THE POPULAR FAILURE OF W. S. GILBERT AFTER 1890:
A STUDY OF THE RECEPTION AND VALUE OF GILBERT'S LATER STAGE WORKS:
WITH EXTENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
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WILLIAM ROBERT ALLEN
(ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE)

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
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W. S. Gilbert, one of the foremost writers of the London stage between 1870 and 1890, had little popular success with the ten works he brought to London audiences during the last twenty years of his life (1891-1911). This study examines the critical reception of these later works, speculates on the reasons for their popular failure, and reveals the chief defects and merits of each work. The study attempts to provide exhaustive lists of early London reviews of the original productions of these works and concludes with what is hoped to be a complete bibliography of all other material related to these works written both during and since Gilbert's lifetime. Included throughout the text are facsimiles of reviews, illustrations, and photographs of the original productions. Although the study admits that these later works of Gilbert had serious flaws and discusses their limitations in detail, it also provides evidence to show that Gilbert's artistic genius was not exhausted and that these neglected pieces contain important expressions of his philosophy of life and dramatic art.
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Technical Note

I beg the reader to forgive possible creeping grammatical or syntactical inconsistencies in the text of this study. Such flaws are the result of three antagonistic influences on my writing style: thirty years' habituation in my native United States ("the humour of humorist W. S. Gilbert"), three years' residence in contemporary London ("the humour of humorist W. S. Gilbert"), and three years' study of Victorian and Edwardian popular reading material ("the humour of humorist W. S. Gilbert").

Following instructions in the Style Sheet (second edition, p. 10) of the Modern Language Association, I have not capitalized nor underlined the initial definite article in the titles of newspapers and periodicals in the text (e.g., the Times, the Pall Mall Gazette), although I do so in most footnote references.
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INTRODUCTION

"It's a sad thing to be transformed into an old woman in the very flower of one's life!"

Minnastra in *The Mountebanks* (p. 385)

1All page numbers given for *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, *The Mountebanks*, and *Utopia Limited* throughout this study relate to the early standard edition of Gilbert's works: W. S. Gilbert, *Original Plays, Third Series* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1895, etc.), and page numbers given for *The Fairy's Dilemma*, *The Grand Duke*, His Excellency, *Haste to the Wedding*, *Fallen Fairies*, *The Fortune Hunter*, and *The Hooligan* relate to the early standard edition of the Fourth Series, Revised (1920, etc.).
In its Law Report column of September 4, 1890, the Times reported the case of "Gilbert v. D'Oyly Carte" and stated that this was an action brought by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the well-known dramatic author, against Mr. D'Oyly Carte, of the Savoy Theatre, for an account and payment of the share of net profits of the plaintiff's operas, the present application being for the appointment of a receiver of the takings of The Gondoliers.

Thus is reported the lawsuit that temporarily ended the fabulously successful comic opera partnership of W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan since the latter had taken the side of their impresario, Richard D'Oyly Carte, in the proceedings. With and without Sullivan, Gilbert had been one of the foremost dramatists of the London stage during the twenty years that preceded this ominous beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century. Gilbert's amazing productivity and popularity during the second half of the nineteenth century prompted one London columnist to write in 1891.

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2 "We are accustomed to speak of the joint productions of Gilbert and Sullivan as 'comic operas,' but this is scarcely their correct definition. In opera, whether comic or serious, the important elements are plot and music, with language of little account; whereas in these works the language is more important than plot. . . . Perhaps they would be better described as 'musical farces.'" Francesc Berger, 22 (London: Matthews and Marrot, 1937), p. 130.
The Gondoliers is to be withdrawn in the course of a few days, and then Mr. W. S. Gilbert's name will be out of the bills of London theatres for the first time for four-and-twenty years. I suppose that in the history of the English stage there has never before been an author who has had a play going on at some London theatre or other for this length of time—or for anything approaching it. I am by no means certain, indeed, that I have not understated the time.

... Often, of course, his work has occupied the stages of several theatres at the same time, and I believe that the list of his plays includes some eighty3 pieces.

Gilbert, Sullivan, and Carte were eventually reconciled, and their collective efforts produced two new comic operas after 1890, but neither these new collaborations nor Gilbert's work with others and by himself attained the popularity of most previous works.

"Among the dramatists of our time, Mr. Pinero always excepted, the most original talent and the most considerable is that of Mr. W. S. Gilbert," wrote critic Stanley Jones at the turn of the century.

"Mr. Gilbert's work, however, is done... Mr. Gilbert's work belongs not so much to the present or to the future, as to the past. 6

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3 The writer was slightly too ambitious in his estimate: in 1891 the figure was closer to sixty. A complete listing is given in the Appendix.


5 Gilbert survived both Sullivan and Carte by a decade and even wrote three new pieces for the London stage after their deaths: The Fairy's Dilemma, Fallen Fairies, and The Fooligan.

Consequently, the ten works of Gilbert’s authorship first produced after 1890 can quite accurately be called the works of “the later” Gilbert or Gilbert in popular decline, and it is exclusively with these pieces that the present study is concerned.

It is the object of this study to combine a critical examination with a history of the criticism of these later works of Gilbert to determine the faults that led to their popular failure and to explore their neglected or hidden value. It should also be noted that these ten works provide an excellent microcosm for study of Gilbert’s art in general. They include samples of almost every type of dramatic work he ever attempted, including two Sullivan comic operas, two without Sullivan, a melodrama, a musical farce, a fairy opera, a parody of Shakespeare, a parody of harlequinade pantomime, and a naturalistic character study. In chronological order of their original production, the ten works to be discussed are these:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, an amusing short sketch which employs a Gilbertian parody of Shakespearean language and appropriates plot elements from Hamlet to satirize Shakespearean actors, critics, and audiences; it was first written and published in 1874 but was

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7 The term “Later works” as used in this study refers to Gilbert’s works first produced after 1890. "Early review" or "early critic" refer to writings on the original productions of these later works. "Later critic" refers to writings since Gilbert’s death in 1911.
not performed in public until 1891 and not given a full run on the professional London stage until 1892 when it was presented under Gilbert's personal direction.

The Mountebanks, an ingenious two-act comic opera with music by Alfred Cellier that was produced at the beginning of 1892 during the height of the Gilbert-Sullivan-Carte estrangement; it resembles much of Gilbert's earlier work with Sullivan: the stage is peopled with naive characters enmeshed in complicated relationships, including several love triangles, and the plot hinges on a supernatural object that places these characters into amusing, sometimes grotesque, topsy-turvy situations;

Haste to the Wedding, a frantic and slightly risque operetta, or musical farce, with music by George Grossmith, based on Gilbert's 1873 farce, The Wedding March; first presented in the summer of 1892, the libretto has spoken dialogue with musical interludes and bears more resemblance to a musical play than to the comic opera libretto form Gilbert used with Sullivan.

8 Although Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and several of the other works discussed in this study were at least partly written before 1890, they still reflect Gilbert's thinking during this later period as all of the productions were instigated and stage-managed (directed) by Gilbert himself. Some newspaper and other accounts allude to the possibility that Gilbert did not instigate the creation of some of the pieces (some reports say, for instance, that Gilbert wrote Haste to the Wedding at the insistence of George Grossmith and The Foolican because of the pleading of actor James Welch), but more reliable personal accounts by Gilbert himself or by people directly involved with Gilbert when the plays were first produced indicate that all of his later works were the original brain-children of Gilbert.

9 Gilbert enclosed the title of the work in quotation marks on the opening-night programme and on early libretto copies because it referred to the popular English song which Grossmith incorporated into his score.
Utopia Limited, or, The Flowers of Progress, the two-act comic opera that reunited Gilbert, Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte at the Savoy in late 1893; it is the most menacingly satiric of all the Gilbert and Sullivan librettos as far as Victorian commercial, political, and social principles are concerned; its love interest is slight, but it has comic characters in abundance, and its fantastic setting and plot are Gilbertian in the extreme.

His Excellency, an 1894 comic opera with music by Osmond Carr that has Elsinore as its setting (but, strangely, there are no comic asides to Hamlet); the work in many ways finds Gilbert at his most cynical toward human nature although it almost totally avoids topical reference.

The Grand Duke; or, The Statutory Duel, the last comic opera collaboration with Sullivan, produced in early 1896; although its setting is an imaginary minor German Grand Duchy in the eighteenth century, its satire is mainly directed at theatrical personalities and conventions of Gilbert's own time in England, and the plot structure revolves around one of Gilbert's complicated legal devices.

The Fortune Hunter, a melodrama employing international characters and settings to reveal and denounce social and financial prominence; it was so dated in dialogue and manner that it never

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10a The original title had the word "Limited" placed in parenthesis.

10b The original title was hypenated: The Fortune-Hunter.
opened in the West End, although major London critics attended its premiere in Birmingham and Crouch End in late 1897:

The Fairy's Dilemma, Gilbert's first work in the new century (1904), a complicated theatrical joke that satirized both Victorian pantomime and Edwardian drawing-room comedy;

Fallen Fairies; or, The Wicked World, a serious musical fantasy based on Gilbert's 1873 verse play, The Wicked World; the music was composed by Edward German, and it was Gilbert's last full-length work, appearing at the end of 1909;

The Boopen, a quite untypical (for Gilbert) naturalistic character study of a whispering, illiterate murderer awaiting execution in his prison cell; the short sketch was Gilbert's last work, produced in early 1911, three months before his death in May of that year.

Since these works are rarely performed today and copies of all but the Sullivan works have been out of print for many years, I have included a number of direct quotations and facsimiles from the standard texts of the plays to give the reader a feeling of the verbal flavour in these neglected works and to allow the reader an opportunity to compare the language found here with that of the more famous earlier works.

11 The full title on the opening-night programme was "Harlequin and the Fairy's Dilemma."
During the eighteen-nineties one writer noted that "... a Savoy first night has grown into what is sometimes called a 'society function,' attendance upon which secures a good mark in the record of social merits and defects," and the premieres of both Utopia Limited in 1893 and The Grand Duke in 1896 were extremely gala occasions.

Opening-night glamour was just as evident for Gilbert's non-Sullivan comic operas, The Mountebanks (1892) and His Excellency (1894):

The production of 'His Excellency' at the Lyric Theatre on Saturday night was manifestly of great interest to theatre-goers. Several persons had stationed themselves at the doors as early as one o'clock. Shortly before three it had begun to rain heavily, and as the little crowd outside the gallery doors bade fair to get drenched, Mr. Levilly, the business manager, had some old carpets laid on the stairs and opened the front entrance. Sitting on the steps, some smoking and others reading, these enthusiastic playgoers remained from three till they were admitted into the theatre at a quarter to eight. Shortly after four, cups of tea were passed down to those in waiting, and appeared to be appreciated. Of course every seat in the theatre was occupied. The Lord Chief Justice sat in a grand tier box, facing Mr. Alfred de Rothschild. Sir Albert Rollit could find no better seat than in a top box; Mr. Lockwood, Sir George Lewis, Lady Jeune, Mr. Samuel Montagu, Mr. O'Curly Carter, and Mr. Gill were in the stalls, while Mr. Arthur Chappell had a place in the front row of the dress circle.13

Although London audiences had undoubtedly become more sophisticated after the turn of the century and a new work by Gilbert produced more a sense of nostalgia than one of expectation, the premieres

of The Pdty's Dilemma in 1904 and Fallen Fairies in 1909 were made
gloving occasions by appreciative middle-aged first-nighters.

Accordingly, the first night of any Gilbert production still
commanded journalistic attention second to none even in those Gilbert
twilight years when the works of Wilde, Ibsen, Shaw, Pinero, Henry
Arthur Jones, and, later, John Galsworthy were nudging each other for
space in the dramatic review columns of the multitude of London
newspapers and journals of the nineties and the first decade of the
(1896), one contemporary noted, "The importance of last Saturday's
function at Mr. Carter's theatre is shown by the space given to it in
the press notices. Not even a great production by [Henry] Irving at
the Lyceum would have secured more attention than has 'The Grand
Duke' . . . 14 Another London journalist said of the same production,

It would be interesting to compute how many thousands of
words were written on the subject by the critics, who must have
numbered over a hundred, who were there on the first night.
That, of course, is quite usual at the Savoy. One unusual
thing was that several Austrian papers had sent representatives,
for the Viennese public was very anxious to learn how Mme.
von Palmay [playing Julia Jelliooe] would fare at the hands
of the British public.15

However, it was not just Gilbert's work with Sullivan that produced
column after column of critical commentary, but any work Gilbert

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14 "Before the Footlights," Licensed Victuallers' Gazette and

attempted during these years. In 1894 one contemporary noted that "the production of a new play by him is ... an event of primary importance in the theatrical world ..." Gilbert's comic opera with music by Osmond Carr, His Excellence, produced this exclamation from "Cherubine" in the London Figaro:

The daily papers throughout the country have given full particulars of the plot of 'His Excellency,' and pretty well all the book, or, at any rate, the funniest portions of it, must by this time have been quoted over and over again. In fact, more columns are telegraphed to various provincial and American journals of Gilbertian librettos than of any other opera.

The 1897 Birmingham premiere of Gilbert's melodrama, The Fortune Hunter, drew a multitude of London critics to the northern city to write first-hand reviews. Said J.F.N[isbet?] in the Academy,

The acting of 'The Fortune Hunter' by a provincial touring company, with Miss Fortescue at its head, does not call for notice. It was adequate; and more need not be said. ... It is Mr. Gilbert's curious position in the matter that attracts attention on literary grounds.

Even Gilbert's efforts in the new century, The Fairy's Dilemma and Fallen Fairies with their Victorian titles and outlooks, drew voluminous first-night reportage.

One recent writer has called the eighteen-nineties "the greatest decade of the English dramatic critic," and dramatic criticism...
certainly has never since enjoyed such luxury of sheer volume as it
entertained during the last twenty years of Gilbert's life. One
study has stated that

the golden period of theatre criticism in England was the
twenty-five years that ended in 1914. As well as the writers
[of acknowledged fame] there were the anonymous critics whose
work in the daily papers was allotted space on a scale so
generous as to excite, now, our envious astonishment. And
who . . . will say that the quality was less remarkable than
the quantity, or be able wholly to stifle a foolish sigh for
the press of yesteryear?19

In the reviews of Gilbert's work after 1890, every aspect of each
production received great scrutiny. A typical first-night review
included not only detailed discussions of the plot, wardrobe,
scenery, acting performances, and other production ingredients,20
but also observations on the composition of the first-night audience
and their reactions to specific features of the work. On the morning
after Utopia Limited opened, the Sunday Times printed a 5000-word
review, and this was not an untypical occurrence during these years
in many publications.

Of course, this great journalistic interest in Gilbert's work
produced criticism that was not always totally objective, and in

19 A. C. Ward, "Introduction," Specimens of English Dramatic
University, 1945), p. 18.

20 It should be noted, however, that the present study does not
essentially concern itself with the costuming, stage decorations,
acting performances, etc., except as they relate to Gilbert's specific
role in the various productions.
evaluating the validity of a great deal of the reportage, one must examine the tone of each review very carefully. A good many critics looked upon Gilbert (or at least Gilbert and Sullivan) as a national institution and felt that writing praise of his (their) work was obligatory and prophecy long runs more common sense:

A feeling of unusual gratification overcomes the average playgoer as he assists at a first-night function at the Savoy, wherein those old favourites and oft-tried collaborators (surely they should never be separated), Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, have a share. There is such an air of geniality and suppressed excitement about the house; everybody evinces such an absolute determination to be pleased, that upon any chance of success even the experienced critic becomes for the moment a partisan, and swells visibly with pride. For the Gilbert and Sullivan opera is a British institution, as characteristic of our country as Parliament or the Royal Academy. Indeed, this Savoy extravaganza is the one art form distinctly English, of which we of the present generation can boast.

Thus, reviewers often joined the first-night audience in allowing a sense of gratitude or nostalgia for former work to prejudice them in favour of Gilbert's new contributions to the London scene—at least for the first night. Of Utorda Limited, the Globe and Traveller noted,

"It is not by any means a perfect work of art; it has its drawbacks and its limitations. But these were not dealt upon by Saturday night's gathering. Everybody was prejudiced in favor of the production; and everybody joined in making it a success.

When The Fairy's Dilemma appeared in 1904, E. F. S. in the Sketch said,

"Never, perhaps, was an audience more anxious to be pleased, since the majority (critics included) one and recognize a deep debt to the author for many happy hours of hearty laughter, and even a first-night audience is capable of gratitude."

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"His Excellency" at the Lyric.

A very brilliant "book": very pretty, tuneful, imitative music: superb mounting, and a wholly successful revival of the Master's manner and method: that is what this beautiful production is. To all of us who value the literary finish, the exquisite polish, that Mr. Gilbert gives to his daintiest sentences, the swift—should I say "Swift"?— satire that the whole fantasy is impregnated with, this work of art comes as a revelation. We have been dosed with so-called "comic opera," and meanwhile the master of all English fun slumbered and sulked like Achilles in his tent. He has, the gods be praised! come out and given us a charming story, an ingenious story, an imaginative story, pure as a pearl, innocent as a new-laid egg. Too late now to tell you of the many subtleties of this work. I take it for granted that you all know the pretty plot and passion of "His Excellency." I rather desire to record—

1. That Mr. Gilbert is the true artist-workman—ever thinking of the whole edifice, while he lays his bricks with the accuracy of a Master Mason.

2. That his inventive genius, so long valued and appreciated, has made a comet-like whisk across our ken with luminous attraction. Bless the man! he makes us laugh! And 3. that this production, as produced by the old "Savoyards," has sensibly raised the tottering standard of wit.

When he whips, our Juvenal, our Molière, our Aristophanes—bother the dates!—keeps fast hold on the eternal humanities, and sees, with smiling philosophies, the fun of existence.

Mr. Gilbert has his own way of looking at life, and he is an artist as well. He sings his song, his queer cynical song, with such an exquisite appreciation of form, that now he mounts to the top ranks of perfect achievements, in the line of farcical philosophy.
However, some critics took the stance of young Bernard Shaw and felt duty bound as rebels to resist such sentiments. "... The announcement of a new Savoy opera always throws the middle-aged playgoer into the attitude of expecting a surprise," said Shaw.

"As for me, I avoid this attitude, if only because it is a middle-aged one." When *Utopia Limited* re-united Gilbert and Sullivan in 1893, A.B.W[alkley] complained, in the *Speaker,*

... the population of these realms is straightway convulsed with joy and treating *Utopia (Limited)* as a work of colossal importance. Mr. Gilbert, in particular, is said to have surpassed himself— that he has surpassed everybody else is assumed as self-evident—and we are invited to believe that the 'last word' of comic-opera libretto has at length been spoken. Ungracious as it may seem to ask our marchionesses to moderate their transports, the request must be made. Let us try to see things in their true proportions and as they really are.

In 1909 one critic became quite irate over the bubbling enthusiasm of the *Fallen Fairies* first-nighters:

Applause is a good and Christian-like thing on a first night at a theatre, but when it is overdone in the ridiculous manner in which it certainly was overdone when *Fallen Fairies* was produced last week at the Savoy, it is an empty vain thing, calculated to make those upon whom it is unduly heaped, feel ridiculous, and to seriously annoy the more ordinary persons among the audience.

Perhaps the sanest appraisal of the early criticism was given by "Carados" of the *Referee* in his review of Gilbert's 1892 musical

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farce, Haste to the Wedding, when he said of the mixed reception given the work by the first-night audience, "For the honest truth is that both the clapping and the hissing were out of proportion to the merits and faults . . . ."

Despite the popular failure of Gilbert's work after 1890, only two of the pieces—Haste to the Wedding and The Fortune Hunter—were roundly condemned by a preponderance of the early reviewers; a fact that will be explored more fully in the body of this study. In fact, three of Gilbert's early librettos during this period—The Mountebanks, Utopia Limited, and His Excellency—were enthusiastically received by most of the press, and it was mainly only after these works failed to attain the long runs predicted by the critics that the reviews for Gilbert's work became much more mixed. The judgments that appeared in the Times offer a fairly accurate consensus of the general reception that each of the ten works received in the London press. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (in its 1891 and 1904 charity performances as well as its professional run in 1892), The Mountebanks, Utopia Limited, His Excellency, The Fairy's Dilemma, and Fallen Fairies were given favorable reviews by the Times, but the influential paper did not find Haste

24. Hindsight may be perfect vision, but it sometimes has a bad memory. The stage journal, the Encore, gave Utopia Limited a positive review in 1893, but after Utopia Limited failed at the box office, a review in the Encore for His Excellency a year later said, "The applause had no tinge of doubt as on the occasion when Utopia (Limited) shed its somewhat disappointing light, but rang true and hearty." Also in reviewing His Excellency, Charles Willy in St. Paul's commented, "The Gilbert of 'The Mountebanks' was a poor and sorry substitute. Everyone felt that," although, in reality, the work was very enthusiastically received by the early reviewers.
to the Wedding, The Grand Duke, The Fortune Hunter, or The Hooligan acceptable. Perhaps partly justifying (or showing the power of) these reviews, all of the last mentioned works except The Hooligan were among Gilbert’s most conspicuous failures at the box office.

The dramatic critic for the Times until 1899 was J. F. Mistet, whose initials also appeared in signature of reviews of Gilbert’s works in several other influential publications of the nineties. A. B. Walkley took over Mistet’s duties in 1900 and found his own "learned and allusive style" satirized by Gilbert in The Fairy’s Dilemma four years later; however, Walkley good-naturedly acknowledged the joke in his highly favourable review of the play:

"Mr. Gilbert’s idea of a theatrical criticism in this journal greatly arrides us. There are plentiful references, we note, to Aristotle and other ancient authors, and the verbiage is magnificently sesquipedalian. We only wish we could write such a notice ourselves.

It might be added that Gilbert apparently was an avid reader of the Times since the paper is filled with his inrate letters to the Editor on a number of different topics during these years.

In the nineties, Walkley had written some important criticisms of Gilbert’s work in the Star and the Speaker. Especially important in understanding Walkley’s erudite interpretation of Gilbert’s work.

25 “London Theatres,” The Stage, May 5, 1904, p. 14. Walkley was satirized even more prominently in Shaw’s 1911 comedy, Fanny’s First Play."
Lines from the text of *The Fairy's Dilemma* satirizing the erudite dramatic criticism of A. B. Walkley of the *Times*:

Sir T. A favourable notice in *The Times*. Let me see it.

All. Read it! Read it!

Sir T. (reads), "Thereupon the Fairy Rosebud transported all the principal characters to the Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation (a scene inspired, no doubt, by the Horatian description of the Groves of the Thetis Academy), and there effected a transformation, clearly suggested by the First and Second Essences of the Categories of Aristotle. Lady Angela became a graceful and singularly modest Columbine, whose movements were widely differentiated from the Dithyrambic Bacchanalia of the Attic-Ionic race—"

Lady An. Yes! I should think so!

Sir T. (continuing), "Mr. Parfitt will, perhaps, with a little practice, develop into an agile Harlequin."

Aloy. Yes. I was getting on nicely.

Judge (taking the paper from Sir Trevor). "While Sir Trevor's Clown, which recalled the pantomimic triumphs of Pylades and Bathyllus—"

Sir T. (taking the paper from Jemima). "Was ably supported by Mr. Justice Whorle's Pantaloon, a marvellous picture of senile infamy, having but little in common with the Cicero's conception of dignified old age."
are his reviews of Utopia Limited, His Excellency, and The Grand Duke in the Speaker. Walkley considered Gilbert's humour as basically verbal and "non-theatrical," and in his review of The Grand Duke in the Speaker, Walkley said, "... what especially makes me laugh over Mr. Gilbert is that more than half of his success is achieved in spite of the 'rules,'" although Walkley also chided Gilbert at other times for breaking these rules.

The Daily Telegraph, the leading circulation daily until it lost the distinction to the Daily Mail in 1896, gave favourable notice to all of Gilbert's last ten works except The Fortune Hunter and The Hooligan. Conservative, anti-Ibsenite Clement Scott was the dramatic critic of the Telegraph throughout the nineties and also was the editor of the influential Theatre, which gave favourable reviews of all of Gilbert's work in the nineties except Utopia Limited and The Fortune Hunter. Although Scott expressed general appreciation for Gilbert's works, the dramatist refused to speak to Scott for fifteen years (1888-1903) because the critic wrote harshly of some of Gilbert's works. Scott, in a review of The Hooligan, put forth the unusual argument that the popular failure of The Mountebanks and a number of other musical works of 1892 lay at the hands of the powerful Daily Telegraph because of its publication of music samples from the works in its reviews: ... by theatre folks—and, which is a more serious thing, by many theatre-goers—these musical illustrations, bald and meaningless as they are to musicians, and damaging as they must be, by giving the general public a wholly false idea of the work, are deemed unlucky ...."
The Sunday Times published reviews of all of Gilbert's later works and was unfavourable toward only one, The Fortune Hunter. Ibsenite J. T. Groin became the paper's main dramatic critic in 1903, but he personally reviewed only one of Gilbert's post-1900 works, The Fairy's Dilemma. As the dramatic critic for the periodical, Life, in the early nineties, Groin expressed a dislike for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (not because he thought it irreverent toward Shakespeare but because he thought more could have been done with the satire), but he enjoyed Haste to the Wedding. Groin admitted, however, that his appreciation of both Haste to the Wedding and The Fairy's Dilemma was mainly motivated from a sense of nostalgia.

Among other influential journals, the Athenaeum gave Gilbert's later works a decidedly mixed reception. Joseph Knight, who in those years was the doyen of the dramatic critics, was in charge of the criticism of the Athenaeum until his death in 1907. Knight, whose mind was stored with an apparently inexhaustible fund of out-of-the-way knowledge on every conceivable branch of dramatic, literary, historical, and antiquarian learning, was also the dramatic critic for the Daily Graphic and the Globe and Traveller. Mixed reviews of Gilbert's

27 See Gilbert's letter to Malcolm Scott, dated Jan. 26, 1904, in the Chronological Type-Copies file in the Reginald Allen Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City; and David W. Cole, "The Policy of Contentiousness," in Gilbert and Sullivan Papers, p. 28, in which Gilbert's conciliatory kindness toward Scott and his wife during the critic's last illness in 1904 is also noted.

later works also came from such other erudite publications as the Academy, the Saturday Review, and the Outlook. Another publication in this general class was Truth, founded and edited by Henry Labouchere, the radical journalist, who, along with his wife, actress Henrietta Hobson, had several feuds with Gilbert in the seventies. In 1894, Gilbert openly satirized Labouchere in several lines in His Excellency (p. 140), and the critic for Truth wrote a slightly unfavourable review of His Excellency, although he did not comment on Gilbert's reference to Labouchere. When Labouchere founded Truth he joked that he planned to make the publication "another and a better world," a reference to the respected publication that, in the nineties and the first decade of the twentieth century, printed the dramatic criticisms of Bernard Shaw and William Archer. In his reviews in the World, Shaw expressed an appreciation for the political satire of Utopia Limited, but he attacked the comic-tragic aspect of the second act of The Mountebanks.

Archer, long an admirer of Gilbert and the author of an important interview with him in 1901, had mixed feelings about the 1892 production of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and he definitely did not approve of many aspects of the libretto of The Grand Duke. In 1904, The Fairy's Dilemma found Archer in an enthusiastic, if nostalgic, vein, and he wrote a humorous, mock serious review of a charity production of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in May of that year. Archer also wrote a favourable review in the Pall Mall Budget of His Excellency, which includes an extended discussion of Gilbert's work in general, especially in regard to other dramatists, including Shaw and Victorien Sardou (see p. 403, below). Upon hearing of Gilbert's death in 1911, Archer wrote to Arthur Pinero, "Poor old fellow! He gave us an immense deal of pleasure in his day."  

The long-lived Era (1838-1939) was considered "the acknowledged organ of the Theatrical and Musical professions," during these years, and it reviewed all ten of Gilbert's later works. Although its reviews were generally favourable, it attacked The Fortune Hunter in both its Birmingham and Crouch End productions, and an editorial on its pages concerning an interview Gilbert had given to an Edinburgh newspaper


when The Fortune Hunter played in that city so enraged Gilbert that he sued the Era for libel. Gilbert lost the case, but the transcripts of the trial, published in the London press on March 29 and 30, 1896, present some of Gilbert's most outspoken and witty views on a host of theatrical topics.

The witty society journal, Vanity Fair, gave favourable comment on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and The Mountebanks and then gave negative reviews to almost all of Gilbert's work after that. Perhaps the publication was stung by Gilbert's slaps at English society journals in Utopia Limited. T. G. Bowles, the editor of Vanity Fair from 1869 to 1903, wrote under the name of "Jehu Junior," and in Utopia Limited Gilbert uses such names as "Jurdus Junior," "Senex Senior," "Mercury Major," and "Mephistopheles Minor" (pp. 417, 420) in satirizing scandal-mongering, pseudonymous society journal writers. In other satirical comments in Utopia Limited aimed at certain segments of the press, Gilbert has one of his characters reveal that "... the editor of a scurrilous paper can stand a good deal—he takes a private thrashing as a matter of course—it's considered in his salary..." (p. 443). The Duke of Dundee in The Fortune Hunter boasts, "No one


was ever known to laugh at me—except in the papers" (p. 402), and his wife tells a friend, "... when you’re in England, come and see us. I can’t say where we shall be, but you can always find our movements in the Radical papers" (p. 404).

Savoy opera was often likened to the British comic journal, Punch, in its satiric but non-risque approach to humour. Punch itself reviewed four of Gilbert’s later works and remarked favourably on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and His Excellency but found fault with the two Sullivan collaborations, Utopia Limited and The Grand Duke.

It has been observed in several quarters\(^\text{37}\) that Gilbert’s “somewhat abrasive relationship” with rival librettist, F. C. Burnand, the editor of Punch, probably influenced the unfavourable reviews. In Utopia Limited, one of the characters says, "Why, the fact is that, in the cartoons of a comic paper, the size of your nose always varies inversely as the square of your popularity" (pp. 429-430).

Disagreement among early critics concerning these later works resulted in several amusing occurrences. The Musical Standard of December 25, 1909, carried two reviews of Fallen Fairies, one by Arthur Poyser which was quite favourable and one by S. H. Strong which was extreme in the other direction. In the Bystander of May 18, 1904, there appeared two articles: one a complimentary sketch of

Gilbert's career and the other a hostile review of The Fairy's Dilemma, as if the editors felt that the bad notice of such an illustrious old trouper's work should not go unattended without some sort of tribute.

Confusion concerning the criticism of Gilbert's later efforts has apparently become something of a literary tradition. The views of writers since Gilbert's day about these works is sometimes difficult to fathom because of seemingly contradictory statements ascribed to the same work at various times by the same critic. This has been true of even the most respected of Gilbert authorities. For instance, Dr. Isaac Goldberg's view of Utopia Limited evolved from one of apparent delight in 1913 to one of disdain in 1929. In 1934 Audrey Williamson confided, "I have never seen Utopia Limited, but I read it more avidly than any other Gilbert and Sullivan opera," but in the early nineteen-fifties she said of the same work, "The amazing thing about Utopia Limited is not that Sullivan failed to reproduce his earlier successes, but that he was able to invent music at all, working on such material, and even receive praise for some of it."

40. Audrey Williamson, "Why Not Revive 'Utopia Limited'?
One Gilbert enthusiast has reported that Leslie Baily described [the plot of The Grand Duke] as 'a clown going through his old tricks'—a phrase which completely lost its significance when the same gentleman used it, in his radio biography, to describe Utopia Limited, which he had praised in his book.  

It is also important to note that many long articles on the Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration completely ignore Utopia Limited and The Grand Duke as if they want to sweep these operas under the carpet because they are too unsightly for discussion. It is probable that many of the multitude of cursory critics of Gilbert and Sullivan in the last fifty years have never actually seen these two works performed even in amateur productions or carefully read them; it is just assumed that they are of no value because they were not great popular successes in the eighteen-nineties and because they have not been revived by the D'Cyly Carte Opera Company since that time. In fact, all ten of Gilbert's post-1890 works are usually lumped together and condemned in a single sentence by later critics with little attention given to the pieces as separate entities.  

Although important twentieth century scholars of Gilbert such as John Bush Jones, Isaac Goldberg, and Jane W. Stedman have made extended comments on some of these later works that will be noted in the text, this is the first study to deal exclusively with these later works and their critical heritage. Most academic studies of Gilbert  

have basically been critical interpretations of his general philosophy and dramatic technique with little regard to the critical receptions of any of the works. Popular published works on Gilbert have also tended to deal exclusively with personal criticism, Gilbertian anecdotes, or purely biographical material. In fact, except for minor articles in the Gilbert and Sullivan Journal and passing references in biographical studies of Gilbert, the only work that I have encountered that deals in any significant way with the early reception of any of Gilbert's work is Reginald Allen's text introductions for his The First Eight Gilbert and Sullivan (New York: Heritage, 1958), which, of course, is concerned only with Utopia Limited and The Grand Duke among the ten works in the present study. Throughout this study I have attempted to assemble and incorporate the complete spectrum of often contradictory views of past writers and critics on the works involved, and I have made extensive direct use of material from these sources—especially from the early reviews of the original

London productions. Facsimiles of important early revues as well as reproductions of photographs and illustrations from the early productions are also included. I have attempted to compile a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the text that includes every item—scholarly, popular, journalistic, or otherwise—written during and since Gilbert's day that I have encountered which has mention of any of the ten later works discussed in this study. In attempting to be as complete as possible in my listing, I have included all the works available on the subject found in the holdings of the Carroll A. Wilson collection in the Lilly Library, Indiana University; the Reginald Allen collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City; the Society for Theatre Research Library, Senate House, University of London; the British Drama League Library, Fitzroy Square, London; and the British Museum Bloomsbury and Colindale Libraries. I have also made extensive use of the "That Which is Written" column in the indispensable and well-written Gilbert and Sullivan Journal (abbreviated G&S Journal in this study), published quarterly since February 1925 under the editorships of A. H. Godwin (1925-1931), D. Graham Davis (1931-1962), and Colin Prestige (1962—).

In addition to this comprehensive bibliography and later criticism, at the close of each section in Chapter II there is a listing of all the contemporary opening-night commentary for the original production of each work available in newspapers and periodicals housed in the British Museum Bloomsbury and Colindale depositories. This is an original compilation that I hope will be of aid to anyone who attempts
a comprehensive Gilbert bibliography in the future or to scholars
doing research on any of Gilbert's later works or later life. To
insure that these listings are as comprehensive as possible, I have
checked the periodicals section of the British Museum Catalogue for
all publications printed in London between 1890 and 1912 and then
checked the actual publications themselves. I found reviews of
Gilbert's last ten works in over 125 different periodical titles
(not including such sensational publications as the Illustrated Police
Gazette which borrowed reviews from other sources). Of invaluable aid
to me in tracking down the principles and prejudices of London newspapers and periodicals of these years were The Newsmaner Press
Directory (London: Mitchell, 1846— ) and Sell's Directory of the
World's Press (London: Sell, 1883-1921), both of which can be found
on the open shelves of the Colindale Reading Room. Although the titles
of some publications in these opening-night review listings may seem
trivialous on first sight, I have found that incisive critical insight
and little-known historical sidelights are often hidden in such
unlikely places as Boy Bells Weekly, the Dwarf, the Entr'acte,
the Free Lance, the Gridiron, Pick-Me-Up, the Planet, the Sphinx,
and many other minor publications. This is especially true in
questions of staging or off-handed quotations from Gilbert himself,
even when the dramatic criticism found in the journal is not of the
highest value. A [brief description of such]
cut of the publications listed in my first-night review lists appears in the Appendix, pp. 482-488, below.
In researching the critical heritage of these later works of Gilbert, I have come into contact with remarks that are informative or amusing as obvious products of their particular time, place, or author. In writing of The Fairy's Dilemma (along with other works by Gilbert, including The Fortune Hunter, Fallen Fairies, and The Hooligan) in her New York University thesis of 1937, socialist Edith Moscou threw a blanket of Marxist theory over her study, presenting concepts that one can be fairly certain Gilbert never considered when he was writing the play, although they may have philosophical or political validity in their own right. For instance, at one point in her study the author states of The Fairy's Dilemma,

This play represents a curious twist in that not only are mortals restored by supernatural forces to their original status in bourgeois society, but that the spirits themselves leave their world of magic to emulate the social, economic, and moral mores of their bourgeois victims.

The lengths to which superfluous criticism of a trivial dramatic incident can go is demonstrated by the interest Gilbert and Sullivan

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4 When Utopia Limited opened in 1893, the Tory Morning Advertiser said, "... it would not be too venturesome to assert that the promised production of the new Gilbert and Sullivan opera excited greater interest throughout the length and breadth of the Empire than did the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, while undoubtedly it will add much more largely to the sum of human happiness than did Mr. Gladstone's unfortunate essay into the realms of farcical comedy." In his review of The Fairy's Dilemma in 1904, the critic of the St. James's Gazette made obvious allusion to victorious Japan in the contemporary Russo-Japanese War when he wrote, "... there were dozens of little odds and ends of contemporary social amenities at which the master satirist of time aimed his shafts of piercing ridicule, every one of which told like a shot from a Jap sharpshooter."


In 'Utopia' there is the only case in which the name of a leading operatic character is repeated. This is Sir Edward Corcoran, one of the Flowers of Progress, introduced to the Utopians as the representative of the British Navy. Whether this is the Captain Corcoran of earlier fame is an interesting problem. Seventeen years have passed since we saw him in command of the old 'wooden walls' of the Pinafore. There has been time enough for him to be transferred to a steam-driven warship and to gain his knighthood. But Captain Corcoran was shown to be a Rackstraw by birth, and a Ralph Rackstraw who became a Corcoran would be, we take it, Ralph Corcoran. Was Sir Edward the son of Ralph Corcoran, alias Rackstraw, and the lady we know as Josephine, and did he owe his amazingly rapid promotion to a little wire-pulling by Sir Joseph Porter, ex-First Lord of the Admiralty? Or was he the same Ralph Corcoran's brother? These are troublesome questions. Sir Edward Corcoran introduces snatches of the Captain's song from 'Pinafore.' But one notices that he is a baritone. Captain Corcoran was a tenor. On the whole we are well advised to dismiss the theory that they are the same person.

The present study will, of course, attempt to avoid such cult pedantry as the "Corcoran Conundrum" and hopefully deal only with issues of genuine importance in understanding the history, art, and

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46 Surprisingly, an article by George Hemmen in the Gilbert and Sullivan Journal of Jan. 1926 (p. 16) indicated that there were more amateur productions of Utopia Limited planned for that year in England than there were of H.M.S. Pinafore, Patience, The Sorcerer, or Trial by Jury. Although The Grand Duke did not appear on the list, The Mountebanks was mentioned as being among other works by Gilbert to be produced by amateurs that year.

47 A. H. Godwin, Gilbert and Sullivan: A Critical Appreciation of the Savoy Operas (London: Dent, 1927), pp. 270-271. See also letters in the Gilbert and Sullivan Journal during these years, especially the long one by "Dick Deadeye" (July 1926, p. 12), and the humorous article by Malcolm Glentorne entitled, "Solving the Corcoran Conundrum" (Jan. 1926, p. 20).
thematic intent of the works under discussion. The first chapter presents a discussion of Gilbert's later works in general and the changes in social and theatrical values that might have affected their popular failure. The second chapter deals with each of the ten works in chronological order of their production, discussing the early critical and popular reception of each work and providing more specific illustrations for the arguments advanced in the first chapter. The third and concluding chapter attempts to reveal the value and positive aspects of these works despite their obvious flaws and box office failure. This last section, in fact, stands as the main justification for the entire project in an original critical sense.

Although I will discuss Gilbert's later works throughout most of this study in the context of their failure with the public, I will also attempt to show that they are of undeniable value in giving fresh revelations into Gilbert's personal beliefs and prejudices and in substantiating or modifying theories presented in the many previous studies of his life and earlier work. The facsimiles I have included from the texts of the works indicate, I feel, that the peculiar artistic genius of Gilbert was still quite evident in these later efforts and that the verbal wit and fantastic topsy-turvydom for which he was renown were not exhausted. Certainly, I hope that the reader will eventually share my conclusion that the study of these later works is not an unrewarding task.
British drama historian, Allardyce Nicoll, has expressed the opinion that before 1890, W. S. Gilbert was "by far the greatest writer when the stage had attracted throughout the entire century of Gilbert's great success with the public during the eighteen-seventies and

Chapter I

GILBERT'S LATER WORKS:

GENERAL PROBLEMS

"All this may seem hypercritical perhaps, but I maintain that even in the case of 'ordinary' librettists it would not be so, and in the case of Mr. Gilbert, who is nothing if not an 'extra-ordinary' librettist, such blandishes on his usual immaculate style invite hypercriticism (if it be such)."

Comment from an unfavourable review of The Grand Duke.

"Things Theatrical by Bill of the Play," The Sporting Times,
March 14, 1896, p. 3.

London audiences for the first time during this period, and were greeted by a new and tremendous success.

Although one is tempted to lay the blame for this failure on the indifference or the complacency of an aging dramatist who had already proven his worth, Gilbert apparently was as serious in his approach and as meticulous in detail in these new works as he had been in his great days of glory in the eighteen-seventies and eighties. In fact, Gilbert staged-assisted (or "directed" in twentieth century terminology)

British drama historian, Allardyce Nicoll, has expressed the opinion that before 1890 William Schwenck Gilbert was "by far the greatest writer whom the English stage had attracted throughout the entire course of the nineteenth century" and that Gilbert's great success with the public during the eighteen-seventies and eighteen-eighties had been a richly deserved one. Yet in the score of years between Gilbert's fifty-fourth birthday in 1890 and his death at the age of seventy-four in 1911, Gilbert's new work for the stage achieved little popular acceptance. Gilbert brought ten works to London audiences for the first time during this period, and none gained permanent success.

Although one is tempted to lay the blame for this failure on the indifference or the complacency of an aging dramatist who had already proven his worth, Gilbert apparently was as serious in his approach and as conscious of details in these new works as he had been in his great days of glory in the eighteen-seventies and eighties. In fact, Gilbert stage-managed (or "directed" in twentieth century terminology)
all of his productions after 1890 as he had done with all his earlier works. He continued to take his directorship quite seriously. As late as 1910 after Mrs. Richard D'Oyly Carte sold the Savoy Theatre, Gilbert wrote to her,

I certainly do not intend to write any more libretti. The difference between working for the Savoy, where I had a free hand, and working under a manager of any other theatre, would (apart from other considerations) place my doing so out of the question.²

He was furious when someone got his permission to perform his short sketch, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, for a charity performance in 1891 without telling him that the piece would be performed in a West End theatre, and he eventually demanded and received permission to manage the one-performance production himself.³

When his full-length comic opera, The Mountebanks, appeared on the London stage a year later, one reviewer said,

The opera is mounted in a manner that may fairly be described as perfect. Mr. Gilbert, as usual in his own stage manager, and at the Lyric Theatre, as at the Savoy, he shows himself a well-nigh incomparable master of the craft.⁴


³See Elizabeth Bessie, Letter to W. S. Gilbert, May 18, 1891, British Museum Dept. of Manuscripts, Add. MSS. 49332, f. 82, and Gilbert's letter to the editor of The Daily Telegraph, May 18, 1891, p. 3. For further evidence that Gilbert continued to take his directorship seriously during these later years, see news item in The New York Times, June 17, 1900, p. 11, and Edmond Richett, "Certain Recollections of W. S. Gilbert," The New York Times, April 1, 1934, sect. 10, pp. 1-2.

⁴"Theatrical and Musical," The London Mercury, Jan. 9, 1892, pages not numbered.
Another contemporary commented, "... Mr. Gilbert's genius has a way of bringing theatre, actors, manager, musician, scenic artist, costumer, everyone and everything, completely under its artistic control, and the result is unity, harmony, and refinement." When *Utopia Limited* appeared in 1893 Gilbert was suffering from gout, but he insisted on directing every detail of the production in the embraces of a wheelchair. The following year saw his direction of another new comic opera, *His Excellency*, which elicited this comment from the *Daily Graphic*:

"His Excellency" had been produced under the personal direction of the author, and a more signal proof was never given of Mr. Gilbert's talent as a stage-manager. Everything went with extraordinary smoothness and precision; the drilling of the chorus would have delighted the German Emperor himself, and the 'business' and by-play showed at all points the utmost ingenuity of contrivance.

Gilbert also directed *The Grand Duke*, his last work with Sullivan in 1896. Immediately after it opened, Sullivan hurried to Monte Carlo to recuperate and wrote back to a friend, "Another week's rehearsal with W.S.G. and I should have gone raving mad. I had already ordered some straw for my hair." When *The Fortune Hunter* opened in Birmingham in 1897, Gilbert was again on hand to direct the proceedings and even

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followed the production to Edinburgh. He went to the trouble of having the point in French law on which the play rotates printed in full in the programme distributed to the audiences.

Gilbert's works in the new century were also under his management and reveal the same concern for detail that his earlier works had exhibited. The Fairy's Dilemma (1904) was, in part, a satire on old-fashioned pantomime, and Gilbert spent a great deal of time doing research at the home of pantomime, Drury Lane, interviewing the leading pantomime performers of the day. During the rehearsals for the production, Gilbert wrote, "There's a sad want of method at the Garrick, and I've had to put my foot down." Despite the fact that he had been a leading light in London theatre for over forty years, on the night of the premiere of The Fairy's Dilemma, Gilbert was as anxious about the reception of the work as any he had ever written. One close acquaintance recorded, "He came with his wife and sat through the curtain-raiser with her in the box, but after that he disappeared, and I doubt whether he remained in the house at all." He completely rewrote the blank verse of The Wicked World (1873) for his fairy opera

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8 A.M.T., "Stageland," The Clarion, May 13, 1904, p. 3.

9 Quoted in Dark and Grey, p. 142.


Fallen Fairies in 1909, and its failure was a great blow to him. To prepare himself for the writing of The Hooligan, a short, grim sketch about a condemned murderer that appeared in early 1911, Gilbert visited Pontonville Prison and spent some time alone in one of the cells there. He directed the piece with great care, and one reviewer commented, "The realism of the piece, the minuteness of the detail, the dull, black frame in which the scene was set, all added to the horror of it." 11

As late as 1910 Gilbert confessed to a visitor, "Usually, you know, Lady Gilbert is my press censor. She reads all the press notices, but lets me see only those she thinks I will like. I tremble at reviewers." 12 Consequently, it seems rather unrealistic to say that Gilbert's later works failed because he lost interest in theatrical success and wrote and produced them half-heartedly. Such was not the case. Gilbert believed in the works and worked hard to make them successful. That they all proved popular failures in one degree or another must be charged to factors relating to both the idiosyncrasies of Gilbert and the changing attitudes of audiences after 1890.

A number of Gilbert's biographers 13 have noted a radical change in his life style after 1890 that parallels Gilbert's fall from popular

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theatrical favour. In 1890 he moved from central London and bought Grim's Dyke, a country estate in Harrow Weald, where he spent the last twenty-one years of his life, and in 1891 he was made a Justice of the Peace for the local suburban Middlesex district. He was honoured by one publication in 1893 as "the most successful and prosperous playwright and gentleman of the day" and criticised by another as "a gentleman who will not be interviewed at a less figure than twenty-one pounds sterling—money down." Adding to his prestige as a prosperous senior citizen during these years was his somewhat belated knighthood in 1907. Consequently, Gilbert's image during these years became that of an establishment dignitary rather than a creative man of the theatre, and when the stage of the eighteen-nineties and the first decade of the twentieth century became the arena for Ibsen's problems, Shaw's socialism, and Galsworthy's realism, Gilbert's basic conservatism buttressed by his Middlesex Justice of the Peace community respectability clearly motivated against his participation in any of these new movements. Gilbert's personal opinion of the new drama is not fully recorded; however, at the turn of the century he told William Archer,

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15 Trincolo, "Amongst the Mumpers and at the Music Halls," The Sporting Mirror, Oct. 29, 1894, p. 3.
I take it you are rather a believer in the 'new drama' and its progress; whereas I am, naturally perhaps, inclined to be a bit of a _laudator temporis acti_. Understand me—I don't at all want to disparage the excellent work that is done now-a-days. Only I sometimes feel like entering a little protest against the unmeasured depreciation one sometimes hears of the plays which used to give so much pleasure in the 'sixties and thereabouts.'

When _Utopia Limited_ opened in 1893, one faithful Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast exclaimed in the conservative _St. James's Gazette_.

'Gilbert and Sullivan' are back once more at the Savoy. Is it not just a little ironical? Here we have been for the last few years hard at it, 'reviving' the drama. Messrs. Henry Arthur Jones, William Archer, J. T. Grein, Ibsen and Co., have had a fair field, and—it must be said—very little favour, though more than might have been expected. They have come, and been seen, and then, after all, back come Gilbert and Sullivan with a victory over all of them. We have little doubt that London playgoers will want to see and hear 'Utopia (Limited)' as much as they did 'The Mikado.'

Unfortunately for Gilbert and Sullivan, this prognosis proved incorrect, and the satiric tone of _Utopia Limited_ would soon be paled by the much more indictable stage pronouncements of G.B.S. Even the success of the less radical society plays and comedies of Jones, Pinero, and Wilde failed to effect a change in Gilbert's basic dramatic style. When Gilbert's _The Fortune Hunter_ appeared in 1897, _J. F. N._ in the _Academy_ complained,

Mr. Gilbert is like the Bourbons. . . . he has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. He has not caught the spirit of the time. That we should have a dull and heavy melodrama, for such The Fortune Hunter is, with its realistic quarter-deck of a P. & O. liner and its duel with swords in the duchess's drawing-room, instead of a sparkling comedy of manners from the pen of the brilliant and original librettist, is one of the mysteries of the case.

American Lewis M. Isaacs write of Gilbert in 1902, "His plays seem but echoes of the past. He has been supplanted by younger men more in touch with the problems and lessons of the day," an opinion to which Gilbert, himself, concurred in his interview with Archer:

". . . I have been left behind. One the one of two occasions when I have returned of late years to prose drama, I have found that the public did not care for my work."

One of the basic motivations behind almost all of Gilbert's later work was a nostalgia for the past and an effort to recreate it. The things Gilbert produced after 1890 were either mere repetition of the things he had done or could have done long before. Neither his cynical-sentimental view of life nor his stage representation of that particularly Gilbertian outlook underwent much change. Unfortunately, this consistency became an unbearable popular handicap rather than an admirable artistic virtue. " . . . Mr. Gilbert's humour, though of the keenest, is of a rather restricted visual angle, said one reviewer.


of The Fairy’s Dilemma. "We roughly know beforehand the things he will see and the view he will take of them. And the certainty and the constancy of outlook make the looking through his spectacles for a whole evening a rather monotonous and even tiring experience." 19

The relationship between Gilbert’s later efforts and his earlier works is so marked and the borrowing so great that a detailed discussion of these elements could be endless. Gilbert’s first major work during this later period was The Mountebanks, and Gilbert himself stated that he had written the plot of the libretto seven years earlier during the heyday of the Savoy operas. 20 The libretto clearly reveals a continuance of the Savoy formula 21 with pilfering from Gilbert’s other early work as well. The most obvious borrowing is found in the heart of the plot structure in a device which Gilbert scholars have dubbed “the lozenge plot.” This refers to plots in which a magical substance of some kind is brought into play with the power to cynically expose the hypocrisy or reveal the innermost thoughts

19. The Pall Mall Gazette, May 4, 1904, p. 3.


21. In satirizing the Savoy operas in 1934, A. P. Herbert wrote, "Take a dainty paradox, / Dress it like a chocolate box— / Take two babies, mix them well; / Take one spinster, give her H— / Take some logic, chop it thin; / Take some tunes and rub them in: / One patter song, and don’t forget / Your unaccompanied octette, / Take a little love, but lavish / Not enough to raise a blush: / By degrees you’ll get a / Rather popular operetta.” Quoted in Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire (Princeton, N.J.: University Press, 1962), p. 266 (note 82).
of the characters. The very titles of some of these pieces—
The Palace of Truth (1870), The Sorcerer (1877)—give some indication of this type of framework. Gilbert's famed "topsy-turvy" structure of having his characters take roles completely opposite to normal expectations is also built into
The Mountebanks. A. B. Walkley quipped in his opening-night review in the Sneaker, "As for the Topsy-turvydropsy, it has now become with Mr. Gilbert almost, we imagine, mechanical." Moreover, the similarity between The Mountebanks and earlier works does not stop with those works that have a similar plot device. The cowardly outlaw band of The Mountebanks obviously have a relationship with the pirates and policemen in The Pirates of Penzance. The clown, Bartolo, resembles Jack Point of The Yeomen of the Guard not only in his occupation but also in his theory that his humour is more for serious reflection than for careless laughter. Teresa in The Mountebanks is also reminiscent of Jack Point when she sings such lyrics as "My heart is sad and a-weary my head, / For I weep and I die for a love that is dead!" (p. 385), and Jane Stedman has commented on the resemblance between Teresa in The Mountebanks and Mad Margaret in Ruddigore in their states of lovelorn insanity. The concept of fair Ophelia gaining the sympathies of a jury in a breach of promise lawsuit against Hamlet in one song

22 Sullivan abhorred the concept and, after The Sorcerer, repeatedly refused to compose music for librettists Gilbert suggested to him that employed the lozenge device. Gilbert's use of the lozenge plot in The Mountebanks and in many other works is given a full discussion in Jane W. Stedman, "William S. Gilbert: His Comic Techniques and Their Development," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1955, pp. 333-357.

23 Stedman, p. 179.
from The Mountebanks is remarkably similar to the plot of Trial by Jury, and this threat hurled at Pietro in The Mountebanks curiously parallels the fate of John Wellington Wells in The Sorcerer:

Oh, horror! / Accursed sorcerer!
Thou demon-leagued traitor! / Ill-omened harbinger!
Low-born equivocator! / This is a hideous plot
To rob us of our senses— / Restore us on the spot,
Or dread the consequences! (p. 399).

There are also similarities between the clockwork Hamlet and Ophelia in The Mountebanks and the wax figures in Gilbert's Robert the Devil (1868). H. D. Spooner in his early review in Dramatic Opinions ominously noted,

Mr. Gilbert has given us very little fresh material; he continues to work on his earlier creations, and though we laugh at his strange topsy-turvy characters, and their eccentric actions, it is rather the sort of laugh with which we greet a joke which we have a shred suspicion of having heard before. Mr. Gilbert has either exhausted his original stock of humour, or we are no longer tickled at the originality of his style.

Haste to the Wedding, which appeared in the same year as The Mountebanks, again saw Gilbert looking back to former works. The piece was a musical version of one of Gilbert's successes from the early seventies, The Wedding March, itself a translation of an even earlier French work, and the Times remarked,

24 See Earl Franklin Bargainnier, "W. S. Gilbert and Nineteenth Century Drama," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1969, p. 183. However, Carados in The Referee (Jan. 10, 1892, p. 2) felt that Gilbert's borrowing here was more than just from himself: "This automatic idea Gilbert has (unconsciously, I am sure) borrowed from the Monster and Modell parts which were written around Fred Leslie and poor George Stone in 'Frankenstein.' Moreover, the idea of the duet 'Put a Penny in the Slot' was worked as a song for Arthur Roberts in Burnand's 'Tra-la-la-Tosca.'" Such automatons is also found in Offenbach's The Tales of Hoffmann.
The idea of making an operetta out of the somewhat old-fashioned farce is by no means a new one since some 15 years ago there seems to have been an intention to arrange the piece as one of the Savoy operas...25

The first night review in the St. James's Gazette reflected the feeling of most contemporary critics when it stated that "the whole thing, indeed, appeared to be out of date, faded, old-fashioned; the characters preposterous, the incidents outrageous," and the popular women's journal, the Lady, remarked that Gilbert had chosen "an old and well-worn theme to work upon, rather than give to the composer and the public something new, original, and worthy of his reputation."

Even Gilbert's heralded reunion with Sullivan in 1893, Utopia Limited, was partly26 based on scenes Gilbert had cut out of Princess Ida27 and on an earlier work, The Happy Land (1873), in which Gilbert had ridiculed the economic policies of Gladstone. Many details of characterization28 and much of the subsidiary satire based on Victorian


28Utopia Limited in the midst of brilliant but chaotic social satire makes an appeal to earlier successes by the reintroduction of Captain Corcoran and his 'what never?' and by Paramount's reference to the Mikado of Japan as an authority on appropriate punishments. This is humour of reminiscence, not of fresh integration, especially when the plot of Utopia Limited contains very palpable reminders of characters, songs, and
prudery, spinsterhood, and naiveté in Utopia Limited had also been used before by Gilbert. The topsy-turvy aspect of the Utopian setting was far from virgin ground. "The collaborators have made no advance," one contemporary ruefully noted.

They are like a respectable and old-fashioned firm which sells only one quality and one pattern of cloth. It is excellent cloth, to be sure, but fashions change, and customers have their whims. Gilbert persevered with the Savoy opera formula in His Excellency (1894) and The Grand Duke (1896), and then he copied the bombastic melodramas of a quarter century before in his only serious work of the decade, The Fortune Hunter (1897).

Gilbert's first work in the new century was a nostalgic satire on Victorian pantomimes called The Fairy's Diary. The Athenæum said of the production, "...it is clear that Mr. Gilbert's conceptions and methods have not changed in a quarter of a century." Max Beerbohm
The literary history of Mr. Gilbert is peculiar and interesting. He began with a classic, "The Bab Ballads." He next wrote extravaganzas, rich in happy ideas and well worth reading. Some might even repay revival. He then turned his attention to comedies in prose and sentimental verse-plays, which last for a time enjoyed more esteem than perhaps they deserved. Three plays coming under these heads, however, merit special mention. "Dan'l Druce" is the most dramatic play to Mr. Gilbert's credit. "Sweethearts" is his only play of genuine feeling. It is, moreover, one of the very few good two-act plays in the language. "Pygmalion and Galatea" is always effective, though some will resent the vulgarisation almost inevitable in the modernisation of a severe and beautiful classical story. "Comedy and Tragedy," which came considerably later, may also be instanced as an effective, if stagey, little drama. These were followed by "Engaged" and "Tom Cobb," two of the most brilliant and perfect farces of English growth. They are literature, and a collection of the twelve best English farces would be defective if wanting either. Up to this point, however, Mr. Gilbert, though a fairly successful playwright, had never established any real ascendancy over the public. That came with his association with Sullivan in what is conveniently called Savoy opera. Here he fell back on "The Bab Ballads," which, writ large and set to admirable and sympathetic music, went round the world, and are going round it still. It is as a Bab Balladist that Mr. Gilbert is at his best. Only a Bab ballad, or even a blend of two or more Bab ballads, pans out thin in the theatre and needs the aid of music to go round. The reason is that Mr. Gilbert's humour, though of the keenest, is of a rather restricted visual angle. We roughly know beforehand the things he will see and the view he will take of them. And the certainty and the constancy of outlook make the looking through his spectacles for a whole evening a rather monotonous and even a rather tiring experience.

"Harlequin and the Fairy's Dilemma," produced last night at the Garrick, is an attempt to do, without the relief and variety afforded by music, what Mr. Gilbert has so often triumphantly achieved with Sullivan.

The attacks on old-fashioned pantomime are obvious to all. They culminate in a ballet in Justice Whortle's garden, where the figurantes whirr about gracelessly, and discharge those duties which once passed for fashionable Valentine and gorgeously entitled "The Revolving Realms of Radiant Re-embellishment." As also in the harlequinade. But the piece is a revue, not only of the past fashions of Christmas entertainment, but of Mr. Gilbert's own work. Apart from him it is highly original. Yet it contains little that he has not done before, some of it to better purpose. Mr. Justice Whortle, the exponent of judicial humour, is delightful, with his breach-of-promise case as a curtain-raiser, and his snappy little clerical scandal "to play them out." But we think of "Iolanthe." Alcohol is very amusing in his diligent search for rhymes, but we think of the modern Major-General of the "Pirates." And so we could go on. There is, indeed, little in the piece that Mr. Gilbert has not himself anticipated. But on the whole it is diverting, it contains several excellent scenes, and when pruned somewhat may become the fashion. It has scores of notable lines, some fresh situations, and two or three most diverting scenes. But reminiscent it is—of Mr. Gilbert.
Gilbert's 1909 fairy opera, Fallen Fairies, was a re-working of his old verse play of 1873, The Wicked World, and, not surprisingly, critics complained that "... there seemed a somewhat Victorian air about the piece." Even a positive review in the Daily Express had to conclude, "But with it all 'Fallen Fairies' belongs to yesterday."

According to the dramatic critic for the Pelican, even Gilbert's vaunted stage managweAlp was found wanting in Fallen Fairies:

... the stage management of the chorus, and such movements as they have, struck me as curiously old-fashioned and lifeless. The whole show, as a production, seemed on the first night to lack ginger and brightness.

This reference to the lethargic atmosphere of the Fallen Fairies production undoubtedly was motivated by comparison to a form of theatrical production that Gilbert considered the great age of the popular stage, a form of entertainment that would challenge and eventually completely supplant Gilbertian comic opera in these later years of Gilbert's life: rollicking, romantic, exhuberant, non-intellectual modern musical comedy. In an 1895 article appropriately entitled, "The Decline of Comic Opera," one observer noted that

a careful comparison of the two records will show that, relatively, the demand for comic opera during the twelvemonth indicated [1894-1895 theatrical season] was of the mildest; whereas that for 'musical comedy' was in most cases substantial, and in a few, enthusiastic and lasting.37


When the plot of The Grand Duke was attacked by contemporary critics for its elaborate complications, the Illustrated London News stood firmly behind the work with the argument that "all Mr. Gilbert's plots require some attention; and we fear that the present grumble has arisen from the sad but customary baldness of incident to which London has been made used during the past two years of blank musical comedy."

During these years, Savoy opera enthusiasts looked to each new Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration as the one that would stop the onslaught of musical comedy, but their expectations failed to materialise. *Utopia Limited* and *The Grand Duke* lasted for only 245 and 123 performances, respectively, while many *fin de siècle* musical comedies doubled and tripled these runs, and the success of musical comedy productions continued unabated on into the twentieth century. Gilbert's own recorded reaction to the success of these pieces was not especially congratulatory, but it does indicate that he was aware of a change in the social complexion of theatre audiences that was not in his favour:

... the modern musical comedies serve to amuse people, even if they cannot claim to be art of a high order. They please a very large class—those who don't want to think: the shop girl, the typewriter, the gentleman from Aldershot, and the people who make theatre parties and merely want to be amused.

Gilbert's obvious aversion to musical comedy with its variety and music hall actors and audience appeal is clearly indicated in several of his later works. In *The Mountebanks*, Bartolo the Clown's lament

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37 For example, when *Utopia Limited* appeared in 1893, the critic for the *Saturday Review* issued this vain prophecy: "The value of this sort of work is especially noticeable just now, when the flood-gates of music-hall vulgarity seem to be opened wide, and comic opera has no chance of success unless it is deliberately lowered to the level of the variety entertainment. . . . The applause which greeted every number of *Utopia Limited* was therefore a healthy sign that the public taste is not yet entirely ruined by music-halls, and that there is still a demand for a more refined form of entertainment, a demand which it is to be hoped the success of the new Savoy opera will perpetuate for many years."

38 See *Daily*, p. 385.

that his work is not accepted by audiences because his comedy has
a serious base (p. 370) is sandwiched between allusions to non-sensical
music hall entertainment. The village girls greet the mountebank troupe
with this joyous praise for empty, non-intellectual entertainment:

Tabor and drum! / Mummers have come!
Hey for their mummary, / Proseic and flummery!
For to my dull / Countrified skull
Nothing sublunary / Equals buffoonery!
Folk of our kind / Frequently find
Jokes that are sensible / Incomprehensible,
Here, I admit, / Glimmer wit;
As a commodity / Ranks below oddity (p. 369),

which probably alludes to the rush of rural holiday-makers who flocked
to London theatres during the holiday seasons. The part of Mita the
dancing girl in this scene is used by Gilbert to satirize the garish,
"many-talented" variety entertainer:

I assist / As soloist / Upon a squeeze,
On the trumpet and the kettledrum sonorous;
I've got a song / That's just as long / As you may please—
Twenty verses, and each verse has got a chorus! (p. 370).

In the village's favourable response to Mita's brand of entertainment
and their rejection of Bartolo's humour of more serious intent undoubtedly
lies an indictment by Gilbert of the music hall and musical comedy taste
of the English public:

Now that's the kind of merriment you ought to set before us;
Only fancy--twenty verses, and each verse has got a chorus.
To such an entertainment we could listen for a summer;
But save us from the humour of this melancholy manner! (p. 370).

In this context it is interesting to note John Huntly McCarthy's end-
of-season comment about The Mountebanks itself in the Players:
Bartolo's song in The Mountebanks (p. 370) on the serious, intellectual aspect of his humour:

TH E M OUNTEBANKS

SONG.—BARTOLO.

Though I'm a buffoon, recollect
I command your respect;
I cannot for money
Be vulgarly funny.
My object's to make you reflect;
True humour's a matter in which
I'm exceedingly rich.
It ought to delight you,
Although, at first sight, you
May not recognize it as such;
Other clowns make you laugh till you sink,
When they tip you a wink;
With attitude antic,
They render you frantic—
I don't, I compel you to think!'

For, oh, this is a world of insincerity and trouble,
And joy is imbecility, and happiness a bubble,
And you're a lot of butterflies who flutter through a sun
And he's a mountebank, and I'm a miserable mummer!
There were other laughable pieces, comic operas, burlesques, and the like which lived and amused only by reason of their acting. 'The Mountebanks'... challenged consideration on its own intrinsic merits as a work of art.

Max Beerbohm once spoke of 'the main difference between [Gilbert's limericks] the 'Bab Ballads' and the Savoy operas. In those operas one feels always a cold and calculating method throughout the silliness—a keen logical faculty presenting a more or less serious criticism of life.40

Gilbert especially deplored 'bad musical comedy, in which half a dozen irresponsible comedians were turned loose on the stage to do what they pleased.'41 These were, in part, a borrowing from the tradition of pantomime which Gilbert took great pleasure in satirising in The Fairy's Dilemma in 1904. Jimmy Glover, the music conductor at the Drury Lane Theatre when the pantomimes held sway, wrote of Gilbert,

[... he sent me a telegram every Christmas Eve for twelve years, asking me to reserve him two seats for the dress rehearsal, 'right behind you.'... Of its comedians, he could enjoy them all—except the music hall portion, and these he could not tolerate.42

When Gilbert attacked Christmas pantomime burlesque comedy during his trial with the Eve in 1896, the prosecutor retorted, 'But that only goes on a short time in the year?' Gilbert shot back, to the amusement of the court, 'It goes on for a long time in the evening.'43

Undoubtedly

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Gilbert would have been enraged to know that there were many references to his work included in a book called Fifty Years of Vaudeville in 1946.\(^4^4\)

One area in which musical comedy scored heavily with the public in the nineties and in the new century at the expense of Gilbertian comic opera was in musical comedy's less puritanical attitude toward its material, costuming, and staging. Despite the fact that Victorian propriety was one of Gilbert's favourite satiric targets, he refused to allow even the suggestion of an off-colour joke or ditigible impropriety in dress to find its way into most of his works. In a review of Utopia Limited in 1893, a writer (undoubtedly A. B. Walkley) in the Star noted that the Savoy operas continued to embody

\[\ldots\; the\; ideals\; of\; the\; average\; middle-class\; Kensingtonian\; on\; the\; lyric\; stage\; just\; as\; Punch\; embodies\; them\; in\; comic\; journalism.\; \ldots\; \text{And both are distinguished from foreign products—operatic and journalistic—of the same class by a somewhat aggressive wholesomeness.} \ldots \text{New, from the Savoy, as from Boulevard-st., anything like animalism or any suggestion of the hot glow of passion has been rigorously excluded. In brief, they are both characteristic art products of a race which takes its cold tub religiously every morning, and has combined to make the fortune of the proprietors of Pears' soap.}\(^4^5\)

\(^4^4\) Ernest Short, Fifty Years of Vaudeville (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1946).

\(^4^5\) "I happen to find Mr. Gilbert's humor entirely to my taste. \ldots I mean, for its absence of that 'knowingness,' slanginess, and wisecracked rakishness which make our burlesque stage in general so unspeakably odious" (review of Haste to the Wedding in The Star); "Mr. Gilbert's dialogue is invariably refined; he does not, like most of the weaklings, seek to obtain a vulgar laugh by the exhibition of alcoholic intoxication; he makes no senseless display of tights to attract the jeunesse dorée or the bald heads; and if the exigencies of the stage would allow, his whole opera might be transplanted to the dressing-room without shocking the most demure of maidens" (review of His Excellency in Truth); "In many, many respects it is a delight to hear a play such as this—void of all music-hall coarseness and buffoonery, with no low-comedian pantomoney, no 'turns,' no 'bits' for the gallery, no skirts for the stalls \ldots" (review of Fallen Fairies in The Daily Mail).
But times and tastes were changing, even if the Savoy operas were not. In an interview in 1901, William Archer commented on Gilbert's reclamation of the English musical stage in the eighteen-seventies from badly translated and somewhat offensive French opera-bouffe, and Gilbert replied in reference to musical comedy, "There is a parable—is there not?—about an evil spirit which, being cast out, returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself." By the time Gilbert's last opera for the Savoy, Fallen Fairies, appeared in 1909, the popular triumph of unchaste musical comedy was complete.

"Jingle" of the Bystander said of Fallen Fairies:

To my mind the whole entertainment, with its freedom from anything approaching the vulgar or even the commonplace, afforded a distinctly restful experience after many moons of musical comedy. But it is for that reason that I wonder whether the management of the Savoy has taken sufficiently into account the change in public taste that has occurred since the days of Pinafore and Iolanthe... And though it may be a good thing to keep the higher ideal before the public, it is regretfully necessary to realize at the same time that Virtue is its own Reward, and that its coupons are not negotiable at the Bank of England.

Although Gilbert would later vehemently argue that the death of Arthur Sullivan in 1900 killed Savoy opera rather than the rise of musical comedy, Gilbert's own words as early as 1897 leave no trace of doubt about the cause of the demise:

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\[46\] Archer, p. 121.

\[47\] See Gilbert's letter to the Editor, The Times, March 12, 1904, p. 9.
emphasizing the change in public attitude toward
theatrical propriety in the eighteen-nineties:

THE DRAMA THEN AND NOW.

THEN. Scene—Dining-Room in Mrs. Grundy's House. The Misses Grundy and their Mother discovered at Luncheon.

Eldest Miss G. Oh, Mamma, do take us to see Formosa at D.ury Lane!

Mrs. Grundy. My dear! Why, it's absolutely shocking! All the papers are ringing with the impropriety! Couldn't possibly go!

Second Miss G. But, Mamma dear, the Boat-Race Scene is so excellent. We might sit at the back of the box, and put our fingers in our ears when we signalled to us.

Mrs. Grundy. Well, as you say, the Boat-Race Scene is excellent, and as for impropriety, we must ignore it.

[Exeunt to get places for Drury Lane.

NOW. Scene as before, Time and situation as before, Company as before.

Eldest Miss G. Oh, Mother darling, do take us to see Formosa at Drury Lane!

Mrs. Grundy. Certainly. I hear the Boat-Race Scene beats the record.

Second Miss G. It is simply magnificent, and the dialogue is so interesting. Twenty years ago they said it was improper! As Ibsen would observe, "Only fancy that!"

Mrs. Grundy. Did they? Well, as you say, the Boat-Race Scene is excellent; and as for the impropriety,—in these days of Ghosts, Pillars of Society, and Dancing Girls, we haven't time to notice it!

[Exeunt to get places for Drury Lane.]
The taste for the class of librettos with which I have so long been associated is dying out, and the public prefer the go-as-you-please sort of pieces, such as the modern musical burlesque. I certainly should not care, and don't intend, to be connected with this class of production. Neither Arthur Sullivan nor myself desires to be bracketed in the public mind with such productions as those to which I refer. 48

In 1911, the year of Gilbert's death, Laurence Irving sighed,

For the lover of serious drama the English public is a sorry master to have to serve. Those provincial theatres which have not yet been turned into music halls are mostly kept solvent by their pantomimes and the visits of musical comedy companies. As in London musical comedies hold the records for longest runs, so in the provinces do they hold the records for box office receipts. . . . In this preference for pantomime and musical comedy is to be discovered the line which demarcates the present-day English public from any that has existed before. 49

As musical comedy and Wildean comedy of manners gained more and more adherents because of their light-heartedness, Gilbert confounded the critics and the public with a strain of melancholy and seriousness in his later work that audiences neither expected nor accepted. One motivation for this new seriousness was Gilbert's feeling that "the easy trivialities of the Savoy librettos" 50 were not his greatest

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50 W. S. Gilbert, letter to Miss Edith A. Browne, March 21, 1907, filed in the British Museum (shelf mark: G,132[5],72) with Edith A. Browne, W. S. Gilbert (London: Lane, 1907). Gilbert's full statement of criticism of Miss Browne's work (a study that is in general highly complimentary toward Gilbert) is enlightening: "I say nothing about the lukewarm opinion you seem to entertain as to the literary quality of my serious plays (especially those in verse) except to express a wonder that the author of such a series of banalities should have been thought to deserve a biographer. I can hardly believe that I owe the compliment to the easy trivialities of the Savoy librettos."
achievement. "Gilbert's own interest lay primarily in his serious poetic dramas," reported a man who talked to him shortly before his death. "'Broken Hearts,' 'Gretchen,' and 'The Wicked World' were, he said, his own favourite plays." Yet Gilbert knew that the critics and the public had never accepted his work as a serious dramatist as fully as they had his comic opera librettis. Concerning his serious work, Gilbert wrote Norman Forbes-Robertson in late 1890, "I hope you will have every success at the Globe, but I don't advise you to try one of my pieces. The press won't hear of me at any price." His serious play of 1897, The Fortune Hunter, was a complete failure, prompting one contemporary to advise, Rabelais knew his power as a humorist, and did not go 'beyond his last'; so did Swift; and Mr. Gilbert, whose genius, when rightly used, is in the same vein, would best sustain his reputation by following the lead of his famous predecessors. Gilbert was so disappointed about the failure of The Fortune Hunter that he vehemently attacked the critics and refused to write anything new for the stage for over half a decade. Gilbert stated in 1901, "It is convenient to 'label' an author, and I am labelled 'cynical librettist.' Woe to me if I attempt to show that, in labelling me with so narrow a definition, audiences and critics are in error!"

51 Nettleton, p. 96.

52 Gilbert, letter dated Dec. 10, 1890, in the type-copies file, Reginald Allen Collection.


54 Archer, p. 116.
Portion of review of The Fortune Hunter by J.F.N. in The Academy, Oct. 2, 1897, p. 265, which emphasizes Gilbert's failure as a serious dramatist:

**DRAMA.**

**THE REMARKABLE CASE OF MR. GILBERT.**

How essentially limited and groovy the finest talent may be is strikingly illustrated by Mr. W. S. Gilbert's pathetic efforts to become a dramatist. As a witty and ingenious writer of comic opera libretto, Mr. Gilbert has long since acquired fame and fortune, but, like Liston, who, being a first-rate comedian, pined to be recognised as a tragedian, he has never failed in his intervals of leisure to cultivate the dramatic muse; and to the brilliant librettist that fickle damsel has been more than usually unkind. Her last response, given in the case of "The Fortune Hunter," which the London critics were invited to see the other day at Birmingham, is less a manifestation of indifference than a rebuff; and as it is nine years since Mr. Gilbert last wrote a play there seems now but a slender chance of his dramatic ambition being realised. Mr. Gilbert's congenial sphere is that of topsyturvydom, where, even without the aid of music, as in "Pygmalion and Galathea" and the "Palace of Truth," he contrives to be entertaining. In other forms of drama he is as unhappy as an angel strayed from Paradise. He loses his wings. His imagination fails him; his wit dies away on his lips. From the lightest of fantastic fairy tales, spiced with satire, he sinks, as soon as he sets about writing a play, to the level of conventional and laboured melodrama; for that, it may be well to say at once, is the category into which his new piece falls. Mr. Gilbert's is, indeed, a remarkable case. There is nothing like it in the annals. As a contriver of one highly successful class of stage-work, the author of "The Mikado" would readily be credited with the possession of a fine dramatic instinct and of a mordant wit that was equal to any occasion. But no! He has only to put himself to the test of writing a play instead of a libretto and it is at once perceived that the two classes of work require a totally different order of ability. The cleverest dramatists sometimes fail to carry critical opinion and public approbation with them. But this result has occurred too often in Mr. Gilbert's case to be accidental. He is a clever rhymster and a pungent satirist, if not exactly a wit; un homme de théâtre, as M. Sarecy would say, he is not.
In his Excellency, one of the characters sings, "All men must love
when I adore, / Or we fall out; / All men and I" (p. 97), and this
philosophy could well apply to Gilbert's feeling about his serious plays.

It is not surprising, then, that Gilbert considered the semi-tragic
The Yeoman of the Guard the best of the Savoy operas, and he tried
to instill the pathos of the Jack Point story into many of his later
libretti. In Fallen Fairies (pp. 212-213), there is a song whose
language and tone is highly reminiscent of Point's "I have a song
to sing; 0!" and the philosophy of humour expressed by Bartole the
Clown in The Mountebanks (p. 370) clearly resembles that of Point
(and Gilbert). The sad fate of Governor Griffenfeld, deserved though
it is, at the conclusion of His Excellency is vaguely reminiscent of
the closing of The Yeoman of the Guard, and there is also a case of
false identity with an ensuing serious love element in both of these
works. The critic of the Daily Telegraph said, "It may be that he
punishes the Governor too severely, and that this reflection rather
damps the mirth of the finale, as poor Griffenfeld... is left a
solitary sentry in the castle where he was once master."

The serious aspects of Gilbert's later works failed to appeal
to either the public or the critics. The more poetic or dramatic
Gilbert made his libretti, the more pretentious they appeared. "It
is the fault of the tradition Sir William has himself created," opined

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A letter written by George Henry Nettleton that appeared in the American Nation, August 3, 1911, pp. 96-97, concerning Gilbert's disappointment at the failure of his serious works:

A VISIT TO SIR WILLIAM S. GILBERT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

Sir: Little more than a year ago I was privileged to visit Sir William S. Gilbert at his home at Harrowweald and to hear him talk intimately of his dramatic effort and aims. Some reminiscences of our conversation may be suggestive to those who have regarded Gilbert chiefly as the librettist of "Pinafore" and "The Mikado" and as the author of popular comedies.

Gilbert's own interest lay primarily in his serious poetic dramas. "Broken Hearts," "Gretchen," and "The Wicked World," were, he said, his own favorite plays. As the talk turned on the question whether in "Gretchen" Siренек's suicide yielded to sin was probable, I was forced to confess that there seemed to me no natural reason for the change of character. I was quite taken aback at the answer: "Just so. The explanation is unnatural. It is diabolical power—the Satanic spell that Gretchen cannot resist. The Faust legend is sufficient authority for any improbabilities of dramatic action." As Gilbert went on to press the point, he seemed to suggest a reason why his poetic dramas are often unconvincing. He was content at times to let his characters escape irksome conformity to the laws of nature and to hold them accountable only to the lax laws of fairyland.

Of Gilbert's extraordinary sensitiveness to adverse criticism I had remarkable proof. Though he was scrupulously faithful to the minutest details of rehearsals, he confessed, to my amazement, that he had never dared to attend a single actual public performance of even the most popular of his dramatic or operatic successes.

"'What, never!' I ventured.
"'Well, hardly ever!'" he replied, with a twinkle. "In fact, really the sole exception that I recall was a production of The Mikado in German. They persuaded me to go, and it was)—he leaned forward confidentially—"'rotten.' Then he added: "I have always been fearful of failure. In the theatre there is always something that may go wrong. The risk of seeing my own failure in public—no, I cannot brave that."

Other proofs of Gilbert's peculiar sensitiveness were frequent. He had just produced a new opera, "Fallen Fairies," based on his early poetic play, "The Wicked World," but the fairies had fallen upon somewhat stony ground. That his expectations had not been yet fully had evidently cut to the quick. Again, I had just been reading the volume on Gilbert by Edith A. Browne in the series called Stars of the Stage. As the author's preface acknowledges a debt to Gilbert for biographical information, I ventured to ask his opinion of the work. "Don't ask me," he said. "Part way through the book she said some things that I couldn't bear about my poetic plays. I never read the rest of it. Usually, you know, Lady Gilbert is my press censor. She reads all the press notices, but lets me see only those she thinks I will like. I tremble at reviewers." Still another evidence of Gilbert's feeling came by earnest chance. I had been speaking of a successful amateur revival of his delightful extravaganza, "Engaged," and to his passing phrases about its whimsical absurdity I thoughtlessly rejoined that nothing in the play itself seemed to me so absurd as the criticism on it which interpreted it as a bitter and cruel caricature of mankind. "Did somebody say that of 'Engaged'?" queried Gilbert. It was too late to retreat, and I had to tell of the pages in the book of Filon, the French critic, on "The English Stage," in which he finds something almost of Swift's saera indignation underlying the playful topsy-turvydom of Gilbert's fancy. "And they call that dramatic criticism in France, do they?" said Gilbert kindly. "Could any one have misconceived 'Engaged' more perfectly?"

Another trait which Gilbert revealed was his attention to details. The themes of many of his operas, he said, had come to him by chance. A Japanese sword hanging on his library wall had suggested the picturesque setting of "The Mikado," a Venetian picture that of "The Gondoliers." The chromo of a beef-eater placarded as an advertisement at a railway station had been sufficient hint for "The Yeomen of the Guard." I remarked that such instances suggested intuition rather than accident. "Well," said Gilbert, "I suppose there is a knack in observing trifles. Most people are too busy to bother with petty details."

Since the advent of "Gilbert and Sullivan opera" the mirth-loving public has been leath to let its most delightful jester put aside cap-and-bells. Doubtless this English Yorick was a fellow of infinite jest, yet if I essayed to pluck out the heart of his mystery, I should take a hint from one who interpreted the English humorists of an earlier age. "Harlequin without his mask," says Thackeray, "is known to present a very sober countenance, . . . a man full of cares and perplexities like the rest of us, whose Self must always be serious to him, under whatever mask or disguise or uniform he presents it to the public."

GEORGE HENRY NETTLETON.

Yale University, July 30.
the Observer. "No audience can possibly take a Savoy fairy seriously. They can no more drop a tear over her woes than they can be roused to indignation by the atrocious slaughter of the pirates in 'Peter Pan.'"56

Bernard Shaw in the World was among those early reviewers who first attacked The Mountebanks for the unnecessary dramatic intensity of some of its scenes, and among later writers, Jane Stedman has noted, "The tone of The Mountebanks is curiously unmerry, in spite of really funny episodes. The universal constraint of the second act, for instance, might approach tragedy if some of its conditions were only taken a little further."57 Another work, Fallen Fairies, concerned a topic Gilbert had treated successfully in a humorous vein in Iolanthe—love between a supernatural creature and a mortal—but most critics and audiences just could not accept Gilbert's tragic, moralistic approach to the subject in Fallen Fairies. "Sir W. S. Gilbert must know that you cannot graft an ordinary human tragedy on a phantasy," said the critic for the Daily News. "You might as well try to make cucumbers of moonbeams." In enveloping his later libretti in an aura of seriousness and partial tragedy, Gilbert was swimming against two powerful currents: the gaiety of popular musical comedy and his own reputation as a cheerful, if cynical, comic librettist.

57 Stedman, pp. 352-353.
Gilbert's cynicism also became more pronounced in his later work. In most of his previous libretti, Gilbert's principal satiric concerns had been the conventions or fads of the day, but in his later works his pessimism included less topical reflections on human nature and the course of life itself. The fairy maidens in *Fallen Fairies* ponder the black nature of mankind:

"False from the first, he comes into the world
Wearing a smiling lie upon his face
That he may cheat ere he can use his tongue!" (p. 191)\(^5\)

and a gallery of selfish, hypocritical personalities glut most of Gilbert's later works. They are a cold, hard lot when compared to his delightful earlier creations. For instance, the main character in *Haste to the Wedding*, Woodpecker Tapping, is not the usual Gilbertian parody of the melodramatic, sincere hero whose bumbling antics ooze with naive good-naturedness; on the contrary, he is an intelligent, unscrupulous, self-seeking realist. The same can be said of the Governor's daughters in *His Excellency* and the Humish knights in

\(^5\) Later they ask one of their number who has visited the land of mortal men:

'Didst thou join in all their revels?
Drink and dance with all their devils?
Didst thou see, with awestruck daring,
Dicer dicing, swearer swearing?
Didst thou watch, with sorrow sobbing,
Liar lying, robber robbing,
Drinker drinking, gorgor gorging,
Pinker pinking, forger forging,
Cooer cooing, biller billing,
Wooer wooing, killer killing,
Prater prating, blabber blabbing,
Hater hating, stabber stabbing,
Kicker kicking, beater beating,
Sticker sticking, cheater cheating? (p. 192).
Fallen Fairies. Most of the characters in The Mountebanks and The Grand Duke can also easily be classified as greedy and self-centered. Governor Griffenfeld of His Excellency, Rudolph of The Grand Duke, and Judge Whortle of The Fairy's Dilemma all lack sensitive regard for persons under their civil control. Benevolent King Paramount of Utorka Limited is a notable exception to this list of self-centered despot, but Lady Sophy in that work laments,

I learnt that spotless King and Prince
Have disappeared some ages since—
Even Paramount's angelic grace, / Ah, me!
Is but a mask on Nature's face! (p. 450).

Perhaps the most noteworthy of Gilbert's lyrics in The Mountebanks is the duet of the automated dolls, "Put a Penny in the Slot," which, in the words of Hesketh Pearson, reveals Gilbert's cynical "inextricable faith in the corruptibility of all mankind." 59

Much of Gilbert's later cynicism is directed not only at human nature but also at what Gilbert's contemporary called the "hap" of life itself. This cynicism sometimes took a serious, melancholy air, reminiscent of another of Gilbert's turn of the century contemporaries, A. E. Housman. For example, there are these lines from Utorka Limited:

Our mortal race / Is never blest—
There's no such case / As perfect rest;
Some petty blight / Asserts its way!
Some crumpled roseleaf light / Is always in the way! (pp. 428-429);

or these from His Excellency: "Oh, human joy at best is brief— / Alas, too soon it's turned to grief!" (p. 115). Lady Sophy's song from

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Cynical duet of the clockwork automata (Bartolo and Nita), "Put a Penny in the Slot," from

The Mountebanks (p. 387):

Duet.—BARTOLO AND NITA.
If our action's stiff and crude,
Do not laugh because it's rude.
If our gestures promise larks,
Do not make unkind remarks.
Clockwork figures may be found
Everywhere and all around.
Ten to one, if we but knew,
You are clockwork figures too.
And the motto of the lot,
"Put a penny in the slot!"

Unpeer, for money lent,
Making out his cent, per cent.—
Widow plump or maiden rare,
Deaf and dumb to suitor's prayer—
Tax collectors, whom in vain
You implore to "call again."—
Cautions voter, whom you find
Slow in making up his mind.
If you'd move them on the spot,
Put a penny in the slot!

Bland reporters in the courts,
Who suppress police reports—
Sheriff's yeoman, pen in fist,
Making out a jury list—
Stern policemen, tall and spare,
Acting all "up the square!"—
(Which in words that plainer fall
Means that you can square them all)—
If you want to move the lot,
Put a penny in the slot!
Utopia Limited strongly resembles Housman’s “When I Was One and Twenty” (first published in 1896) in both its phraseology and its sadder but wiser philosophy:

When but a maid of fifteen year,
Unsought—unlighted—
Short-petticoated—and, I fear,
Still sorter-sighted—
I made a vow, one early spring,
That only to some spotless king
Who proof of blameless life could bring
I’d be united,

For I had read, not long before,
Of blameless kings in fairy lore,
And thought the race still flourished here—
Well, well—
I was a maid of fifteen year! (p. 449).

The realization of the universality of human imperfection and life’s betrayal of the romantic idealist is given a more dramatic treatment by Gilbert in the story of Queen Selene in Fallen Fairies and Diana Caverel in The Fortune Hunter. Romantic love proves false in both cases. When Selene is deprived of her royal title by her fellow fairies, she takes heart in the consolation that she still has the love of the mortal, Ethais (p. 230), but she is soon betrayed by her lover, and at the libretto’s conclusion she calls love “a deadly snare—beware of it!” (p. 234). In The Fortune Hunter, Diana is betrayed by her French dandy husband and suffers similar disillusionment.

The most direct statement of Gilbert’s cynical attitude toward life is found in one of King Paramount’s songs in Utopia Limited (pp. 418-419). It describes life as an absurd joke, expressing a sentiment that Gilbert explores in more theatrical terms through the
King Paramount’s song on the Joke of Life

from Utopia Limited (pp. 418-419):

**King.** Yes. Properly considered, what a farce life is, to be sure. 

**SONG.—** King.

First you’re born—and I’ll be bound you

Find a dozen strangers round you,

"Hello," cries the new-born baby,

"Where’s my parents? which may they be?"

Awkward silence—no reply—

Puzzled baby wonders why!

Father rises, bows politely—

Mother smiles, but not too brightly—

Doctor mumbles like a dumb thing—

Nurse is busy mixing something—

Every symptom tends to show

You’re decidedly de trop—

Ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! ho! Time’s teetotum,

If you spin it,

Gives it its quotum

Once a minute,

I’ll go bail

You hit the nail,

And if you fail

(The deuce is in it!)

**You grow up, and you discover**

What it is to be a lover.

Some young lady is selected—

Poor, perhaps, but well-connected

(Whom you hail (for Love is blind)

As the Queen of fairy kind.

Though she’s plain—perhaps unsightly,

Makes her face up—faces tightly,

In her form your fancy traces

All the gifts of all the grace,

Rivals none the maiden wo,

So you take her and she takes you!


Joke beginning,

Never ceasing,

Time releases,

Out your way

You blindly stray,

And day by day

The joke increases!

Ten years later—Time progresses—

Sours your temper—thins your tresses

Fancy, then, her chain relaxes;

Rates are facts and so are taxes.

Fairy Queen’s no longer young—

Fairy Queen has got a tongue—

Twins have probably intruded—

Quite unbidden—just as you did—

They’re a source of care and trouble—

Just as you were—only double.

Comes at last the final stroke—

Time has had his little joke!


Daily driven

(Wife as drover)

Ill you’ve thriven—

Never in clover:

Lastly, when

Three-score and ten

(And not till then),

The joke is over!


Then—and then

The joke is over!
practical joking of Gov. Griffenfeld in His Excellency and the pantomime transformations of society dignitaries in The Fairy's Dilemma. The popular journal, Black and White, said of this song in Utopia Limited, "... the first stanza is full of fun and go, but the second is a pessimistic lament upon life, the third a jeremiad—a dirge—full of wit, but a dirge nevertheless." Among later critics, Allardyce Nicoll looks upon this lyric "as expressing the inner mood from which Gilbert's fantastic conceptions proceeded," and he has called Utopia Limited... an opera in which Gilbert reveals clearly what may be called the philosophic basis of his work. The state where 'a Despotism tempered by dynamite provides—the most satisfactory ruler' is not merely a joke; it is the logical creation of Gilbert's thoughts on humanity. The pessimism of the piece was not well received by a great many of the early critics, including "Moms" in the Gentlewoman, who ventured that "possibly Mr. Gilbert's vein of humour has become slightly over-cynical, and there is here and there a dash of sadness in his fooling..." E.A.B. in the Musical Standard was more overt in his criticism: "... to those pessimists to whom cynicism is as the breath of life his satire is as welcome as balm in Gilead." The negativism of the work undoubtedly was a factor in its popular failure. "The audience... that came to be merry did not at times care to moralise pessimistically with Mr. Gilbert at his most caustic," said the review in Black and White. The article went on to ask, "What business has the most successful and

60 Nicoll, p. 147.

62 Ibid., pp. 145-146.
prosperous playwright and gentleman of the day to be a pessimist—to lament over life and deplore the strokes of that fortune which has been so propitious to himself?" Even the political and economic satire in Utopia Limited was too negative in its cynicism to be fully embraced by either the left or the right who both prophesied the upcoming century to be one of rich, unblemished promise based on the almost universally acclaimed technical progress and social concern of the closing century. In one of the most penetrating statements ever written on Utopia Limited, Nicoll has theorised,

In Utopia Limited Gilbert had lowered the veil a little too far, and what was seen beyond did not seem so amusing. All the vaunted progress of the century was revealed as a thing of doubtful value, and the whole of life was presented darkly... Gilbert's barb went deeper than burlesque... fundamentally he was guilty of looking with eyes of laughter upon the benefits of science and of mocking that on which Victorian society was founded—the very concept of progress.62

Adding to the cynicism of Gilbert's later works was a strong dose of grotesque Gilbertian black humour that sometimes seemed tasteless and cruel rather than witty and quite incongruous with Gilbert's role as a responsible J.P. residing in pleasant north London. In The Fortune Hunter, Gilbert himself alluded to this inconsistency when Armand, a French dandy, says to Sir Guthbert, a respectable English gentleman,

When I come to England I will hire a slaughter-house, and poleaxe oxen until you are not able to contain yourself with joy! And then you will be merciful to my countrymen who shoot blackbirds, for the sake of your beloved Armand, who swims in the blood of cattle! (p. 396).

In 1894, the Pall Mall Gazette said, "The expression of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's humour is tough-fibered, even (sometimes) ponderously brutal." When young Minestra is transformed into an old woman on her wedding day in The Mountebanks, the dialogue between Minestra and her bridegroom, Risotto, seems a sick joke on the natural problems of the aged, and Arthur Quiller-Couch remembered this episode as "a scene which almost drove one from the theatre in nausea":

Ris. . . . You're rugged wrinkles you can't thin off?
Ris. I've scrubbed, and scrubbed, and scrubbed away
For half a day, for half a day,
   Until I've almost scrubbed the skin off!
So gouty and rheumatic I,
That though I try, that though I try,
   I scarce can fasten my shoe-buckles.
Ris. (looking at her fingers). My bride could write (so gouty she)
   'No Popery! No Popery!'
   On all the walls with all her knuckles! (p. 384).

In reviewing The Fairy's Dilemma, A.M.T. in the Clarion wrote, "... when I saw a dainty child dancing round a pantomime fairy, made up to look particularly elderly in that trying juxtaposition, I thought the satire both cruel and low." Similar humour is directed toward Uncle Bopaddy's deafness in Haste to the Wedding (p. 150). Several patter songs in Gilbert's later works seem step-children to the nightmare song of the Lord Chancellor in Iolanthe, but some of them are so grotesque in their imagery and childish delight that one wonders
what compelled Gilbert to include them in works for sophisticated,
upper class audiences. "He makes his people talk with an odd
affectation of ingenuousness," noted H.G.H. in the Sun in 1894.
"sometimes breaking out with an exercise of savage satire." There  
for instance, the practical jokes song of Gov. Griffenfeld in His
Excellency and the Jim-jams song of Rudolph in The Grand Duke (pp. 64-65).
Of the latter work, the Musical Standard said,

... we thought we detected a note of commonness and vulgarity
which was not to be heard in Gilbert's former work. For instance,
the song in which the Grand Duke describes the symptoms of the
disease of 'Jim-jams' contains several very nasty lines, and in
other places in the libretto, notably in the 'sausage roll'
episode, the jokes are decidedly common.

Black humour concerning death and capital punishment was very
apparent in Gilbert's later efforts. When a character in The Grand
Duke loses a "statutory duel"—a card game with unusual social ramifi-
cations—he is declared legally dead because of a "pack-of-cardiac
affection" (p. 89). Pietro in The Mountebanks describes the slow agony

65Omitted from The Mountebanks because Alfred Callier apparently
refused to compose music for it (see Sporting Times, Jan. 9, 1892, p. 2)
was this bit of Gilbertiana, reproduced in the Clarion, April 23, 1892, p 3:
I'll hide his dress suits, and I'll put little brutes like
black-beetles and newts into the toes of his boots;
When fatigued and half dead he shall sup on dry bread,
and lay down his poor head on an apple-pie bed;
Then to add to his woes all his socks and his hose
shall be rubbish that goes at the heels and the toes.
His meat shall be tough and he sha'n't have enough,
and his pudding or puff shall be flavoured with snuff;
His claret, I think, in acidity pink will resemble red ink;
and the coffee he'll drink,
As to flavour and smell you'll alone parallel in the stuff
that they sell in a British hotel!


67G.W. Wilson Knight in The Golden Labyrinth (London: Phoenix House,
1962), p. 178, has noted the combination of "judicial horror and lyric
gaiety" in Gilbert's works.
of death by poisoning. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, Claudius tells Gertrude that the penalty for laughing at a bombastic play he wrote in his youth is death, and he comments as an afterthought, "The play was not good—but the punishment / Of those that laughed at it was capital" (p. 76). In *The Grand Duke* the politically rebellious theatrical troupe who fear their secret plan to overthrow the Duke has been discovered cry in fright:

Pack up at once and off we go, unless we’re anxious to exhibit Our fairy forms all in a row, strung up upon the castle gibbet! (p. 54).

Allusions to physical violence is given a great deal of play in Gilbert’s lyrics. Dame Neda Cortlandt in *His Excellency* is reminiscent of Katisha in *The Mikado* when she describes the violent attitude she would take toward any man who scorned her (p. 106), and Gilbert repeats this type of phraseology with the histrionics of tragic actress Julia Jellicoe on a similar subject in *The Grand Duke* (pp. 77-78). Also in *The Grand Duke*, Rudolph and Ludwig shout physical threats of a modern, mechanised order at each other before their "statutory duel" (p. 67), and all of Gilbert’s libretti during these years is sprinkled with black humour on the problem of dynamite casualties and injuries—a grave concern of...

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68 In a farcical episode worthy of Gilbert’s own invention, Lord Carson attacked Gilbert with these lines while cross-examining him during the court proceedings when Gilbert sued the *Pra* for libel in 1897. The lines were used by Carson as evidence to show that Gilbert believed critics should be punished for condemning a dramatic work. See Edward Marjoribanks, *The Life of Lord Carson*, vol. I (London: Gollanz, 1932), p. 246.
Examples of Gilbertian "black humour" from His Excellency:

Trio.—Griffenfield, Nanna, and Thorn.

All. Oh what a fund of joy indeed its bid in harmless hoaxes! What keen enjoyment springs From cheap and simple things! What deep delight from sources trix inventive humour conveys,

That pain and trouble breave For every one but you!

Griff. Gunpowder placed inside its waist improves a mild Havannah,

Its unexpected dash Burns eyebrows and moustache.

Nanna. When people dine no kind of wine heats lice's brain;

But common sense saves— You keep it for your guests—

Thorn. Then taught assassin's organ boys like throwing red-hot copper,

And much amusement hides In common butter-slides:

Griff. And stringy anerines across the stairs cause unexpected croppers.

Thorn. Coal scutiles, receipts, Produce the same effect.

Griff. Of course—sensies At great expense—

Nanna. It does not call For pocket deep:

Thorn. Extremely cheap.

All. If you commence with eighteenpence—it's all you'll have,

You may command a pleasant and a most instructive day,

Griff. A good spring gun breeds endless fun, and makes men jump Like rockets.

Thorn. And turpil-heads on posts Make very decent ghosts.

Griff. Then hornets sting anything, when placed in waistcoat.

Nanna. Burnt cork and walnut juice Are not without their use—

Griff. No fun compares with easy chairs whose seats are stuffed with needles—

Thorn. Live shrumps their patience tax When put down people's backs—

Griff. Surprising, too, what one can do with a pint of fat black beetles.

Nanna. And trouble on a chair Will make a Quaker swear.

Thorn. Then sharp fun-bolts— And pockets squeak.

Griff. And cobbler's wax— For ladies' skirts—

Nanna. On bedroom doors—

Griff. And water jugs On open doors—

All. Prepared with these cheap properties, amusing tricks to play, Upon a friend a man may spend a most delightful day!

Duet.—Governor and Dame, Constabulary.

Dame. Now what would you do if you proved untrue, and the suit you pressed were an idle jest, and the conjugal yoke a brainless joke, and if marry your darling you couldn't?

Griff. Yes, what would you do if I proved untrue? And if marry my darling I couldn't?

Dame. What would I say if you owned some day that, a wager to win, you had taken me in, and the face disclosed that you just proposed because somebody bet you you wouldn't?...

Griff. If I owned some day that I sang that lay, Because somebody bet me I wouldn't?

Dame. Why, the trembling rock from an earthquake's shock, and the ocean's roar on the rock-bound shore, and the hell-babe's scream were a peaceful dream, to the terrible broke of my brav'ring:

The tiger's gnash, and the cut-throat's gash, and the smoker's clash, and the thunder-crash of eternal smash were calming trash, compared with my hallaballooing!

Ensemble.

Governor (aside).—Exstream!

Dame. It might, perhaps, be rather rash Take care, you'll find it rather rash

The truth upon her mind to dash My matrimonial hopes to dash.

If an earthquake's shock were idle— For an earthquake's shock were trash—

Compared with her "hullabalooing! Compared with my hullaballooing!—

Dame. Like grey screech-owl that hideous fowl) in a midnight cowl I'd slink and prowl till a horrible howl and a tiger's growl had told the world I'd found you I—

With object fell and a yell and yell, on Vengeance' wing at my toe I'd spring, and face to face in a close embrace I'd wind my arms around you—

Your heart I'd tear from its loathsome lair— I'd pluck out your eyes, and your tongue likewise—and limb from limb, with a growing grim, I'd rend him who gosh poogs me!

(p. 106)
Englishmen at this time. There are, for instance, the remarks about the alchemist in *The Mountebanks*:

> Why, the poor boy is continually blowing himself up with dynamite in his researches after the Philosopher's Stone. Well, that's nothing—it's all in the day's work; and he's used to it. But this time he has blown himself up worse than usual, and several of the bits are missing: if you come across anything of the kind they are his, and I'm sure you'll behave honourably, and give them up at once (p. 357).

Gilbert was especially preoccupied in this type of humour with the idea of explosives as a means of eliminating despotic rulers, a concept that possibly alluded to late nineteenth century bomb plots against the Russian tsar. Upon hearing of a revolutionary plot against his throne, Rudolph in *The Grand Duke* wails, "If you had been told that you were going to be deposed to-morrow, and perhaps blown up with dynamite for all I know, wouldn't you be a cry-baby?" (p. 65). In *Utopia Limited*, King Paramount is threatened with execution by dynamite if he breaches his Constitutional limits:

> A pound of dynamite / Explodes in his auriculares;  
> It's not a pleasant sight—/ We'll spare you the particulars (p. 410).

The character who is to perform this duty is called "the public exploder," and his name is Tarara ("terror" or "to tear up"). One of the characters in *Utopia Limited* exclaims,

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*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* of Sunday, May 8, 1892, had no less than three unrelated news articles on the subject on its front page.
After many unhappy experiments in the direction of an ideal Republic, it was found that what may be described as a Despotism tempered by Dynamite provides, on the whole, the most satisfactory description of ruler—an autocrat who does not abuse his autocratic power (p. 409).

Actually, references to dynamite in some of these works--such as The Mountebanks and The Grand Duke—are anachronistic since the works are set before the mid-nineteenth century when dynamite was invented.

This abundance of grotesque and sadistic imagery coincides with a general tendency toward excess in all facts of Gilbert's work after 1890. The pieces were too elaborately staged and were overburdened with a profusion of characters, complicated plot devices, and involved, self-conscious comic verse as "... Gilbert lost some of his self restraint in a frenzy to regain his public." In fact, in some of these works, he attempted to replace quality with quantity, and it is important to note that two of the best and most original things he had produced in these years were quite short: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and The Hooligan. One of Gilbert's most condemned later works, Haste to the Wedding, was written to be produced for light-hearted summer entertainment, but Gilbert dragged it out to three full acts—a disastrous length for such a frivolous piece.

Several of Gilbert's other later libretti took close to four hours to perform, eclipsing the playing time of some grand operas and gaining the censure of the first-night critics. Elaborately complicated plot structures spoil The Mountebanks, Utopia Limited, The Grand Duke, and The Fairy's Dilemma. The plot of The Mountebanks is so complicated, in fact, that Gilbert felt compelled at one point in the second act (p. 395)...

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to have one of his characters recount all the things that had
previously happened to him in the first act. When The Fairy's Dilemma
first appeared, F. H. in the Outlook complained,

In these days dramatic technique has been carried to a point
undreamed of by the older playwrights, and it is no longer
considered workmanlike to break too many eggs in the making
of an omelette. Mr. Gilbert is absolutely reckless with his
eggs. Twelve characters, a score of imps and fairies, seven
changes of scene are required to bring off his two-hours' joke.

E. F. S. in the Westminster Gazette said, "In plain English, the canvas
is far too big for the picture; the joke is in too many volumes, and
one has at times the oppressive feeling that matters are introduced
simply to pad out the piece."

Gilbert's thematic purpose in some of these works is not clearly
focused. He attempts to cover too much ground, and the satire becomes
weak and disjointed. This is especially true of works like The Mountebanks,
The Grand Duke, Haste to the Wedding, and The Fairy's Dilemma,
in which Gilbert gains one's interest in a satiric topic and suddenly
drops it to pick up another one. In Utopia Limited he attempted to
"satirize the English nation, as it were, en bloc," and The Concise
Oxford Dictionary of Opera describes it as "a satire which fails partly
through trying to fire at too many targets in Victorian England at once."

This is especially true of the long first act finale of the work
(pp. 430-436). Of Gilbert's other post-1890 collaboration with Sullivan,
The Grand Duke, one critic said, "... he has given us too much—a less
inventive genius would have put into three books what the author...

71 Thomas F. Dunhill, Sullivan's Comic Operas (London: Arnold, 1928),
p. 201.

72 Harold Rosenthal and John Warrack, Concise Oxford Dictionary of
has crammed into one;"  

Fallen Fairies could easily apply to most of Gilbert's later work:

It rather reminds one of the bishop's saying that a curate's first sermon was usually his best, because he put so much of himself into it; and his worst, because there was too much in it and it was badly arranged.

Gilbert's later work also reveals over-dressing in spectacular stage effects. Perhaps in an attempt to beat musical comedy at its own game, Gilbert set his pieces in a number of picturesque locales or earlier times often for no reason other than the opportunity the settings afforded for lavish costumes or scenery. When Haste to the Wedding opened, William Archer complained in the World, "The reason for dressing the wedding-party in stage costumes of seventy-five years ago is not exactly obvious." "Bass Trombone" in the Lady's Pictorial said of His Excellency, "Mr. Gilbert takes us back a century, apparently for no other reason than to present us with two beautiful stage pictures of Elsinore and to display some lovely dresses." Of the costuming for The Grand Duke, Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper commented, "... a contrast between German dresses of a century and a half ago and classic Greek attire provides more than the ordinary amount of spectacular effect." The original production of Utopia Limited is notorious for the extravagant amount of sterling spent on its staging. Its fantastic production style apparently prevented its being played in England outside the London

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75 See Baily, p. 376.
The battle between Sir Ethnas and Sir Phylten in Fallen Fairies:

The Daily News (Dec. 16, 1909, p. 5) described this episode as "quite a terrific affair," a comment echoed by other early reviews.

Elaborate staging in Fallen Fairies:

Both photographs from The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, Dec. 25, 1909, p. 708.
movement can be seen in the clockwork automata effect in *The Mountebanks*; the motley wedding party dashing perpetually through every scene in *Haste to the Wedding* ("... my ear retains a most unpleasing impression of an all-pervading grittiness of sound, only varied, when the fun grew fast and furious, by a nerve-shattering hubbub of jarring noises," wrote Archer in *The World*); the throne room and drawing-room scenes in *Utopia Limited* (*The crowning weakness of a weary business is the reproduction of a Court reception, as dull as it would be possible for a real Court ceremonial to be," said the *Fall Hall Gazette*); the dancing hussars and the life-like statue of Rutland Barrington as the Regent in *His Excellency*; the classical Greek attire and attitudes affected by the theatrical Court in the second act of *The Grand Duke*; the on-stage duels in *Fallen Fairies* and *The Fortune Hunter*; the transformation and pantomime scenes in *The Fairy's Dilemma*; and the huge black scene border used to heighten the dramatic impact of the 1901 London Coliseum production of *The Hooligan*. Although some of these devices are clever and add dramatic or comic effect to the works involved, the general tendency reveals that Gilbert had begun to rely more on stage elements than on thematic originality.

§ 80. *... a great part of the second act of Utopia Limited was taken up with the realization of a 'drawing room' with the presentations made in due form, and perhaps may have been a trifle tedious. It was great fun for the company on the days when we had a lady professor of deportment attending rehearsals to teach us how to bow," Rutland Barrington, *Rutland Barrington* (London: Richards, 1911), pp. 94-95. The genesis for this staging can be seen in certain stage directions for the royal assemblage in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* (p. 85).
The centre of the stage in the first act was occupied by a statue of myself as the Regent, of the size called a life-size statue. I had determined to give a number of sittings to the well-known sculptor, Mr. A. C. Lucchesi, whose works are familiar to patrons of the Royal Academy. The story of the play much resembles "The Pickwick Papers."
Gilbert also attempted to freshen stale concepts and hide unruly plot structures with elaborate novelty songs and verbal tricks. His later works are glutted with his intricate patter songs, "the patternity of which," panned the comic paper, *Moonshine*, "there is no mistaking." Jane Stedman has allowed that "to compensate for its sprawling plot" Gilbert threw his full effort into the linguistic aspect of *The Mountebanks*, and "the diversity of its metres, rhyme patterns, and levels of vocabulary provides a pyrotechnical display which, soaring off, frequently leaves the rest of the libretto in uniformed darkness." In *The Mountebanks*, Gilbert sometimes let his joy in verbal display outweigh the reality of his characterizations. For instance, there is this bit of unexplained learned foreign language proficiency from Hits, the simple dancing girl:

Those days of old / How mad were we / To banish!
Thy love was told / Querido mi, / In Spanish—
And timid I, / A-flush with shame / Elysian,
Could only sigh, / *Dieu, comme je t'aime!* / (Parisian.)
No matter, e'en / Hadst thou been coined / A Norman,
Thou wouldst have been / Mein lieber freund— / (That's German.)
Thy face, a-blaze / With loving rapt, / Felt tingling,
For in these days / I loved thee—that's / Plain English!

and these from the peasant farmer, Alfredo:

Teresa! little word go glily spoken!
Take pity on a heart that's all but broken!
Teresa! one-word poem trisyllabic;
An Eastern ode in sensuous Arabia—
Would that thou wert as tender in thy nature
As in thy soft and tender nomenclature! (p. 362).

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81 Stedman, p. 232, footnote.
Concerning other later works, A. E. DuBois has complained that

Victoria Limited and The Grand Duke show a rather conscious use of tricks that before had been popular. Extraordinary rhymes, for example, are more than plentiful; they attract attention to themselves away from the rest of the too long piece.82

In the case of Fallen Fairies, many early reviewers complained that Gilbert had included too many polysyllabic rhymes which not only hampered the lush musical style of the composer, Edward German, but also undermined the dramatic intensity of the libretto. Also somewhat disconcerting in The Mountebanks83 and The Grand Duke84 were Gilbert's own self-conscious references to faulty vocabulary and rhyme words in his own lyrics.

Eccentric indulgences into intellectual subtlety also impaired the popular appeal of many of Gilbert's later works. In 1896, A. B. Walkley noted that "the greater part of his fun is either verbal fun or fun of abstract idea—sometimes it is purely arithmetical fun, the reductio ad absurdum of simple addition and single rule..."

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83 Dickey-birds tweetle, tweetle tweetle,
Which may be silly, and does sound weak (p. 366).

84 Not... (When exigence of rhyme compels,
Orthography foregoes her spells,
And 'ghost' is written 'ghost'.)

All (aside). With what an emphasis he dwells
Upon 'orthography' and 'spells'!
That kind of fun's the lowest (p. 56).

But we don't know what she means by 'hubble-bubble'...
No doubt it's an expression à la mode (p. 79).
of three. At times this wit was lost in the staccato tempo of his lyrics or presented in a form too difficult for a general theatre audience to grasp. Even stage-wise critics often found the intricacies of Gilbert's lyrical libretto wit hard to follow. For this reason, beginning with The Mountebanks Gilbert had full-dress performances for the critics prior to the opening-night. Gilbert reasoned that if the critics could see the production twice before writing their reviews they would not miss the beauty and wit of his lyrics and more clearly see the development of his plot structure. He also had printed copies of the libretto issued on the opening-night apparently because, as one song in The Mountebanks proclaims,

No single word / Is ever heard
When singers sing in chorus (p. 393).

When The Mountebanks opened in New York in 1893, an American reviewer said,

On the whole, it must be said that the book is decidedly better as a literary than as a dramatic product. Much of the subtlety of the humour is lost in the attempt to project it over that dread chasm which yawns between the footlights and the first row of orchestra stalls.85

The elaborate satire on Victorian politics and economics in Futonia Limited, with its complicated speeches and songs on corporate trusts and externs of financial liability, was even more obscure than the satire in The Mountebanks. The Westminster Gazette complained of

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... a super-subtlety that enshrouds the better part of the work and obscures its beauties to people who merely hear... Who could expect gallery or stalls to see the humour or even the meaning...?

H.M.T. in the _Schröer_ echoed the criticism of many of his fellow reviewers when he wrote of _The Grand Duke_.

Granted, then, that Mr. Gilbert has always loved to make us exercise our wits, and has cared nothing for the laughter which comes too easily, it must be admitted: 'The Grand Duke' is a real puzzle in regard to story.

Some early reviewers questioned the dramatic potential of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, feeling that the value of the work was primarily literary rather than theatrical. "Admirably humorous as it is in the reading," said the _Saturday Review_ in 1892, "the humour does not seem to bear transference to the stage... on the stage the point of the joke seems to be blunted or lost." Gilbert himself apparently was of the opinion that the piece really did not work on the stage and withheld it from formal theatrical production for over a decade and a half after he wrote it. The Bath song in _Haste to the Wedding_ (p. 173) was called "an excellent joke" by early reviewers, "though the humour of it was too sly for some of the audience," and the Song of the Bee Who Tried to Swarm Alone in _His Excellency_ (pp. 127-128) was also praised but considered "rather too subtle for a miscellaneous audience." Early reviewers issued similar comment concerning

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87 See _The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News_ : June 13, 1891, p. 492.


the song on classical Greece in The Grand Duke (p. 74). Of Gilbert’s allusion in The Fairy’s Dilemma (p. 41) to the erudite journalism of A. B. Walkley, the Times dramatic critic, “Carados” in the Referee said, “This elaborate jibe is just the sort of thing which a first-night audience would appreciate more than another. For the ordinary playgoer, I fancy, is not a diligent reader of the Times … .” In a number of these later works, Gilbert also confused his audiences by experimenting with multi-levels of dramatic meaning (discussed in Chapter III, below). Generally, Gilbert’s contemporaries found this dramatic mode too tedious and complicated for their tastes. Typical of critical and public opinion was this early statement on The Fairy’s Dilemma in the Star:

... the audience declined to follow the tortuous windings of the author’s meaning. Too many hares were started for them to pursue, and they gave up the chase. The initial certainty as to ... Mr. Gilbert’s aims gave way to doubt; doubt was succeeded by perplexity; perplexity by ennui; and ennui by antagonism.

There are also a number of references in Gilbert’s later works to London localities,\(^\text{91}\) the satiric intent of which often puzzled critics even in Gilbert’s own day. The little-known Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital near Gilbert’s Harrow Weald home (for which he gave a 1904

\(^{91}\) One chorus in Utopia Limited speaks of “Knightsbridge nursemaids—serving fairies—/ Stars of proud Belgravian airies” (p. 423), and King Paramount boasts, “Our city we have beautified—we’ve done it willy-nilly—/ And all that isn’t Belgrave Square is Strand and Piccadilly” (p. 440). In satirizing the vogue of the long, sentimental novel in His Excellency, Blanche states that the one she is reading “... ends with a wedding at Hanover Square;/ As a three volume novel should do!” (p. 136).
charity performance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at the Garrick Theatre) is mentioned for private joke purposes in The Fairy's Dilemma, and one of the characters in the play is the "only child of the haughty and despotic Marquis of Harrow" whose family name is "Nealdstone" (p. 9). In Haste to the Wedding the characters run all over London, and there is much covert, subjective humour made out of the localities, such as the protagonist's residence at "No. 8, Little Pickleboy Gardens, Mulberry Square" (p. 179); an inexplicable song on the menu of the Piccadilly Hotel (pp. 170-171); and references to an "Archbishop of Bayswater" (p. 164) and "Ye barbers, and Messrs. the Bond Street hair-dressers / (Some shave you, and others do not)—" (p. 165).

In reviewing The Fairy's Dilemma, E.P.S. in the Westminster Gazette noted that one of the characters "suggests that the Demon should carry off Lady Jane to the Baronet's flat in Whitehall-court, which they agree is worse than Shaftesbury-avenue—a point which in my innocence I do not understand . . . "92 Although the intent of many of Gilbert's local allusions might have been apparent to some, many critics and members of Gilbert's audience left the theatre shaking their heads in bewilderment.

These ambivalent local allusions coupled with Gilbert's reference to dramatic critic A. E. Walkley in The Fairy's Dilemma and the satire on corporate law in Utopia Limited presents us with another aspect of Gilbert's later work that might have contributed to its failure:
Gilbert's repeated self-indulgent allusions to topics that were of

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92 See pp. 301-302 below.
great concern to himself but not necessarily of interest or familiarity to general audiences. Gilbert spent his life as a man of the theatre—playwright, librettist, stage manager—and as a man of the law—first as a solicitor and then as a Justice of the Peace—and his later works are filled with complex theatrical and legal themes and allusions.

At least four of Gilbert's later works—Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, The Mountebanks, The Grand Duke, and The Fairy's Dilemma—deal in substantial fashion with theatrical topics, and there are passing theatrical allusions in almost all of the rest of his later works. Many theatrical allusions are included in the texts for no stronger reason than to express Gilbert's own very personal theatrical views and complaints. For example, the aforementioned allusion to the Times theatrical reviews in The Fairy's Dilemma provoked this response from E.F.S. in the Westminster Gazette:

... a caricature of Mr. A. E. Walkley's style, boldly described as a notice appearing in the Times, is not likely to appeal save to those versed in the inner life of London theatrical and acquainted with the quarrel between Mr. [Arthur] Bourchier [who appeared in The Fairy's Dilemma] and the critic. Even those 'in the know' seemed to think that the joke was hardly 'cricket,' and indicated an undesirable feeling of malevolence; and it is difficult not to sympathize with them.

There are lines in Utopia Limited (p. 443) that reveal Gilbert's hostility toward what he felt were ill-planned theatrical safety devices

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by impractical County councillors and inflated salary demands by ungrateful actors—topics which would be of no great import to general audiences. Gilbert once confided that his experience with tenors revealed that "they never can act and they are more trouble than all the members of the company put together. The tenor has been the curse of every piece I have written," and this prejudice is the basis for a lengthy song on the problems of a love-sick tenor that begins the second act of Utopia Limited but has little to do with the rest of the libretto. In reviewing The Fairy's Milestone, E.F.S. in the Westminster Gazette complained that

...the playgoer had to sit through an artless, old-fashioned ballet and an transformation scene, which perhaps had some exquisite strokes of subtle humour; but to the ordinary eye merely appeared as a poor specimen of the hideous debauches of mid-Victorian colouring still customary in Christmas pantomimes.

The Grand Duke is especially sprinkled with theatrical satire and allusions ("as plentiful as blackberries in sunny autumn," said the Era) which, according to the Daily News, "...actors and actresses will probably understand better than ordinary audiences can hope to do."

Gilbert's experiences as a stage manager, his conflicts with actors and actresses under his control, and his abhorrence of the eccentricities of the star player are the basis for the song of the theatrical manager in the first act (pp. 49-50). Also during this act, the comment is made that

Song on the problems of a tenor who attempts to express his love feelings in *Utopia Limited* (p. 437):

**SONG.—FITZ.**

A tenor, all singers above,
(This doesn't admit of a question),
Should keep himself quiet,
Attend to his diet....
And carefully nurse his digestion.
But when he is madly in love
It's certain to tell on his singing—
You can't do chromatics
With proper emphasis.
When anguish your bosom is wringing
When distracted with worries in plenty,
And his faltering bosom the slave of mistrust is,
A tenor can't do himself justice.
Now observe—(sings a high note),
You see, I can't do myself justice!
I could sing, if my fervour were mock,
It's easy enough if you're acting—
But when one's emotion
Is born of devotion.
You mustn't be over-exacting,
One ought to be firm as a rock,
To venture a shake in *edrado*,
When fervour's expected,
Keep cool and collected.
Or never attempt *apodos*.
But, of course, when his tongue is of leather,
And his lips appear pasted together,
And his sensitive palate as dry as a crust is,
A tenor can't do himself justice:
Now observe—(sings a cadence),
It's no use—I can't do myself justice!

Song of the theatrical manager in *The Grand Duke* (pp. 49-50):

**SONG.—ERNEST.**

Were I a king in very truth,
And had a son—a guileless youth—
In probable succession;
To teach him patience, teach him tact,
How promptly in a fix to act,
He should adopt, in point of fact,
A manager's profession.
To that condition he should stoop
(Despite a too fond mother),
With eight or ten "stars" in his troop,
All jealous of each other!
Oh, the man who can rule a theatrical crew,
Each member a genius (and some of them two),
And manage to humour them, little and great,
Can govern this tuppenny State!
Oh, the man, etc.
Both A and B rehearsal slight—
They say they'll be "all right at night"
(They've both to go to school yet);
C in each act must change her dress,
D will attempt to "square the press";
E won't play Romeo unless
His grandmother plays Juliet;
F claims all hoydens as her rights
(Shes played them thirty seasons); And G must show herself in tights
For two convincing reasons—
Two very well-shaped reasons!
Oh, the man who can drive a theatrical team,
With wheelers and leaders in order supreme,
Can govern and rule, with a wave of his flag,
All Europe—with Ireland thrown in!
Though marriage contracts—or what'er you call 'em—
Are very solemn,
Dramatic contracts (which you all adore so)
Are even more so! (pp. 71-72),

and Julia Jellicoe, the English prima donna of the theatrical troupe
in the plot, gives Gilbert an excellent opportunity to satirize the
cold, selfish, one-track professionalism of some leading ladies of the
day. The characterization of Julia, like Teresa in The Mountebanks,
also develops into a Gilbertian attack on "Bernhardtesque" tragic
heroines. Disdaining the idea of playing "A comfy, cozy, / Rosy posy /
Innocent ingenue!" Julia gives a blood-curdling interpretation of a
role that she says, " . . . calls for the resources of a high-class
art, / And satisfies my notion of a first-rate part!" (pp. 77-78).

This characterization is just one of a number of negative allusions
to the "star player" in Gilbert's later works. Gilbert's own opinion
about leading actors was that they were over-praised and over-paid.

One of the original Savoyards, Jessie Bond, said that Gilbert "had an
obsession that he made his artists, and not the artists his operas,
and he felt that they should consider it a sufficient reward that they
were playing at the Savoy" and that he once "snapped out that he was
tired to death of artists who thought that they were responsible for
the success of the operas . . . "96 Another leading Savoyard, Rutland
Barrington, once made a minor, if inappropriate, suggestion to Gilbert
about one of his scenes in The Gondoliers, and Gilbert fumed in a
letter to D'Oyly Carte, "I never heard a more inartistic suggestion.


96 Jessie Bond, "Memories of an Old Savoyard," John O'London's
The man's personal vanity is at bottom of it all." Gilbert's most overt satiric treatment of the public's adoration of star performers occurs in *Haste to the Wedding*:

_Duke_. . . And who sings? _March_. The most delightful creature in the world—no other than the distinguished falsetto, Misnardi, who arrived only a week ago from Bologna, and who has already turned all the crowned heads of Europe! He can go up to G! _Duke_. God bless me, what a gift! _March_. You have no idea how deliciously eccentric he is. _Duke_. Well, you know, a man who can touch an upper G is not like us common fellers; he's a genius—a genius (p. 164).

_March_. Lord of the Upper G, / By peers of high degree
Ascendantly courted; / Falsettist all divine,
No heaven-sent whim of thine / Ought ever to be thwarted.
Society should strain / Each nerve to spare thee pain,
Whatever's on the cards; . . . (p. 169).

Gilbert instituted a "no main star" policy in *The Gondoliers* in 1888 in an avowed attempt to discourage star players from taking the spotlight, and in none of Gilbert's later work (except the short sketch, *The Hoolligan*) does the action completely revolve around any one character. One result of this policy was a common complaint among critics that Gilbert populated his later works with too many characters and did not develop these characters to their full potential. For instance, *Utopia Limited* and *The Grand Duke* have the largest number of specified character parts of all the Savoy operas, and *Utopia Limited* has no less than five major comedy roles.

Gilbert's distaste for star players apparently did not stop with those who appeared in his own work; he was also infuriated with major Victorian Shakespearean actors who fattened their own roles by changing the structures or distorting the meanings of the plays in which they appeared. When faced with a personal problem concerning a proposed staging of scenes from *Hamlet*, Bartolo in *The Mountebanks* exclaims, 'I have it. If Hamlet had married Ophelia she wouldn't have committed suicide.

**Pie.** Well? What then?

**Bar.** What then? Why, if I marry her at once the motive for the act will be removed!

**Pie.** Nonsense! Hamlet and Ophelia never married. It would be trifling with the text.

**Bar.** Anyhow, it's a new reading. What! am I to be the only Hamlet who is not permitted to discover new readings? Bah! (p. 400).

Such tampering by Shakespearean leading men undoubtedly motivated Gilbert's Hamlet in *Rosecrants and Guildenstern* to command his associates, "Bestir yourselves about it, and engage / All the most fairly famed tragedians / To play the small parts— as tragedians should" (p. 84), and some critics were outraged that Gilbert actually would use leading actors of the day for farcical pantomime roles in *The Fairy's Dilemma* in 1904. "Somebody in the play says, 'I don't like my profession,' said 'Carados' in the *Referee*, 'and one might almost suspect Mr. Gilbert of insufficient respect for the actor's noble art in setting players of repute to perform the antics of Harlequin and Columbine, Clown and Pantaloon.'"

There is no doubt that Gilbert's main motive in his Shakespeare satire, *Rosecrants and Guildenstern*, was an attack on Henry Irving
MR. W. S. GILBERT TO SIR HENRY IRVING:—"THIS SPEECH OF YOURS IS THE UNKINDEST CUT OF ALL!"
But Irving was not the only tragic actor of the day who felt the sting of Gilbert's wit. In a letter written to a friend at the turn of the century, Gilbert commented,

Do you know how they are going to decide the Shakespeare-Bacon dispute? They are going to dig up Shakespeare and dig up Bacon; they are going to set their coffins side by side, and they are going to get [Beerbohm] Tree to recite Hamlet to them. And the one who turns over in his coffin will be the author of the play.101

It was reported in 1893 that Gilbert called Tree's performance in Hamlet "funny without being vulgar," and Gilbert apologetically, yet somewhat unconvincingly, wrote to William Archer that what he really said was "fun without vulgarity"—meaning, of course, that I did not think the part would suit him at all.102

Gilbert's aversion to contemporary Shakespearean acting during these years coincides with his satiric allusions to Shakespeare's plays in his later103 works. A veiled attack on what Gilbert felt was the unreality of the suicide of Ophelia appears in Fallen Fairies (p. 215), and a hint of Hamlet's advice to the players surrounds the Prince of Monte Carlo's advice to the actors he has hired to play his noblemen at the Court of The Grand Duke (p. 87). His Excellency is laid in Hamlet's Danish town of Elsinore,104 and jealous Major-General

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102 British Museum, Dept. of Manuscripts, Add. Mss. 45291, f.188.

103 For a discussion of Gilbert's use of Shakespearean material in his work before 1890, see Reginald G. Davis, "Shakespearean Similarities," G&S Journal, April 1927, p. 4; see also the same author's "Gilbert's Stagecraft" (Letter), ibid., p. 5, and Robert McKown's "Hamlet and Hilariou" (Letter), ibid., p. 5.

104 However, this setting was topsy-turvy indeed in the sense that, as the Westminster Gazette noted, the town was "chosen apparently by Gilbert in order to induce people to expect jokes that are not made."
Bunthunder in Haste to the Wedding is described as a "middle-class white-washed Othello" (p. 178). However, the most extensive use of Shakespearean material for satiric purposes is found in The Mountebanks and Rosengrants and Guildenstern. In the former work, there are two automated dolls which represent Hamlet and Ophelia, and Pietro, the theatrical manager, tells their story:

Now, all you pretty villagers who haven't paid, stand you aside
And listen to a tragic tale of love, despair, and suicide.
The gentleman's a noble prince—a marvel of ventriloquy—
Unhappily afflicted with a mania for soliloquy.
The lady is the victim of the God of Love tyrannical—
You see it in her gestures, which are morbidly mechanical;
He's backed himself at heavy odds, in proof of his ability
That he'll soliloquize her into utter imbecility.
She wildly begs him to desist—appeals to his humanity,
But all in vain—observe her eyes a-goggling with insanity.
He perseveres, improving the occasion opportunistic—
She sticks straws in her hair—he's won his wager—she's a
lunatic! (p. 381).

In Rosengrants and Guildenstern there are again satirical comments on the soliloquies of the Danish prince, but Rosengrants and Guildenstern is as much an attack on Shakespearean critics, actors, and fawning audiences as it is a travesty of Hamlet. In fact, much of Gilbert's satire on Shakespeare in his later work is aimed at what Gilbert felt was an idolatrous glorification of the Bard at the expense of modern dramatists. For instance, in Utopia Limited one of the characters complains,

Are you aware that the Lord Chamberlain, who has his own views as to the best means of elevating the national drama, has declined to license any play that is not in blank verse and three hundred years old—as in England? (p. 445).
A letter to the Editor of The Times, Sept. 18, 1880, p. 7, written by Gilbert, relating to two aspects of his later work: his feeling about the needless glorification of Elizabethan drama at the expense of contemporary dramatists and his somewhat antagonistic attitude toward the clergy:

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**A POINT OF TASTE.**

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.**

Sir,—At the recent unveiling of the statue to Christopher Marlowe, the Hon. and Rev. Canon Froomble is reported to have asked, in the course of his speech, "Why it was that our English nation, so capable of literary excellence, had hardly produced any really great playwright in these latter days?"

It is, unfortunately, too true that, although we have several capable dramatic writers among us, we have none who have any claim to be considered great. But was it polite or tactful on the part of the honourable and reverend orator to impress this unpleasant fact upon an assembly of gentlemen intimately connected with the stage, and among whom was that excellent dramatist, Mr. A. W. Pinner? Probably we have not many great divines among us, but what would be thought of Mr. Pinner if, feeling himself in the society of a number of clergymen engaged in honouring the memory of (say) Bishop Latimer, he ventured to make such an assertion to such an assembly? It might be quite true, but it would not be pretty to say so.

I am your obedient servant,

September 17. W. S. GILBERT.
Gilbert's attitude toward Shakespeare has been compared to the views of writers as dissimilar as T. S. Eliot\(^\text{105}\), Bernard Shaw\(^\text{106}\), and P. G. Wodehouse\(^\text{107}\). Several writers have even advanced the theory that Gilbert was essentially a Shakespeare enthusiast. The main evidence for this argument rests with an article Gilbert wrote in the eighteen-seventies, reprinted in Rossetti's Fairy and Other Tales in 1890, called "Unappreciated Shakespeare." In this article, Gilbert ostensibly attacks the English public for not knowing the works of Shakespeare more intimately than they do. Principally, however, "Unappreciated Shakespeare" was another attack on star players who cut scenes and whole acts from Shakespeare's plays when those portions did not emphasize the importance of the star player's role in the play. "Unappreciated Shakespeare" also seems to the present writer to be a Gilbertian tongue-in-cheek attack on the irrational attitude or humbug of the public in glorifying a writer the bulk of whose works they hardly knew or, at least, rarely read. This would more clearly agree with numerous confidential remarks made by Gilbert against Shakespeare's work to close friends.\(^\text{108}\) Regardless of Gilbert's intent, many writers, including Arthur Quiller-Couch\(^\text{109}\) in the present century have attacked

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\(^{106}\) Edith A. Browne, W. S. Gilbert (London: Lane, 1907), p. 40.


\(^{109}\) Quiller-Couch, pp. 173-175.
Gilbert's later work for its overabundance of what they feel is wearisome anti-Shakespeare material.

Gilbert's theatrical satire in his later works also includes a number of allusions to the Lord Chamberlain in his powerful role as a theatrical censor, another topic that might not have been fully understood by non-professionals in Gilbert's audience. When the Lord Chamberlain's title is mentioned in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Gilbert includes stage directions in the text that "all bow reverentially at the mention of this functionary" (p. 80), and one of the improvements on the isle of Utopia in Utopia Limited concerns him:

King. The chamberlain our native stage has purged, beyond a question,
Of 'risky' situation and indelicate suggestion;
No piece is tolerated if it's costumed indiscreetly—
Chorus. In short, this happy country has been Anglicised completely! (p. 440).

Describing life in ancient Greece, Ludwig in The Grand Duke says,

Then came rather risky dances (under certain circumstances)
Which would shock that worthy gentleman, the License of Plays,
Corybantic marriage kick—Dionysiac or Bacchic—
And the Dithyrambic revels of these undecorous days (p. 74).

In Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Polonius is the Lord Chamberlain, and Ophelia tells of her nocturnal sojourn to his den:

Ophelia. Last night I stole down from my room alone
And sought my father's den. I entered it.
The clock struck twelve, and then—oh, horrible!—
From chest and cabinet there issued forth
The mouldy spectres of five thousand plays,
All dead and gone—and many of them damned!
I shook with horror! They encompassed me,
Chattering forth the scenes and parts of scenes
Which my poor father wisely had cut out.
Oh, horrible—oh, 'twas most horrible!
Covering her face.

Ros. What wasn't they uttered?

Oph. (severely). I decline to say.

The more I heard the more convinced was I

My father acted most judiciously;

Let that suffice thee (p. 83).

Although these lines can be taken as another of Gilbert's many swipes at stringent Victorian propriety, they can also be taken as representative of Gilbert's own feeling about the need for theatrical censorship in some matters. In 1908 Gilbert said, "I do not care for the spirit which seems to animate the modern French dramatists—most of them, at all events. Their work is almost invariably founded on breaches of the Seventh Commandment." More to the point, in giving testimony before a Parliamentary Committee on Dramatic Censorship a year later, Gilbert stated that he felt the stage was "not the proper platform from which to discuss questions of adultery and free love before a mixed audience composed of persons of all ages, of both sexes, of all ways of thinking, and of all conditions of life." Gilbert went on to give a very complicated, legalistic solution to the problem of censorship:

I am very strongly of opinion that there should be a Censor, but I am still more strongly of opinion that the responsibility of vetoing a play should not rest exclusively on the shoulders of the Censor, and that there should be an appeal from him to a body consisting of an arbiter appointed by the author, another appointed by the Lord Chamberlain, and a third arbiter appointed by these two. 112


111 Quoted in The Times, August 20, 1909, p. 16.

112 Ibid.
The legal intricacies of Gilbert's above proposal draw attention to Gilbert's other main life-long interest, the Courts and the legal profession, and the marked influence it had on his later work.

Gilbert had actually been a member of the bar during his early life, and from June 1891 to the end of his life, he served the Crown as a Middlesex Justice of the Peace. Gilbert's legal background had always influenced his theatrical style and thematic content (as witnessed by his first major success with Sullivan, Trial by Jury, in 1875). "Gilbert never quite succeeded in shaking off the dust of Chancery Lane and Lincoln's Inn," wrote Augustin Filon.

In many respects he may be said to have remained a lawyer all his life: by his professional scepticism, by the variety of his dialectical resources, by his proneness to subtle distractions and interpretations, by his cleverness in setting up appearances against realities, and words against ideas... As Gilbert advanced in years, this legal influence on his work seemed to grow even greater. Unfortunately, the interests and understanding of the average theatre-goer apparently were not so jurisprudential, and the Era amused in 1897, "To judge by results he sets more value on a point that would rather interest a court of casuistry than on such sterling sentiment as goes straight to the heart of the public."


Oct. 2, 1897, p. 15.
The main themes and plots of a number of Gilbert's later works concern legalities. There is the legal prohibition with penalty of death concerning the production of Cædilus's condemned play in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and the law of Fairyland that permits the entry of human beings into that realm under certain conditions in Fallen Fairies. Legal language and conditions abound in Utopia Limited, and Mr. Coldbry's long explanation of corporate law in that work (pp. 434-435) is one of the most complicated lyrics Gilbert ever wrote. A. B. Walkley in the *Speaker* said of the structure of *Utopia Limited*:

Mr. Gilbert's is a logic-plot, not a stage plot. The joint-Stock idea which he works out so carefully on paper is not expressed—I do not know how it could be expressed—in the only mode proper to the stage—I mean, action. The characters talk of it, they do not present it . . .

An intricate legal mechanism underlies the entire plot of *The Grand Duke*, prompting William Archer to complain in the *World*, "...the laborious device of the Statutory Duel—which satirizes nothing, symbolizes nothing, travesties nothing—is made the mainspring of the whole action." When Gilbert brought out *The Fortune Hunter*, based on a little-known article of French law, J. F. N. in the *Academy* noted that "... in setting himself to expose the hardship of an article of the Code Napoleon, the author ties himself down of necessity to a more or less mechanical plot," and "Cavados" in the *Referee* questioned Gilbert's priorities:

Questions of law are rarely interesting on the stage, and Mr. Gilbert's simple reference in the programme to the article in the Code upon which the plot turns would be enough. But he insists upon the point with such tiresome iteration that one begins to feel that he is more concerned with the law than with the people who are affected by it.
Motivations of a personal nature are also somewhat involved in Gilbert's many satiric allusions in his later works to the Crown and the aristocracy. While Sullivan was a personal friend of the royal family and hob-nobbed with the nobility, Gilbert's personal associates were mainly lawyers, theatrical personalities, and journalists. One writer has noted that while Gilbert was "writing with the players" Sullivan was "gambling with princes." Undoubtedly, the shabby Prince of Monte Carlo in The Grand Duke was a reflection on Sullivan's many visits to the gambling resort with his friends in the aristocracy. Temporary Grand Duke Ludwig's theatrical court welcomes the Prince with wild dancing, but Ludwig makes it clear that he doesn't think much of his visitor:

Lud. There, what do you think of that? That's our official ceremonial for the reception of visitors of the very highest distinction. Prince (puzzled). It's very quaint—very curious indeed. Prettily footed, too. Prettily footed. Lud. Would you like to see how we 'good-bye' to visitors of distinction? That ceremony is also performed with the foot.

Gilbert's feeling about his partner's aristocratic associations are not fully known, but his own relationship with the Monarchy was not a warm one. Gilbert's complete involvement with the theatre (at least before 1890), his cantankerous nature, and his satiric libretto style apparently did not serve him well with the Queen. One notorious royal snub occurred in 1891 when The Gondoliers was performed at Windsor Castle with only Sullivan's name appearing on the official programme. Sullivan was knighted in 1883, but Gilbert had to wait almost a quarter of a

The Prince of Monte Carlo of The Grand Duke:

MR. SCOTT FISHE AS THE PRINCE OF MONTE CARLO.

(The Westminster Gazette, March 9, 1896, p. 3)
century later before the honour was conferred on him after the death of Victoria. Slight such as this could not go unnoticed by a thin-skinned man like Gilbert nor unavenged by the theatrical artist in him. In his later works, both royal monarchs and aristocratic nobles are made the targets of such caustic comment and ironic humour, and the exclamation of one of Gov. Griffenfeld's daughters in His Excellency that "dear Papa is never so happy as when he is making dignified people ridiculous" (p. 101) could easily be a remark alluding to Gilbert himself in his satiric treatment of the upper classes.

Ironically, Gilbert's major satire using monarchical subject matter appears in his two works with Sullivan, Utopia Limited and The Grand Duke. At one point in Utopia Limited (p. 440) there is a parody of an English Cabinet Council with the chairs arranged in Christy Minstrel fashion. King Paramount asks one of his English advisors, "You are not making fun of us? This is in accordance with the practice at the Court of St. James's?" He is told, "Well, it is in accordance with the practice at the Court of St. James's Hall" (where American-type minstrel shows were performed) (p. 440). Later in that work there is an onstage re-creation of a Royal Drawing-room Reception in which, on the first night of the production, Rutland Barrington playing King Paramount, appeared in a replica of the royal Field Marshall's uniform of the Prince of Wales. Although the early reviews suggest that the scene

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In The Fortune Hunter, the American heiress, Euphemia, says to her husband, the Duke of Dundee, "Everybody knows my Poppe wasn't a gentleman, but he was a smart man, and you may thank your stars and garters too—you are a Carter, aren't you?" (p. 402). For an interesting article on Gilbert's knighted with reference to his later works, see P. G. Nicol, "Gilbert and His Knighthood," G&S Journal, Sept. 1957, p. 202.
was done in a dignified solemnity. A. H. Godwin, the politically conservative Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast, once suggested that...

... the most daring scene [in all the Savoy operas] is the parody of a Royal Drawing-room in 'Utopia.' ... It is not in good taste, whatever one may think of it, and for once it seems that the Licensed satirist had exceeded the bounds that his license permitted.

Members of the royal family apparently took a dim view of these proceedings, and, according to Barrington, the rumoured disfavour of the Court influenced the early popular failure of the work. If, indeed, the royal family did take exception to Utopia Limited, Gilbert had already foreshadowed their disfavour in the work itself:

Plan. But the crowning joke is the Comic Opera you've written for us—"King Irreps ces; or, A Good Deal Less than Half a Sovereign"—in which the celebrated English tenor, Mr. Wilkinson, burlesques your personal appearance and gives grotesque imitations of your Royal peculiarities. It's immense! King. Ye--es. That's what I wanted to speak to you about. Now, I've not the least doubt but that what has its humorous side, if one could only see it. As a rule, I'm pretty quick at detecting latent humour—but I confess I do not quite see where it comes in, in this particular instance. It's so horribly personal! See. Personal? Yes, of course it's personal—but consider the antithetical humour of the situation. King. Yes, I--I don't think I've quite grasped that. See. No? You surprise me. Why, consider. During the day thousands throng as at your from, during the night (from 8 to 11) thousands rear at it. During the day your most arbitrary pronouncements are received by your subjects with abject submission—during the night, they shout with joy at your most terrible decrees. It's not every monarch that enjoys the privilege of undoing by night all the despotic absurdities he's committed during the day (pp. 417-418).

118 Godwin, p. 197.

119 The New York Times Magazine, July 12, 1914, p. 6. However, Bally, p. 379, disagrees with Barrington's analysis of the events.

120 Similar lines about the discomfort of being the butt of a joke appear in His Excellency, and they add to the "joke of life" theory discussed elsewhere in this study: "The fact is, the point of a joke is like the point of a needle—hold the needle sideways and it's plain enough, but when it is directed straight at you—well, it's not always very easy to see the point of it" (p. 103).
Royalty is satirized in *The Grand Duke* in the character of Rudolph, the tight-fisted, priggish ruler who gives the work its title. When Rudolph sings,

A pattern to professors of monarchical autonomy,
I don’t indulge in levity or compromising bonhommie,
But dignified formality, consistent with economy,
Above all other virtues I particularly prize.
I never join in merriment—I don’t see joke or jape any—
I never tolerate familiarity in shape any—
This, joined with an extravagant respect for tuppence ha’penny,
A keynote to my character sufficiently supplies (p. 59),

one is at least partially reminded of the aloof, serious formality of Victoria herself. Royal nepotism also comes under scrutiny in *The Grand Duke*. When he replaces Rudolph as ruler, Ludwig exclaims,

Oh, a Monarch who boasts intellectual graces
Can do, if he likes, a good deal in a day—
He can put all his friends in conspicuous places,
With plenty to eat and with nothing to pay! (p. 69).

Gilbert had previously planted these sarcastic lines in *Utorna Limited*:

**King**: No tolerance we show to undeserving rank and splendour! For the higher his position is the greater the offender.

**Chorus**: That’s a maxim that is prevalent in England (p. 440).

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121. The Graphic commented on the elaborate formality of the stage business of the Court dignitaries in the original production of *The Grand Duke*, noting that they “were dressed in identical uniform, save that the chief wore seven feathers in his hat, seven orders on his breast, and seven garters on his leg, the next in rank six of each, and so on, down to the Acting-Temporary, &c., who had one feather stuck in his hat like a shaving brush, and whose principal duty was to carry the royal snuffbox and the tardily presented royal handkerchief, articles which were passed from hand to hand until eventually they reached the Grand Ducal nose.” Later Rudolph upbraids the actor, Ludwig, for addressing him without going through the proper channels: “Who are you, sir, who presume to address me in person? If you’ve anything to communicate, you must fling yourself at the feet of my Acting Temporary Sub-Deputy Assistant Vice-Chamberlain, who will fling himself at the feet of his immediate superior, and so on, with successive foot-flingings through the various grades—your communication will, in course of time, come to my august knowledge” (p. 65).

122. In fact, it is conceivable that Gilbert’s collection of horrid matrons of propriety and formality are modelled after his conception of the Queen.
In *Fallen Fairies*, the fairy Lutin looks down at the earth from
Fairyland and tells his mortal visitors from the wicked world below:

Hark ye, you sir! On yonder ball
You've Kings and Queens to whom you fall,
And humbly cringe and creep and crawl,
Cast dust and ashes to your head upon,
That they some civil word may say to you (p. 206),

and sycophantic behaviour toward royalty and the aristocracy is
satirized repeatedly in Gilbert's later works. The expectation of a
visit from a duke and duchess throws a small village into a state of
frenzy in *The Mountebanks*:

Go and wash your pretty faces, / Dress in ribbons and in laces,
Or expect from both their Graces / A well-merited rebuke;
And your hair I pray you frizz it—
For it isn't often—is it?—
That you're favoured with a visit
From a Duchess and a Duke! (p. 359).

Divine, the innkeeper, fears he will make some inexcusable faux pas in
the presence of these refined visitors:

*Alf.* . . . The Duke is an awful stickler for etiquette, *Alf.*
He gave an innkeeper at Palermo six months because he used his
pocket-handkerchief in his presence. *Alf.* And he fined the
Mayor of Syracuse a hundred crowns because he didn't. *Alf.* This
is terrible. I know I shall make some fearful mistake with these
people! I've never in my life addressed anybody of higher rank
than an oil and Italian Warehouseman! *Alf.* My good sir, they're
not people—they're *personages* (p. 367).

Similar commentary occurs in *His Excellency* when a Prince Regent visits
a small town. More cynical and obvious sycophants are the chamberlains
of Rudolph in *The Grand Duke*, who confess,

Though quite contemptible, as every one agrees,
We must disguise if we want our bread and cheese,
So hail him in a chorus, with enthusiasm big,
The good Grand Duke of Pfennig Halbfennig! (p. 59).
King Claudius in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* tells Gertrude of the sycophants who aided him in getting his miserably bad drama first produced:

1. A play, writ by a king—
   2. And such a King!—
   3. Finds ready market. It was read at once; But are 'twas read, accepted. Then the Press Teemed with porpentine import. Elsinore Was duly placarded by willing hands; We know that walls have ears—I gave them tongues— And they were eloquent with promises.
   4. Even the dead walls?
   5. (solemnly).
   The louder they proclaimed! (p. 77).

The social-dancing antics of Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Coxe and their fawning attitude toward the Duke and Duchess of Dundee is the major comic factor in Gilbert's serious play, *The Fortune Hunter*.

The aristocracy itself suffers a good deal of Gilbertian abuse in these later works. The entire second act of *Haste to the Wedding* is given over to satire on the upper classes, and the stage is controlled by such characters as the Duke of Turniptopshire, the Marchioness of Market Harborough, the Lord and Lady Pepton, the Duke and Duchess of Deal, Colonel Coketown, the Dowager Duchess of Worthing, the Lord and Lady Pentwhistle. During these proceedings, the Duke of Turniptopshire laments his lot as a "highly-strung sensitive Duke" (p. ). The aristocracy is further notably satirized in events surrounding Col. Sir...

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123 These allusions in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, however, may be directed toward sycophants in the theatre rather than those in the Court.
The Marchioness of Market Harborough and The Duke of Turniptopshire of Haste to the Wedding (The Players, August 5, 1892; p. 4):

**HASTE TO THE WEDDING**

YOU WERE MY LATE HUSBAND'S GREATEST FRIEND!

**AT THE CRITERION**

Miss Ellis Jeffreys & Mr. D. E. James

The Duke of Turniptopshire's Song from Haste to the Wedding (pp. 165-166):

**SONG—DUKE.**

Oh butcher, oh baker, oh candlestick-maker,  
Oh vendors of bacon and snuff—  
And you, licensed victualler, and public-house skittle,  
And all who sell sticky sweet-stuff—  
Ye barbers, and Messrs. the Bond Street hair-dressers—  
(Some shave you, and others do not)—  
Ye greasy porkpie-men—ye second-hand flymen—  
All people who envy my lot (taking up tambourine),  
Let each of you lift up his voice—  
With tabor and cymbal rejoice  
That you're not, by some horrible fluke,  
A highly-strung sensitive Duke!  
An over-devotional,  
Super-emotional,  
Hyper-chimerical,  
Extra-hysterical,  
Wildly-aesthetical,  
Madly phrenetical,  
Highly-strung sensitive Duke!  

You men of small dealings, of course you've your feelings—  
There's no doubt at all about that—  
When a dentist extracting your tooth is extracting,  
You howl like an aristocrat.  
But an orphan cock-sparrow, who thrilled to the marrow.  
A Duke who's doubly refined  
Would never turn pale a petty retailer  
Or stagger a middle-class mind!  
So each of you lift up your voice—  
With cymbal and tabor rejoice, &c.  
(Dances to tambourine accompaniment.)
Also somewhat behind the times were Gilbert's slaps at Victorian propriety and prudery, subjects that Gilbert had successfully ridiculed from the beginning of his literary career. In *Haste to the Wedding*, a lady shopkeeper sings:

But fixtures are but means to end; / Goodwill's a term misplaced,
Unless with them you deftly blend / Politeness and Good Taste.
Without you, money paid is waste; / So hail, Politeness
and Good Taste! (p. 157).  

Echoes of Captain Corcoran and his vow that he "never swears a big, big D" from H.M.S. _Pinafore_ are found in a number of lines from Gilbert's later work, including a reference to England in _Utopia Limited_ that "... in the language of that great and pure nation, strong expressions do not exist ..." (p. 409). In _His Excellency_, Gov. Griffenfeld and his fiddle daughters discuss the subject:

Thora: When a man his temper loses his remarks he never chosces, but expressive language uses, with a tendency to swear—
Grif: And when lovers are discarded their upbraiding will be larded with some epithets unguarded—you had better not be there!
Thora (disappointed): We had better not be there?
Grif (decidedly): You had better not be there! (p. 139)

Much of the humour in *Haste to the Wedding* concerns accusations from the irate father of a blushing bride about the immoral behaviour of his future son-in-law, and King Paramount is questioned by the strait-laced Lady Sophy about similar indiscretions in _Utopia Limited_ (pp. 420-421). In fact, Lady Sophy's lecture to the King's daughters on "a course of maiden courtship" (pp. 415-416) is one of the funniest indictments of Victorian prudery and social formality in all of Gilbert's

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125 Jack: The lady who is stopping with master—the lady without a hat. Mar: A lady stopping with your master! Indol. On his wedding-day! Maria: And without a hat! Paints into Noodie's arms (p. 151).
Lady Sophy’s instructions on the propriety of “a course of maiden courtship” in Utopia Limited (pp. 415-416):

RECITATIVE.—Lady Sophy.
This morning we propose to illustrate
A course of maiden courtship, from the start
To the triumphant matrimonial finish.

[Through the following song the two Princesses illustrate in gesture the description given by Lady Sophy.]

Song.—Lady Sophy.
Bold-faced ranger
(Perfect stranger)
Meets two well-behaved young ladies.
He’s attractive,
Young and active—
Each a little bit afraid is.
Youth advances,
At his glance
To their danger they awaken;
They repel him
As they tell him
He is very much mistaken.
Though they speak to him politely,
Please observe they’re sneering slightly,
Just to show he’s acting vainly,
This is Virtue saying plainly,
“Go away, young bachelor,
We are not what you take us for!”

When addressed impertinently,
English ladies answer gently,
“Go away, young bachelor,
We are not what you take us for!”

As he gazes,
Hat he raises,
Enters into conversation,
Makes excuses—
This produces
Interesting agitation.

So, with daring,
Undespairing,
Gives his card—his rank discloses—

Little heading
This proceeding,
“‘They turn up their little noses,
Pray observe this lesson vital—
When a man of rank and title
His position first discloses,
Always cock your little noses.
When at home, let all the class
Try this in the looking-glass.
English girls of highest class
Practice them before the class,
His intentions
Then he mentions
Something definite to go on—
Makes recital
Of his titles,
Hints at sentiments, and so on.
Smiling sweetly,
They, discreetly,
Ask for further evidences:
Thus invited,
He, delighted,
Gives the usual references.
This is business. Each is fluttered
When the offer’s fairly uttered.
“Which of them has his affection?”
He declines to make selection.
Do they quarrel for his dross?
Not a bit of it—they toss!
Please observe this cogent moral—
English ladies never quarrel.
When a doubt they come across,
English ladies always toss.

RECITATIVE.—Lady Sophy.
The lecture’s ended. In ten minutes’ space
’Twill be repeated in the market-place!

[Exit Lady Sophy, followed by Nikaya and Kaliba.

CHORUS.
Quaff the nectar—call the roses—
Damsel girls will soon be plenty!
Maids who thus at fifteen poses
Ought to be divinities at twenty!}
works. Questions of outlandish propriety also greatly affect Gilbert's works after the turn of the century; The Fairy's Dilemma and Fallen Fairies. However, jokes about "Mrs. Grundy" had been made ever since Thomas Morton first introduced her in Speed the Plow at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and such satire was neither new to Gilbert nor relevant for the comparatively liberated nineties (see p. 64, above) and Edwardian noughts. As one recent writer has noted, "... the high-born lady in The Fairy's Dilemma, covered with shame at her short skirts, seemed in 1904 no longer shocking but out-of-date and rather silly," and lines that Gilbert had used in The Wicked World which were attacked in 1873 as indecent and offensive were accepted by the public without a thought when he incorporated them into Fallen Fairies (p. 208) in 1909.

Two related subjects of much pre-1890 Gilbertian satire—the traditional characteristics of Gilbert's fellow countrymen and "the Englishman's complacent admiration for the presumed superiority of..."

126 In His Excellency, the Governor's daughters tell their father that their suitors have been "unnecessarily realistic in their attentions" (p. 139) and in lines of mock modesty confide to their suitors, "And we're so afraid of Mrs. Gug-gug-gug-Grundy!" (p. 141). In The Grand Duke, Ludwig describes the scanty dress of the ancient Greeks, and he decides:

"Yes, on reconsideration, there are customs of that nation which are not in strict accordance with the habits of our day, and when I come to modify, their rules I mean to modify, or Mrs. Grundy, p'r'aps, may have a word or two to say (p. 74)."

127 Darlington, p. 35.
the ways and institutions of his own country are repeated in a number of passages in Gilbert's later work. For instance, the Sicilians in The Mountebanks describe their clockwork robots as "clock-full of eccentric wheels—might almost be English" (p. 373), and in The Grand Duke, Ernest Dunlop calls Julia Jellicoe, the English leading lady of his German theatrical troupe, a "Haughty Londoner" (p. 50) when she scorns his affectionate advances. The Daily Graphic added this bit of interesting information concerning the original production of The Grand Duke:

Undoubtedly the crowning Gilbertianism of the whole production was the selection of Mrs. Ilka von Palnay, a Hungarian actress who had never previously appeared on the English stage, to fill the role of the English actress. As the scene is laid in Germany, Mr. Gilbert looks at his own libretto in the light of a German piece, in which case the English actress would speak broken German, and accordingly allusions to her difficulties with that 'crackjaw tongue' are introduced into the dialogue. This is undoubtedly an ingenious mode of justification, but, as one of the audience was overheard to remark on Saturday night, 'It makes my head ache to work it out.'

In consequence, at least one later writer has argued that the original production of The Grand Duke was the victim of hidden prejudice in that the public objected to Gilbert giving Ilka von Palnay, a foreign actress, this major role. Ironically, a year earlier in Utopia Limited,

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Gilbert had satirically written that the Utopians "wouldn't listen to any tenor who didn't call himself English" (p. 430).

In *His Excellency* Gilbert has the Danish Prince Regent deplore the monotony of having to constantly listen to his country's national anthem—a concept undoubtedly motivated by Gilbert's own dislike for the British national hymn which he considered "preposterous doggrel" and "pitiable drivel." The *Evening News* commented on Gilbert's "sly dig . . . at the persistence, in season and out of season, of the British hymn of loyalty" in *His Excellency*, and Jane Stedman has noted that ". . . many extravaganzas satirized current musical crazes but only Gilbert encroached upon the patriotic sacred." However, the two works of Gilbert's later years that make the most of national satire are the many-sided *Utopia Limited* that "satirizes practically everything English—English prudery, English conversation, English company-promoting; the English party system, the English War Office and Admiralty, the County Council, and the English cabinet" and *The Fortune Hunter* in which a bumpious, class-conscious English couple are held up to ridicule. One of the characters in *The Fortune Hunter* . . .

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130 Letter to the Editor of The Times, August 29, 1894, p. 3.

131 Stedman points out that Gilbert had also attacked the national anthem in a journal article thirty years before in *Bun*, and she gives a long discussion of the song and its qualities in regard to similar pieces by Flanche in her dissertation, pp. 100-103.

The Prince Regent’s song on the monotony of the National Anthem in His Excellency (pp. 110-111):

SONG.—REGENCY.

A King, though he’s pestered with cares,
Though, no doubt, he can often trepan them;
But one comes in a shape he can never escape—
The implacable National Anthem!
Though for quiet and rest he may yearn,
It pursues him at every turn—
No chance of forsaking
Its rococo numbers;
They haunt him when waking—
They poison his slumber!
Like the Banbury Lady, whom every one knows,
He’s cursed with its music wherever he goes!
Though its words but imperfectly rhyme,
And the devil himself couldn’t scan them,
With composure polite he endures day and night
That illiterate National Anthem!

It serves a good purpose I own:
Its strains are devout and impressive—
Its heartstirring notes raise a lump in our throats
As we burn with devotion excessive:
But the King, who’s been bored by that song
From his cradle—each day—all day long—
Who’s heard it loud-shouted
By throat's operatic,
And joyfully spouted
By courtier’s emphatic
By soldier—by sailor—by drum and by fife—
Small blame if he thinks it the plague of his life!
While his subjects sing loudly and long,
Their King—who would willingly ban them—
Sits, weary disguising, anathematizing
'That Bogle, the National Anthem!'

"Patriotic" finale in Utopia Limited (pp. 452-453):

FINALE.

Zara. There’s a little group of isles beyond the wave—
So tiny, you might almost wonder where it is—
That nation is the bravest of the brave,
And cowards are the rarest of all rarities.
The proudest nations kneel at her command;
She terrifies all foreign-born rapscallions;
And holds the peace of Europe in her hand.
With half a score invincible battalions!
Such, at least, is the tale
Which is borne on the gale,
From the island which dwells in the sea.
Let us hope, for her sake,
That she makes no mistake—
That she’s all she professes to be!

Oh, may we copy all her maxims wise,
And imitate her virtues and her charities;
And may we, by degrees, acclimatize
Her Parliamentary peculiarities!
By doing so, we shall, in course of time,
Regenerate completely our entire land—
Great Britain is that monarchy sublime,
To which some add (but others do not) Ireland.
Such, at least, is the tale, etc.

CURTAIN.
Hunter comments, "That delightful snob Mr. Coox-Coox has been making love to the Duke's courier, in the belief that it is the Duke himself. It is delightful—it is enchanting—it is English!" (p. 395). When Coox-Coox is later caught in some shady maneuvering, he defensively blurs out to an American nouveau riche heiress, "I've not the advantage of knowing what the code of etiquette may be in Chicago pork circles, but it may interest you to learn that in a civilized country no one has a right to hold his head higher than an English gentleman!" (p. 432). In Utopia Limited the people of a small tropical island kingdom decide to emulate the ways of the English because, as their Cambridge-educated princess tells them, despite the fact that the Utopians are "all, in the abstract, types of courtly grace," they are "little better than half-clothed barbarians" when "compared to Britain's glorious race" (p. 431). The rest of the play tells of the hilarious and disastrous implantation of English customs and values on the distant society in what Isaac Goldberg later called Gilbert's "almost seditious satire against the vaunting Englishman." Yet Gilbert was no radical iconoclast trying to bait his audience. Utopia Limited ends happily, and Gilbert cut a portion of a speech which some critics considered too harsh in its satire of the English political system (see note, p. 266, below). When some early reviews also questioned the propriety of the use of the music to "God Save the Queen" at the closing curtain, Gilbert

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quickly replaced it with a patriotic, if slightly scolding, lyric (see p. 125 above)
expressing sentiments not unlike the speech of the Bastard at the
close of Shakespeare's King John, "as though the author wished to offer
some atonement for the ridicule he had been pouring upon his own country,
and to show that he could from his heart say with Byron, 'England, with
all thy faults, I love thee still.' Likewise, in The Fortune
Hunter, a romantic heroine, infatuated with the reckless life that the
Continent offers, refuses the marriage proposal of her honourable
English suitor, Sir Orthbert, with the excuse, "The dull, slate-coloured
routine of English country-respectability would weigh me down as does
the dull, slate-coloured English sky" (p. 400); however, by the end
of the play, the girl has been betrayed by her French dandy husband
and now supposedly sees the value of the good English life she once
scorned.  

Gilbert's criticisms of England in works after 1890 may have
offended some members of his audience, but the satire was not unlike
that he had previously used in such works as H.M.S. Pinafore and
Iolanthe: it lacked the imprint of social conviction. Although the
review in Labouchere's radical journal, Truth, gave some contemporary
sidelights on the political allusions and stated that the satire in
Utopia Limited was aimed at more appropriate targets than the earlier
Savoy operas, it added that the satire was of the kind that would not

136. Francis Collier and Cunningham Bridgeman, Gilbert, Sullivan,
wound "the susceptibilities of any save the thinnest skinned," and
the Shaw commented that the Savoy operas
reflect the best qualities of human nature as it flourishes
in the West-end of London—its common-sense, its worship of
'good form,' its habit of outwardly gambolling at English
political and social traditions, while inwardly holding them
to be the best conceivable, because they are English.

Bernard Shaw enjoyed Utopia Limited, but he wrote,

... Mr. Gilbert, at his best, was a much cleverer man than
most of the playwrights of his day; he could always see beneath
the surface of things; and if he could only have seen through
them, he might have made his mark as a serious dramatist instead
of having, as a satirist, to depend for the piquancy of his
ridicule on the general assumption of the validity of the very
things he ridiculed. 132

It was satire for satire's sake. Consequently, Utopia Limited was not
fully appreciated nor widely espoused by either the left or the right,
and neither the conservative Pall Mall Gazette nor its political rival,
the Westminster Gazette, had much praise for it.

It is also important to note that although the opening-night critic
for the Times interpreted Utopia Limited as a Gilbertian indictment of
"the enemies of progress," most early reviewers who brought political
motivation into their discussions of the work felt that the satire was
not aimed at the establishment as much as it was aimed at the radicals
in the establishment. One early review remarked that ... Gilbert
intended a satirical forecast as to the future of the English nation

135 See also Audrey Williamson, "Gilbert Through Modern Eyes,"

136 Bernard Shaw, Music in London, 1890-92, Vol I (London:
when the faddists of the present day shall have their ways in all things,"137 and another said, ... there is doubtless a satire intended against the efforts of the dreamers who would make a paradise of this our earth."138 The very fact that Gilbert sub-titled *Utopia Limited* "The Flowers of Progress" and gave his reformers this ridiculous, high-blown name indicates a mocking attitude toward them and their reforms, and confirms his basically conservative political philosophy.139 Scaphio and Phantis who promote the rebellion against the reformers in *Utopia Limited* are similar to Dick Deadeye of *H.M.S. Pinafore* in the sense that they are self-seeking villains ironically correct in their stands against naive or ruinous reforms. At least two other later works of Gilbert—*The Fairy's Dilemma* and *Fallen Fairies*—look with a disparaging eye on the work of reformers, political and otherwise, and Gilbert's anti-radicalism is also indicated in the moral ballad concerning the wilful bee who tried to swarm alone in *His Excellency*.139

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139 "... Iolanthe is concerned with a fantastic social and political experiment. In *H.M.S. Pinafore* it is the leveling of all ranks in the navy. In *Princess Ida* it is complete segregation of the sexes. In *The Gondoliers* it is the raising of everyone to the aristocracy. *Utopia Limited* is wholly concerned with the Anglicizing of *Utopia*. All of these experiments fail; ... Gilbert's basic conservatism is indicated by theses failures ..." Bargainder, p. 394.
In attacking "puerile yet sensitive Socialism"\(^\text{140}\) and "parliamentary
Jacobins"\(^\text{141}\) eighteen years later, Walter Sichel said that Utopia
Limited probed "the evergreen fallacies of shallow optimism,"\(^\text{142}\) and
in 1926 another writer said that Gilbert was

\[\ldots\text{one of the humorists who mark the contrast between man's}
\]
\[\text{ideals and the facts of life; between man's conscience and the}
\]
\[\text{possibilities of the world. He is one of the conservative}
\]
\[\text{humorists who mock high-faluting Bolshevist and revolutionary}
\]
\[\text{philosophy.}\]

Other later writers of less conservative bent have complained that
Gilbert "did not dare the apparent impolicy of suggesting a better
world,"\(^\text{144}\) and that there is "never a suggestion that the rich ought
not to be so rich as they are, never an attack on any essential article
of the middle-class code. Even Gilbert's ridiculing of parliamentary
government in Iolanthe and Utopia Limited is tame beside that of Dickens
or Disraeli.\(^\text{145}\) In testimony given before a Parliamentary Committee
on Dramatic Censorship in 1909, Gilbert said that he thought some form

\[^{140}\text{Walter Sichel, "The English Aristophanes" (1911), reprinted in}
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\[^{141}\text{Ibid., p. 97.}
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\[^{142}\text{Ibid., p. 95.}
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\[^{143}\text{Maurice Hutton, "Taking the Measure of the Plays," G & S Journal,
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\[^{144}\text{Henry Ten Eyck Perry, "The Victorianism of W. S. Gilbert" (1926),}
\]
\[^{145}\text{Arthur Jacobs, Gilbert and Sullivan (London: Parrish, 1951),}
\]
\[^{149}\text{The Philadelphia Forum Magazine, April 1927, p. 27.}^\]
of legal restraint was necessary against the theatre at times because, in his view, "... the stage of a theatre is not the proper pulpit from which to disseminate doctrines, possibly of anarchism, of Socialism, or of agnosticism."

Aside from Utopia Limited (and perhaps partly because of that work's relatively unsuccessful run), much of Gilbert's interest in his later work is directed toward non-English nationalities. In The Fortune Hunter Gilbert employs Australian, French, and American\textsuperscript{146} characters in a number of foreign locales. "'The damned mousetrap' figures in the story in the person of the Vicomte de Breville," remarked the critic for the Queen, "and Mr. Gilbert's French critics who carped before at the above-quoted expression in 'The Gondoliers,'\textsuperscript{148} will have much more reason to feel dissatisfied with the portrait of the Frenchman Mr. Gilbert has here drawn." The setting of His Excellency is Denmark and that of The Grand Duke is Germany. Of the later work, Lawrence Ludwig has noted the many "shafts aimed at the Teutonic temperament,"\textsuperscript{149} and the Daily News opined at the time of its original London production,  

\textsuperscript{146}Quoted in The Times, August 20, 1909, p. 16. However, there are occasional references in Gilbert's work during these later years that reflects the struggle going on between the Socialists and their opponents, such as these lines from The Fairy's Dilemma when Lady Angola as Columbine informs the Rev. Parliett of his new duties as Harlequin: Lady An... a man comes along in a fifteen hundred pound motor-car with 'FISCAL POLICY' on it. You slap the car with your hat, and it changes into a costermonger's barrow labelled 'FREE FOOD FOR EVERYBODY.' Alyx. But that is not at all in accordance with my political views!" (p. 33).

\textsuperscript{147}American ingenuity and commercialism is perhaps covertly satirized in references to Kodak cameras in Utopia Limited (p. 415) and Waterbury watches in The Mountebanks (p. 388) and The Grand Duke (p. 65).

\textsuperscript{148}The expression actually occurs in Ruddigore.

\textsuperscript{149}The Philadelphia Forum Magazine, April 1927, p. 27.
"... it is quite possible that the chaffing . . . good-humoured as it is, may have to be toned down for foreign circulation," although one later writer surmised that Gilbert was merely "'cashing in' on the then current Ruritanian craze, exemplified by Hope's 'The Prisoner of Zenda,' ^150 and another has said, "... The Grand Duke both musically and dramatically may be viewed as conscious parody of the 'Ruritanian' operettas of the Viennese type."^151 The exegetical qualities of the German language are humorously referred to in The Fairy's Dilemma (p. 18), and in his reminiscences, H. G. Hibbert remarked that the dancing hussars episode in His Excellency^152 was "Gilbert's very obvious attack on the Kaiser."^153 The setting of The Mountebanks is Sicily, and satiric comments about the southern European temperament abound in the second act of Haste to the Wedding. Gilbert makes a passing satiric reference to Ireland in The Grand Duke (p. 50), and he alludes to Gladstone's unsuccessful Irish Home Rule Bill in Utopia Limited (p. 453). When a group of bandits are transformed into celibate monks in The Mountebanks, Gilbert uses such terms as "unwashed and unpleasantly yellow" . . . "friars smug and greasy" (pp. 390, 393) to describe them, and an early review in the London periodical, Bow Bells, observed,

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152Hibbert incorrectly lists the work as The Grand Duke.
The question is not a matter of very great importance in the country, but a number of people are wondering what sort of reception the opera might have in Ireland, where some of Mr. Gilbert's whimsicalities might hit the public in a sensitive part. Would the exuberant frivolities of the sham Dominican Brothers be laughed at in Dublin as they are in London?

There is also a funny reference to Mohammedanism in Fallen Fairies (p. 217), and some early critics¹⁵ª objected to Gilbert's satire on a Jewish theatrical costumed in The Grand Duke.

For the most part, Gilbert had carefully avoided religious allusions in his work before 1890. For instance, the rival aesthetic poets in Patience were once conceived as rival curates, but Gilbert abandoned the idea at least partly because of possible repercussions from the Victorian clergy. Even so, in 1868 Dr. Lewis Carroll attacked the Savoy operas for the improprieties of such songs as the one on the pale young curate in The Sorcerer.¹⁵⁵ and there are indications from Gilbert's private writings during his later years that he did not hold the clergy—or at least certain clergymen—in especially high esteem.¹⁵⁶

When speaking before a group of churchmen, Gilbert once confessed that he felt like "a lion in a den of Dandies," and some critics detected irreverent roaring in his later material that they felt went beyond the

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¹⁵⁵ See Kenneth Pearson, Gilbert and Sullivan, pp. 116-117.

The bandits of _The Mountebanks_ attempting to deliver an ecclesiastical chant in their impersonation at the monastery:

(Illustration from _Black and White_, Jan. 9, 1892, p. 39)

"Mr. Frank Wyatt as the Captain of the Secret Society displayed an almost too great activity, especially in the scene in which he conducted an amusing chorus of monks with a baton which he waved too wildly. The scene would have been more effective, and Mr. Wyatt would have achieved an equal and less cheap triumph had he stood still and beaten time in a grave manner. The absurdity of the situation is sufficiently obvious without his capering about like a madman." Percy Reeve, "Music and Drama," _St. Stephen's Review_, Jan. 9, 1892, p. 21. (Compare this criticism with Gilbert's philosophy of stage humour discussed below, pp.357-362).
limits of acceptance. In its review of Haste to the Wedding, the Daily Telegraph noted that

- - a person is introduced under the title of the Archbishop of Baywaters, who solemnly blesses the guests, at this there was a curious silence in the audience, which showed that Mr. Gilbert had made an error of taste, which had not even the redeeming merit of being funny.

Indeed, when the village girls see the bandits disguised as monks in The Mountebanks, the maidens, though amused, admit,

This disguising / Is surprising,
Priests masking / It is shocking
It is baseful — / It is shameful
It is shameful— / Ha! ha! ha! (p. 380).157

In Rosenstock and Guildenstern, these lines appear:

Hans. Is there a part for me?

Osi. There is, my lord, a most important part—
A mad Archbishop who becomes a Jew
To spite his diocese.

Roge. Then you become the leader of a troop
Of Greek banditti—and soliloquise—
After a long and undisturbed career
Of murder (tempered by soliloquy)
You see the sin and folly of your ways
And offer to resume your diocese;
But, just too late—for, terrible to tell,
As you're repenting (in soliloquy)
The Bench of Bishops seize you unawares
And blow you from a gun! (p. 34).

One character in The Grand Duke disdainfully comments that parsons are "three a penny" (p. 47), and one of them, "the Rev. Aloysius Parfitt, M.A., of St. Parabola's," undergoes extended satirical treatment in The Fairy's Dilemma, a work in which, according to the Morning Post, "the Church—or 'cloth'—is by no means unduly respected."

157 Also of amusing note is the hypocritically pious, senescent language of bandit-turned-monk Arrostino: "I should say that worldly allurements have the faculty of enlivening their devotees for the moment, but the evening's enjoyment seldom bears the morning's reflection, and the choicest banquet is but a feast of Dead Sea apples which turn to ashes in the mouth" (p. 392).
Satire aimed at Parfitt’s pious and contemplative nature is foreshadowed by his being “discovered playing ‘The Lord Chord’ on the harmonium” when he first appears in the play (p. 7). Later in the work, Parfitt agrees to marry his secret fiancée, Clarissa, at a Registrar’s Office, but adds, “I confess that it pains me to have to resort to an opposition establishment—it savours of disloyalty to my cloth . . . ” (p. 14). Clarissa’s father, Judge Whortle, is enraged when he learns that his daughter has eloped with Parfitt, but the clergyman has his conquering reply to the Judge’s outcry:

Judge (in a violent passion). Why you—!


When another character is transformed into Columbine and begins a burlesque pantomime dance, begging Parfitt not to look at her, he replies, “Not for bishoprics, Lady Angelia!” (p. 31). Parfitt’s ridiculous, head-in-the-sand unworldliness gave Gilbert an opportunity to attack the pious members of the clergy who had spent their days condemning even the most innocent presentations of the professional theatre throughout much of the nineteenth century, although this satire seems a bit dated for 1904:

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Arthur Sullivan was quite serious about his composition, “The Lost Chord,” which he had composed upon the death of his brother, and Arthur Jacobs insists that “Sullivan would not have appreciated” its rather comical use here. See Arthur Jacobs, “Sullivan, Gilbert and the Victorians,” Music Review, May 1951, p. 29, footnote.
Alov. . . . I fear that frivolous and worldly distractions are not without a certain allurement for you. Clay. (his fiancée)
Of course I like to amuse myself, dear. Harmless amusement—
Alov. Oh, I was not referring to school-feasts and mothers' meetings. I allude to dinner parties, dances, and theatres.
Clay. Of course, Aloysius, I shall do exactly as you wish. But have you ever been to a theatre, dear? Alov. (with energy)
Never! Most surely never! Clay. They are not really not so bad as you think. . . . (p. 22). 159

However, it should be noted that Gilbert's attitude toward religion itself was not completely antagonistic, and this is shown in his aforementioned comment to the 1909 Parliamentary Committee on Dramatic Censorship that certain doctrines, including those of "agnosticism," should not be promoted on the theatrical stage. His attitude toward the Church undoubtedly was similar to the one he covertly expressed about the House of Lords in Iolanthe: the institution really is not valid, but it doesn't hurt anything and gives a needed sense of permanence and order to a chaotic world. It was basically its pious hypocrisy that he objected to most loudly. As one of the young Princesses in Utopia Limited exclaims,

I'll row and fish, / And gallop, soon--
No longer be a prim one--
And when I wish / To hum a tune,
It needn't be a hymn one? (p. 449).

159 Similar satire occurs in The Mountebanks when Pietro comments that his clockwork figures of Hamlet and Ophelia represent the couple "as they appeared in the bosoms of their families before they disgraced their friends by taking to the stage for a livelihood" (p. 371).
Another topic that finds a notable place in Gilbert's later work as, indeed, it did in all his previous efforts was the value of marriage. One recent writer has noted that:

Beneath his gruff exterior Gilbert was a romanticist who knew that 'all the world loves a lover' and that 'it's love that makes the world go round' for in all of the operas from The Mikado to The Grand Duke he arranges that one or more marriages take place or are clearly scheduled to take place before the final curtain falls.\(^{160}\)

Although there are many obvious similarities between the characters of Shaw and Gilbert in the librettist's later work, one searches Gilbert in vain for men of Shavian stamp (both Higgins and Doolittle in Pygmalion, for instance) who attempt to permanently shun the taking of the marital vows, and despite the coy intelligence of many of Gilbert's females, there is certainly no Ibsenite Nora to be found—except perhaps Diana in The Fortune Hunter, and her 'revolutionary spirit'\(^{161}\) leads to personal disaster. The only male character who comes close to fitting this marriage-abhorring description in Gilbert's later work is the free-living Woodpecker Tapping, yet, ironically, the work in which he appears, Haste to the Wedding, is concerned with Tapping's attempt to marry a girl over her father's wishes:

As Woodpecker, single, / Turned Woodpecker, double,  
Refounding his ways, which are rather too free,  
Walks into the heaven of matrimony! (p. 149).

\(^{160}\) Louis Weissman, "Won't it be a Pretty Wedding?"* *G&S* Journal, Sept. 1955, p. 114. A wedding or expectations of one are depicted in all of Gilbert's later works except*Fallen Fairies* and*The Hooligan*.

The play ends with these typical lines:

Ring, ye joybells, long and loudly, / Happy hearts together tied—
Bridegroom's bosom swelling proudly
As he takes his blushing bride!

Throughout His Excellency, the incorrigibly independent Nancy and
There ridicule and reject in scorn the advances of their two suitors,
yet the fall of the curtain finds them, too, joyously acquiescing to
the call of the wedding chimes:

Ring the bells and bang the brasses!
Get the cake and fill the glasses!
Lovers and their blushing lasses
Will be duly coupled soon,
When, in Castle chapel plighted,
Man and maid are once united,
Off they'll go in mood delighted / On a happy honeymoon!

This dramatic stance of Gilbert was, once again, basically autobiographi-
cal. Gilbert's marriage to Lucy Agnes Turner in 1867, though childless,
was one of apparent happiness for both partners and lasted until Gilbert's
death forty-four years later. In The Fortune Hunter, Armand
De Bréville, a Frenchman, says, "Englishmen make admirable wives.
Shall I confess? It is the dream of my life to marry an Englishwoman"
(p. 396). The marital bliss between Gilbert and his wife also
undoubtedly prompted such playful and sentimental lines as those from
the newly-weds in The Grand Duke (p. 46) and The Mountebanks:

Mrs. Allow me to present to you—my wife!

Sir. I think you'd better keep her to yourself.

Mrs. She's the treasure and the pleasure of my life—

Sir. I dare say—until she's laid upon the shelf!

Mrs. She's a poem, she's a song—

Sir. (relenting) You don't mean it—go along!

Mrs. I shall love her when she's grey!

Sir. Will you really?—I dare say;

With your snapping and your snarling!
Biographer Hesketh Pearson has given this description of the relationship between Gilbert and his wife:

She never attempted to impose her will on his, but was clever enough to get what she wanted by making him wish it first. . . . She was certainly docile, but she possessed humour, and as he never gave her serious cause for jealousy she was sensible enough to encourage his whims. There were times when her acquiescent and conciliatory but alert nature had the effect of calming his anger when exacerbated by the behaviour of others and of lessening the violence of his explosions when stung by ingratitude or dishonesty . . . 162

This relationship finds expression in several of Gilbert's later lyrics, but one chorus in The Grand Duke is especially illuminating in its assumption that the bride's calm femininity will eventually prove a match for the aggressive masculinity of the husband:

If he ever acts unkindly, / Shut your eyes and love him blindly—
Should he call you names uncomely,
Shut your mouth and love him dumbly—
Should he rate you, rightly—leftly—
Shut your ears and love him deathly. / Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!
Thus and thus and thus alone / Ludwig's wife may hold her own!

Gilbert's firm belief in the value of the devotion and companionship of the husband-wife relationship surfaces in several of his later works. For example, the only possible redeeming grace of the obnoxious, class-conscious Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Coke-Coke in The Fortune Hunter

Lisa's song to Julia concerning Ludwig in
The Grand Duke (p. 75), reflective of the
attitude of Lucy Gilbert toward her husband:

(Song.—Lisa)

Take care of him—he's much too good to live,
With him you must be very gentle;
Poor fellow, he's so highly sensitive,
(And O, so sentimental!)
Be sure you never let him sit up late
In chilly open air conversing—
Poor darling, he's extremely delicate,
(And wants a deal of nursing!)

Lisa. / I want a deal of nursing!

And O, remember this—
When he is cross with pain,
A flower and a kiss—
A simple flower—a beauty kiss!
Will bring him round again!

His moods you must assiduously watch:
When he succumbs to sorrow tragic,
Some hardtack or a bit of butter-scotch
Will work on him like magic.
To contradict a character so rich
In trusting love were simple blindness—
He's one of those exalted natures which
Will only yield to kindness!
lies in their apparent devotion to each other, exemplified especially in Mrs. Coren-Coren's attitude preceding and during the couple's disastrous third act interview with the Duchess of Dundee (pp. 426-433). In Rosenkrants and Guildenstern, Claudius's lines to Gertrude (p. 77) when he tells her the dark secret of his authorship of an infamously bad play also have some bearing here, despite their comic, mock serious delivery. Despite passing allusions to the possibility of unhappy marriage and divorce in lyrics of The Mountebanks (p. 357) and The Grand Duke (p. 46) and the ruptured marriage of Armand and Diana in The Fortune Hunter, it is obvious that Gilbert's main attitude toward the marital state in his later works was an extremely positive one, reflecting his own happy experience in the institution. Such sentimental attitudes were commonplace in the theatre of the eighteen-seventies and eighties, but England during the fin de siècle was experiencing Ibsen's The Doll's House and Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession—not to mention the decadence of men like Beardsley and Wilde—and Gilbert's sincere, happy reflections on married life in his later work again served to date him.

Yet Gilbert was not completely out of touch with the times in this area. There is, for instance, this humorous exchange between a bride, Minestra, and a male friend, Arristino, in The Mountebanks:

"Arr. . . . Now look at it in cold blood. Think of it ten years hence—when the novelty's worn off. Min. It does look foolish from here. Oh, I almost wish I hadn't! Big. My dear! (Consoles her.) Min. Don't—I'm so inexperienced! Arr. I suppose so. Pity-pity! Never mind—next time you'll be older" (p. 359). A rare allusion to marital unfaithfulness, rich with Gilbertian sarcasm, appears later in The Mountebanks: "Alg. . . . But take heart, little one; it is true I love thee not, for I have a bride, and no married man ever loves anybody but his wife. Tar. I am not so mad but that I know that. Why, I learnt it at school! But thou art like the rest—thou thinkest that any truism is good enough for a mad girl!" (p. 396).
There are a few portraits of domineering, impudent wives in Gilbert's later work, such as the descriptions the mortal Latin in *Fallen Fairies* (p. 222) and Maguire in *Haste to the Wedding* (p. 176) give of their wives. Yet these portraits are blatant stereotypes and were undoubtedly inserted for their comic value alone. They are strongly akin to Gilbert's string of impossible, ageing, man-chasing spinsteresses: a view of womanhood that Gilbert delighted in repeating to the exasperation of his collaborators, critics, and audiences both before and after 1890. In at least four of Gilbert's later libretti---The Mountebanks, *Utopia Limited*, *His Excellency*, *The Grand Duke*---the shadow of one of these characters appears, and the humour of such lines as "It's a singular thing, but I never yet proposed to a very unattractive old lady without being immediately accepted" in *His Excellency* (p. 116) was beginning to wear thin. Of Dame Hedda Cortlandt in that work, the * Pall Mall Gazette* said,

A very Gilbertian convention, which we had hoped he had discarded, reappears in the unsuccessful efforts of an unattractive widow to get herself married. This is the sort of thing we meant by Mr. Gilbert's brutality: he supposes a female character to be undesirable, and makes her run after unwilling men. It is a very old and not an amusing cliché of Mr. Gilbert's and we wish he would give it up.

164 In his song on the joke of life, King Paramount in *Utopia Limited* speaks of the shrewish aspects that develop in a wife after a period of time, and he complains, "Daily driven / (Wife as drover) / Ill you're thriven— / Ne'er in dower . . . " (p. 419).

165 But I dare say the best rebuke of this was the gentle one administered by his favourite actress, Miss Jessie Bond. When she told Gilbert she was going to marry, he burst out, 'Little fool!' "I have often," she answered, "heard you say you don't like old women. I shall be one soon. Will you provide for me? You hesitate. Well, I am going to a man who will." Arthur Quiller-Couch, pp. 472-473.
Maguire's song on his overbearing wife in 
**Haste to the Wedding** (pp. 176-177):

**SONG—MAGUIRE.**

If you value a peaceable life,
This maxim will teach you to get it;
In all things give in to your wife,—
I didn't—I lived to regret it;
My wife liked to govern alone;
And she never would share with another;
Remarkably tall and well grown,
She had plenty of muscle and bone,
With an excellent will of her own—
And my darling takes after her mother!

Oh, if early in life
I had happily known;
How to humour a wife;
With a will of her own,
We should not have been snarling;
All day at each other—
And, remember, my darling,
Takes after her mother!

Never wake up her temper,—I did—
And smash went a window, instant;
Invariably do as you're bid,—
I didn't—bang went a decanter;
Give in to each whim,—I declined—
At my head went a vinegar-cruet,
Whatever inducement you find,
Never give her advice of a kind.
That is known as "a bit of your mind,"
I did—and the crockery knew it!
Oh, if early in life
I had happily known, &c.

Though her aspect was modest and meek,
She could turn on the steam in a minute;
Her eruptions went on for a week—
Vesuvius, my boy, wasn't in it.
Give your wife of indulgence her fill,
Though your meals be unpleasantly scrappy—
Never look at her milliner's bill;
Gulp down that extravagant pill;
And you may, and you probably will;
Be bankrupt—and thoroughly happy!
Oh, if early in life
I had happily known, &c.

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**Dame Hecla Cortlandt towering beside her suitor, Matts Munck, in His Excellency (St. James's Budget, Nov. 2, 1894, p. 38):**
The reason for Gilbert’s obsession with creating negative portraits of over-bearing Victorian matrons has never been fully explained, but it is interesting to recall that Gilbert’s relationship with both his own mother and his “national mother,” Victoria, were always quite strained. On another level of thought, it is interesting to note that Gilbert’s long marriage was childless, and in his ageing spinsters there is also a “suggestion of impotence.” The importance of Gilbert’s later work in helping to clarify his attitude toward the “weaker sex” will be discussed in fuller detail later in this study, but Gilbert’s reflections on female dressing-room vanity in *Utopia Limited* (p. 441) and *The Fairy’s Dilemma* (p. 26) seem trite, and his satiric references to Princess Zara’s Girton College education in *Utopia Limited* (pp. 422, 437) only echo his ridicule of the women’s emancipation movement in *Princess Ida* a decade before.

The ten works of W. S. Gilbert that were first produced after 1890 offer something of a contrast one to another in their individual forms and intents, and the faults and merits of each work will be discussed in the chapters that follow. However, in summing up the general reasons for the popular failure of Gilbert’s work after 1890, it is safe to say that a major factor was Gilbert’s inability or refusal to change his methods and themes despite revolutions in social attitudes and theatrical conventions. The only signs of change in his work—an increased seriousness and cynicism, and a more complicated wit—merely tended to alienate his audiences.

166 Ibid., p. 174.
On the other hand, Gilbert continued to use old themes, plot lines, and character types in self-indulgent works whose basic topics often were of great personal interest to himself but of little concern to general audiences. In corresponding attempts to keep his popularity, Gilbert incorporated too much material into the structure of his plots and burdened them with a profusion of characters and unconnected satiric allusions. He also relied too heavily on spectacular stage effects and theatrical tricks rather than on the verbal humour for which he had become famous. An argument could be made that Gilbert summed up his own predicament during these years in this lyric from His Excellence:

In search of quip and quiddity I’ve sat all day, alone, apart—
And all that I could hit on as a problem was—to find
Analogy between a scrag of mutton and a Bony-part,
Which offers slight employment to the speculative mind:
For you cannot call it very good, however great your charity—
It’s not the sort of humour that is greeted with a shout—
And I’ve come to the conclusion that the mine of jocularity,
In present Anne Boleyn, is worked completely out!
Though the notion you may scout
I can prove without a doubt
That the mine of jocularity is utterly worked out! (p. 134).
Chapter II

GILBERT'S LATER WORKS: RECEPTION AND FAILURE

"At the fall of the curtain the plaudits were exceptionally enthusiastic. England's greatest living humorist was compelled to bow his acknowledgments three times, but wouldn't be drawn into a speech. The applause was sustained for ten minutes, and all the performers received flattering notice. One is compelled to state that Mr. Gilbert's share of the applause was doubtless more for his previous works than for the one just incepted."

Although it was written and published almost two decades before it was officially presented to the public in 1891, Gilbert's satiric play on Shakespearean, Hamletian, and Guildensternian themes is a testament to the enduring influence of the Bard. The play, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern," was first performed in a lyrical form and its reception as a poetic essay was met with mixed reviews. However, the play's themes and motifs have continued to resonate with contemporary audiences.

"I can well imagine that in the dim and distant future that the authorship of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will be the subject of as many heated discussions as the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy; there will be some who bring forward indisputable evidence to show that Gilbert wrote it, and there will be others who bring forward equally indisputable evidence to prove that none but George Bernard Shaw would have dared to write it!"


To Gilbert——the notably experimental the production——would probably decline to regard this original novelty as anything beyond a sketch," noted the Daily Telegraph in its review of the act. But even if taken at this comparatively limited value, it is superior both in freshness of invention and ingenuity of dialogue to many essays of more obvious nature seen nowadays, and the Pall Mall Gazette felt that it was worthy of development into some more substantial form.
Although it was written and published almost two decades before it was officially presented to the public in 1891, Gilbert's skit on Shakespeariana, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, can be considered in the thematic mainstream of Gilbert's efforts after 1890 because of its use of the theatrical profession as a satirical target and its kinship to the Hamlet material in *The Mountebanks* libretto of 1892. It was first published in serialized form in the comic journal, *Fun*, in December, 1874, and it was presented occasionally in private performance after that date, but it did not see the light of a West End theatre until June 3, 1891, when it was produced as part of a charity matinee at the Vaudeville Theatre.

"Mr. Gilbert—who yesterday superintended the production—would probably decline to regard this original comicality as anything beyond a sketch," noted the *Daily Chronicle* in its review of the matinee, "but even if taken at this comparatively limited value, it is superior both in freshness of invention and pungency of dialogue to many essays of a more ambitious nature seen nowadays," and the *Pall Mall Gazette* felt that it was "worthy of development into some more substantial form."

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1 The history of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* before 1891 was presented in a letter written by Gilbert to the Editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, May 18, 1891, p. 3.
Review of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in
The Lady’s Pictorial, May 7, 1892, p. 686,
presenting a humorous résumé of other
Hamlet travesties presented on the London stage:

AT THE PLAY.

"ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN," AT THE COURT.

In the new programme The Phantom, Bobesel still holds the
place of honour. No "Triple bill," indeed, could be genuine
without it. But its supremacy is challenged at last. The house
from which it has swayed millions (I suppose it runs into millions
by now) of merry makers, batters to its fall. And with the deposition
of the Prince of Wales, there will be the customary revolution, and a
couple of courtiers—Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—will reign in its
stead.

Mr. Gilbert is a poet. Let Sunbeams and Broken Hearts, and
fragments barked from any other of his serious plays speak on his
behalf. Like poor old Triflet, he is ready for anything "from an
epitaph to an epic." But, the time being out of joint and poetic
rhapsodies at a stupendous discount, he is one again with Triflet
in his willingness to turn tragedy into farce, for the better enjoyment
of cakes and ale. And first among his achievements in this branch
of art will stand his brilliant parody of Hamlet.

Parodies of the famous play exist, or have existed, in dozens, but
none upon the lines of Mr. Gilbert's choosing. There have been
Hamlets, puffy-guzzling little boys, who suffered frightfully from
infantilism, threatened of ghosts, and refused with pantoms the blue
pills prescribed by thoughtful Uncle Claudius; disobedient little
boys who soaped the floors and played at pirates in the brook, and
when Polonius and Ophelia had come to grief through their incon-
siderate horseplay, received their punishment at Laertes' hands
(literally hands) with a sad exhibition of temper. Others have borne a close
resemblance to the ruffians hired to do away with The Bobes in the Wood.
These have cultivated somnolent tones and gravity enroncetl cards, and then pro-
claimed themselves adventure, whose aim it was to terrify the Queen by rock-
and-ball, or more correctly rock-and-
ghost, stories of gossiping spirits, and
win her to regard them (marvellously
changed to her eyes) though they ap-
peared, after brief residence in Witten-
berg) as her sons and heirs. And fun,
of a kind, has been extracted from them
all. But the ingenious perversion Mr.
Gilbert's humour affects is to these
banalities as "sunlight unto moon-
light," and (subscribing for quotation's
sake to the precepts of the Trollope)
"as water unto wine." In his parody
there are wit, perception, and an in-
finitely number of sly but sounding little
hits at the joints of the real Hamlet's
homies. And so truly sustained is
the joke that one long laugh will last
you through the merry piece.
Both the Observer and the Times suggested that it be put to use on a
more permanent West End basis, and Fun noted that "... three separate
managements are negotiating with that view." A year later, on April 27,
1892, it was presented as part of a triple bill at the Court Theatre
with two other humorous pieces, The New Sub by Seymour Hicks and the
very popular A Pantomime Rehearsal by Cecil Clay. The Rosencrantz and
Guilderstern portion of the programme was again under Gilbert's direction,
and Brandon Thomas, who would make stage history later in the year as the
author of Charley's Aunt, appeared as Claudius. On the first night,
"the piece was received with shouts of laughter, and Mr. Gilbert was
forced to appear and receive congratulations." 2 Vanity Fair called it
... one of the most delightfully amusing travesties ever seen
on any stage. To describe it adequately is impossible. We can
only say that everybody should, as no doubt everybody will, go
to see it.

Two weeks after the 1892 opening, one writer reported, "... the Court
has been packed every night ..." 3 but Rosencrantz and Guilderstern
remained on the bill only until mid-July. This would not appear to be
a bad run, except that The New Sub and A Pantomime Rehearsal continued
to play after that date.

Perhaps the basic reason for the cutting of Rosencrantz and
Guilderstern from the triple bill at the Court Theatre in the summer
of 1892 was the fact that it was too restrictive of subject to sustain

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2 Review of Rosencrantz and Guilderstern, The Standard, April 28,
1892, p. 3.

3 The Gridiron, May 7, 1892, p. 105.
a large audience over the long pull of a popular theatrical run. In mid-July London theatres were packed with not-so-sophisticated audiences from the countryside, and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* was humour for the erudite, not the masses. In his opening-night review, the critic of the *Stage* indicated his awareness of the ironic fact that in the verbal merit of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* lay the seeds of its popular failure:

> It is that rare thing—a burlesque with ideas. It has—a damning sin, I know, in the eyes of many playgoers—literary merit. Instead of presenting us, in gaiety fashion, with a Hamlet who sings 'T-R-R-B-D-A,' and an Ophelia who is a petticoat dancer, it really caricatures, with wit and taste, the weaknesses of the great tragedy; and so becomes a subtle form of dramatic criticism. It has (pardon me for interjecting 'Thank goodness!') no scenic display, no gorgeous processions, no ballet, no music-hall songs. That is, to say, it is merely a work of art.

The critics for the *Saturday Review* and the *Stage* vaguely agreed with this analysis, expressing the view that the sketch worked as literature, but that its completely verbal humour was not well-suited to stage presentation. "The dry humour of Mr. Gilbert's burlesque loses in the acting," complained A. B. W[alkley] in the *Speaker*; "here is another fireside companion dragged before the footlights!" William Archer in the *World* said, "If Mr. Gilbert had designed this little piece for the stage I think he would have made more of some of the ideas which are now merely suggested . . . " Prior to the 1891 production, Gilbert had, in fact, told critics to keep in mind that the piece had not originally been written for the stage. However, J. T. Grein in *Life* was completely disenchanted with the whole business: " . . . on the
whole, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is poor stuff—rather puerile and frothy. A gigantic opportunity has been frittered away."

There was also some question concerning the propriety of the satire. The Daily Chronicle in 1892 expressed the belief that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was not "of a nature to wound the thinnest-skinned worshippers of the bard," but there were a few obvious dissenters from this view. In fact, the bumptious (and apparently not totally literate) editor of the Dramatic Review had already been offended by the play a year earlier:

Rosencrantz and Guildenstein [sic] is a ridiculous parody on Hamlet, which is more amusing than in good taste, as the greatest production in literature, and the greatest writer that ever was on earth should be held in reverence instead of being made a jest of.

Thirteen years later, the dramatic critic of the conservative newspaper, the People, voiced a similar outcry after seeing another charity performance of the sketch:

The old Horatian reflection 'It is sweet to play the fool in season' is well enough when indulged just for once in the cause of charity; but repetitions of the fooling, however good, as such, would raise the question of the taste of the dramatists of our time making mock of their master for all time.

In 1920 Thomas H. Dickinson counted the play among "the most surprising lapses of Gilbert's taste," a view echoed in later years by Arthur Quiller-Couch and popularised by Leslie Baily in editions of The Gilbert and

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Sullivan Book. Returning to the reviews of 1892, we find that J. H. McC.
expressed this view of the Court Theatre production:

... there was not much joy in the performance on Wednesday night. ... Can it be that sense of respect to the illustrious departed, some serious thoughts of him whose genius broods over the Warwick fields—for I do not suppose that the Baconian theory has ever troubled the minds of actor or actress—shadowed their mirth and froze the genial current of their hilarity? Something was the matter; there are infinite possibilities for the comic in Hamlet and Ophelia, but they were not brought out on Wednesday. Surely Mr. [Neidon] Grossmith [as Hamlet] did not fear to pain the susceptibilities of Mr. Bearbohm Tree (currently appearing on the London stage as Hamlet).

Looking to the work itself, one finds that all of the characters in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are based upon characters in Hamlet, but they exhibit noticeable ironic differences from Shakespeare's originals in personality or situation. Gilbert prepares the audience (or at least the reader) for this difference in a mock heroic Miltonic "Argument" that introduces his work "founded on an old Danish legend" (p. 75):

King Claudius, when a young man, wrote a five-act tragedy which was damned, and all reference to it forbidden under penalty of death. The King has a son—Hamlet—whose tendency to soliloquy has so alarmed his mother, Queen Gertrude, that she has sent for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to devise some Court revels for his entertainment. Rosencrantz is a former lover of Ophelia? (to whom Hamlet is betrothed), and they lay

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6 Leslie Baily, The Gilbert and Sullivan Book, originally published in 1952, 1956 by Cassell; a revised edition was published by Spring Books in 1966. All editions have the same comments about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

7 Ophelia and Rosencrantz were betrothed from the cradle, one of Gilbert's favourite devices of mock melodrama: characters who were lovers or betrothed from the cradle appeared in a number of Gilbert's works before 1890 and the concept is repeated again in the plot of The Grand Duke.
their heads together to devise a plan by which Hamlet may be put out of the way. Some Court theatricals are in preparation. Ophelia and Rosencrantz persuade Hamlet to play his father's tragedy before the King and Court. Hamlet, who is unaware of the prescription, does so, and he is banished, and Rosencrantz happily united to Ophelia (p. 76).

Although this outline seems a wide departure from the plot of the original Hamlet, a close analysis of Gilbert's play shows some ingenious and amusing symbolic parallels with the original work (the "crime" of Claudius, the play scene in which he suffers mental anguish, Hamlet's trip to England at the instigation of Claudius). Actually, Gilbert interwines non-Shakespearean scenes of known making (the love vows of Ophelia and Rosencrantz) with parodies of scenes from the original play (Hamlet's "to be or not to be" soliloquy), a construction which tends to disorient the audience and undoubtedly was the reason some early critics expressed dissatisfaction with Gilbert's "plot".

The sketch opens with a scene between King Claudius and Queen Gertrude in which the Queen attempts to console Claudius as he laments his authorship of a long-forgotten bad play (paralleling Gilbert's own real life failure as a serious dramatist and foreshadowing King Paramount's secret literary efforts in Utopia Limited and Barrie's failure as a dramatic actor in The Mountebanks). The opening speech of the King is indicative of the general tone of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, both in its parody of Shakespearean dramatic verse and in its veiled...

8 Gilbert was quite pleased with his attempts to parody Shakespearean language, and he loved to bait Shakespeare enthusiasts with his imitations. "The curious thing is that he really did believe it was 'jolly good Shakespeare,'" notes Hasketh Palmer in his Gilbert and Sullivan (London: Hamilton, 1935), pp. 273-274.
At the Garrick, Gilbert was famous for perpetrating subtle pranks upon his fellow-members—even within the sacred precincts of the dignified Club itself. On a cold January night, I was one of a group sitting around the blazing open fire in the members' lounge. Gilbert left the Club early that evening, and after he retired Cyril Maude, with whom I had been conversing, asked me if I had heard of the joke Gilbert had played upon a fellow Garrickian, whose admiration for Shakespeare amounted to an obsession.

As the story goes, Gilbert met this friend (whose name is internationally known, but whom I shall call Mr. X to preserve his incognito) in the members' lounge after dinner. As Gilbert entered, Mr. X remarked good-humoredly:

"Hello, Gilbert. What have you been doing lately? Wasting your time, as usual?"

"Yes," Gilbert admitted frankly; "reading Shakespeare."

"Oh, well," Mr. X retorted, refusing to rise to the bait; "it takes a poet to appreciate a poet, and a genius to understand a genius."

"I don't dispute Shakespeare's genius," Gilbert declared with assumed petulance; "but I will never admit that everything he wrote was inspired."

"You don't have to admit anything," Mr. X retorted calmly. "The fact remains that there is more between the lines of Shakespeare's works than any other author ever wrote."

Gilbert made an impatient gesture. "Look here," he exclaimed. "Listen to these lines I read last evening, and tell me if you can find a single trace of sense or beauty in them:

'I would as lief leap through a thickset hedge
As say "plosh" to a thrush."

Did you ever hear such arrant nonsense?"

Mr. X instantly became tense. "At last you expose your ignorance," he declared impatiently. "Those lines are classic—"

Gilbert manifested what appeared to be genuine surprise.

"Classic?" he repeated. "You really mean that they are—"

"Good heavens, man!" Mr. X interrupted. "In reading those words can't you see the dew glistening on the grass, the buds bursting into bloom, the birds twittering in the trees—all Nature awakening? They form nothing less than an inspired invocation to spring. Don't be a fool!"

Gilbert beamed, as he leaned forward to strike the bell. When the page appeared, he said:

"Ask the gentlemen what they will have to drink. Mr. X will pay the bill."

Then he turned to Mr. X with that whimsical expression on his face his friends loved, and shook his finger indulgently at his critic.

"Shakespeare didn't write those lines," he said, chuckling—"I wrote them."
allusion to the crime and ghost of Shakespeare's original play:

If by an effort of the will I could
Annul the ever-present Past—disperse
The gaunt and gloomy ghosts of bygone deeds,
Or bind them with imperishable chains
In caverns of the past incarcerated,
Then could I smile again—but not till then! (p. 77).

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern enter, preceded by the Queen's explanation
to the King that

To cheer our son, whose solitary tastes
And tendency to long soliloquy
Have much alarmed us, I, unknown to thee,
Have sent for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—
Two merry knaves, kin to Polonius,
Who will devise such revels in our Court—
Such antic schemes of harmless merriment—
As shall abstract his meditative mind
From sad employment... . . (pp. 78-79).

Walter Sichel wrote in 1911, "Nowhere . . . is [Gilbert's] irony more
marked than in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, where the soliloquising
Hamlet figures as the worst bore in England,"9 and these lines of
Gertrude are the first of many satiric allusions to the speeches of
Hamlet both in this work and in The Mountebanks. Receiving special
satirical treatment in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is Hamlet's "To
be or not to be" soliloquy. When Guildenstern offers Hamlet a
revolver to use for purpose of suicide, Hamlet exclaims, "To take
those dreadful things away. They make / My blood run cold. Go away—
go away!" (p. 82). Later when Claudius threatens to kill him, Hamlet
pleads, "Hold thine hand! / I can't bear death—I'm a philosopher!" (p. 83).

9Sichel's comment is theoretically correct, although the expressed
setting of the work is Elsinore, not England. Walter Sichel, "The
English Aristophanes" (1911), reprinted in W. S. Gilbert: A Century
of Scholarship and Commentary, p. 105.
As Hamlet attempts his famous speech, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern interrupt him with mundane remarks at every pause, and the infuriated Hamlet roars angrily, "It must be patent to the nearest dunce / Three persons can't soliloquise at once!" (p. 82). Many early reviewers felt that this scene was the funniest in the play, but to the present writer, most of the interruptions seem too trifling and forced, not an example of Gilbert's best wit. Hamlet attempts to gain an advantage over the two interpolators by employing the recorder episode from the original play, but Hamlet is foiled because Rosencrantz does know how to use the flute. Hamlet produces and proceeds to give a demonstration of his skill on the instrument. Later in the work, Hamlet is again upstaged when he gives his famous "advice to the players," and the first player replies:

Sir, we are beholden to you for your good counsels. But we would urge upon your consideration that we are accomplished players, who have spent many years in learning our profession; and we would venture to suggest that it would better beth your lordship to confine yourself to such matters as your lordship may be likely to understand. We, on our part, may have our own ideas as to the duties of heirs-apparent; but it would ill become us to air them before your lordship, who may be reasonably supposed to understand such matters more perfectly than your very humble servants (p. 86).¹⁰

All of these reversals of incidents from Shakespeare's original play indicate Gilbert's irritation with the complete intellectual superiority over other characters Shakespeare gave Hamlet, and Gilbert

¹⁰Dean B. Farnsworth ("Satire in the Works of W. S. Gilbert," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1950, p. 176) has taken the position that "the haughty response accorded Hamlet by the professional actors confirms ... that Gilbert identified himself with Hamlet and identified the players with conventional nineteenth century stock types."
thus ridicules Shakespeare's philosopher hero by turning him into a bumbling, self-indulgent clown, easily the most ridiculous figure in the sketch. In fact, the reason Gilbert made a point of naming his travesty after two minor characters from the original play was probably because he felt Shakespeare had made Hamlet too much of a "one man show." When Rosencrantz approaches Hamlet to produce the King's old play, Rosencrantz baits Hamlet by explaining that there is a very important role in it for Hamlet to play:

Ros. (excitedly). That's excellent. Ooh. But, pray consider—all the other parts are insignificant.
Ham. What matters that? We'll play this piece.
Ros. The plot's impossible, and all the dialogue bombastic stuff.
Ham. I tell you, sir, that we will play this piece (p. 84).

The ensuing play scene turns into a parody of the play scene from Shakespeare's work with Claudius eventually writhing in agony as he slowly realizes that the hack melodrama being performed before the Court which everyone finds so unintentionally hilarious is the early work of his own hands. The critic for the Saturday Review in 1892 was not impressed:

...it ends very feebly indeed with Hamlet reciting the mock heroes of the King's tragedy, and stopping between the lines to laugh. In truth, there is very little to laugh at, and we envy the Queen and courtiers their readiness to be amused.

To the present writer it appears that although there is little literary merit involved, the scene could come to life on the stage if the King's discomfort were handled well, revealing the humorous parallel with Claudius in the original play. The scene also reminds one that Gilbert
himself refused to attend actual public performances of his own works and that he once confessed, "The risk of seeing my own failure in public—no, I cannot brave that." Unlike the King in Shakespeare's play, Gilbert's Claudius becomes so enraged at the performance that he reveals before the Court his "crime" (of writing a bad play). He is about to condemn his son to death for producing it when alert Ophelia (an "extremely unromantic" foil to Shakespeare's original heroine and one of Gilbert's typical coy but knowledgeable females) suggests that the King should banish his son to a place called "Engle-land" where the people will more readily appreciate his eccentric ways. Claudius agrees:

Well, we're dull dogs in Denmark. It may be
That we've misjudged him. If such race there be—
(There may be—I am not a well-read man)
They're welcome to his philosophic brain—
So, Hamlet, get thee gone—and don't come back again!
(pp. 88-89).

"It all ends in smoke," said J. T. Grein in Life, "and the curtain falls on a very feeble situation." E. F. S. in the Pictorial World complained that the conclusion was "lame and impotent," a criticism that would be repeated by many reviewers about the closing scene of a number of Gilbert's later works. An unexpected forgotten agency

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12 The strained, rather loveless relationship between Hamlet and Claudius ("... my son—my play—both worthless!" p. 88) is not unlike that between Gilbert and his own father as described in a number of biographies, especially Hesketh Pearson, Gilbert: His Life and Strife (London: Rothman, 1957).

13 Phrase used to describe Gilbert's Ophelia by the Morning Advertiser, April 23, 1892, p. 2.
introduced at the climax to produce a satisfactory ending is a standard
plot device, and this deus ex machina method is a very apparent in
Haste to the Wedding, Utopia Limited, The Grand Duke, and, in a
twisted way, in even The Importance. Gilbert himself told William
Archer in 1901,

There is nothing easier than to write a good first act, and
even the heightening of the complication in the second act is
not very difficult. The dramatist's real problem is, and must
always be, the solution in the last act.¹⁴

¹⁴ William Archer, Real Conversations (London: Heinemann, 1904),
p. 110.
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHTNOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF
EARLY PRODUCTIONS OF ROSENCRANZ AND GUILDENSTERN IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

*Review with drawings; **Review with photographs;
***Article with digest of contemporary reviews;
(B) denotes publication available only at Bloomsbury Reading Room; all
others available at Colindale Reading Room.

I. H.H.S. Serpent Widows and Orphans Relief Fund Charity Matines,
Vaudeville Theatre, June 3, 1891
CAST: Claudius (Mr. Alexander Watson); Gertrude (Mrs. Theodore
Wright); Hamlet (Mr. Frank Linda); Rosencrantz (Mr. S. Herbert-
Basing); Guildenstern (Mr. C. Lambourne); First Player (Mr. G.
Stewart); Second Player (Miss Bessele); Ophelia (Miss Mary
Bessele)

Publications of June 4, 1891
p.5. Fall Mall Budget, review by R.U.E. p.27. Fall Mall Gaiette,

Publications of June 5
Daily Chronicle, p.2.

Publications of June 6
p.508.

Publications of June 7
The Observer, p.6. The People, p.4. The Referee, p.3. Sunday Sun,

Publications of June 9
Licensed Victualler's Mirror (Cox), p.274.

Publications of June 11
Piccadilly, p.27.

Publications of June 13
The Gentlewoman, review by Hosius, p.31. Pictorial World, p.750.

Publications of June 17
Fun (B), review by Nester, p.246.

Publications of July 1891 - The Theatre, pp. 34-35

II. Triple Bill Programme (Rosencreant and Guildenstern by Gilbert,
The New Sub by Seymour Hicks, A Fantomme Rehearsal by Cecil Clay).
Court Theatre, April 27, 1892
CAST: Claudius (Mr. Brandon Thomas); Gertrude (Miss Gertrude
Kingston); Hamlet (Mr. W. E. Crossmith); Rosencrantz (Mr.
Elliot); Ophelia (Miss Decima Moore); Guildenstern (Mr. C. P.
Little); First Player (Mr. W. E. Franscombe); Lady Player
(Miss May Palfrey); Polonius (Mr. R. Rochfort)
Publications of April 23, 1892

Publications of April 29:

Publications of April 30:

Publications of May 1:

Publications of May 3:
- *The Demia*, review by Manfred, p. 17.

Publications of May 4:

Publications of May 5:

Publications of May 6:

Publications of May 7:

Publications of May 8:
- *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, p. 3.

Publications of May 14:

Publications of August 6:
- *Pick-Up*, review by *Jingle*, pp. 300-301.

III. Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital Benefit Performance, Garrick Theatre, July 19, 1904
CAST: Claudius (Mr. W. S. Gilbert); Gertrude (Lady Colin Campbell); Hamlet (Captain Robert Marshall); Rosencrantz (Mr. Leo Trevor); Guildenstern (Mr. Paul Rubens); First Player (Sir Francis Burnand); Second Player (Miss Clo Graves); Ophelia (Mrs. Madalaine Luette Ryley); Curtiers (Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Edward Rose, and Mr. Anthony Hope).
Publications of July 20, 1904


Publications of July 22

St. James's Budget, p. 10.

Publications of July 23

The Graphic, p. 123 (illustrations only). The Outlook, review by St. J. H., p. 12.

Publications of July 24

The Referee, review by Carados, p. 2.

Publications of July 26

The World, review by William Archer, p. 147.

Publications of July 27


Publications of July 28

Truth, pp. 224-225.

Publications of July 30

THE MOUNTEBANKS

"Other lodes there may be, richer perhaps in golden ore, but ... Mr. Gilbert caters for the public on principles far too soundly British to leave the auriferous vein of topsy-turvy paradox for speculative prospecting, however tempting."


1 Colline died just a few days before The Mountebanks opened in 1892, and much of the blame was attached to his dying (see review in the Lady); this may account in part for the apathetic acclaim the early critics gave the score. In a typically incorrect mode, Bernard Shaw was a notable dissenter. Shaw criticized the music in his original review of The Mountebanks in the World, and he began his review of KaiserLindt a year later in the same publication with this sarcastic reminiscence: That is to see Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan working together again in full burlesque. They should be on the best of terms for months, for Arthurotic Mr. Arthur can always say, 'Any other librettist would do just as well': look at opera. Mr. Sullivan's opera with a librettist by Sir Henry Suter had been a failure the year before; whilst Mr. Gilbert and Robert,' Any other music-hall would do just as well: look at The Mountebanks.' For further comment on Colline's contribution to this work, see The Manager, Jan. 15, 1892, p. 77, and John Addin, "Colline: After the Emperor," Musical Rambler (U.K.), April 16, 1892, pp. 59, 72, and again in the Old Journal, April 1997, p. 15; July 1897, p. 64; and June 1898, p. 65.
The *Mountebanks* was the first major work Gilbert attempted after the dissolution of his partnership with Arthur Sullivan and Richard D'Oyly Carte at the beginning of the eighteen-nineties. With music composed by the popular light opera arranger and conductor, Alfred Cellier, 1 the *Mountebanks* was first produced at the Lyric Theatre on January 4, 1892, under the auspices of Horace Sedger, a manager contemporary sources considered as "energetic" as D'Oyly Carte himself, and the *St. James's Gazette* noted that "... everything that tact, foresight, and lavish expenditure could do to ensure the [satisfactory] result has been effected." The consequent response of the opening-night audience would have warmed the coin-chilled heart of any theatrical entrepreneur. "Without hitch or flaw, the

1 Cellier died just a few days before *The Mountebanks* opened in 1892, and much of the music was composed as he lay dying (see review in the *Lady*); this may account in part for the sympathetic acclaim the early critics gave his score. In a typically irreverent mood, Bernard Shaw was a notable dissenter. Shaw criticised the music in his original review of *The Mountebanks* in the *World*, and he began his review of *Utopia Limited* a year later in the same publication with this sarcastic reminiscence: "Pleasant it is to see Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan working together again full brotherly. They should be on the best of terms; for henceforth Sir Arthur can always say, 'Any other librettist would do just as well; look at Hadden Hall. Sullivan's opera with a libretto by Sydney Grundy had been a failure the year before; whilst Mr. Gilbert can retort, 'Any other musician would do just as well; look at *The Mountebanks*.'" For further comment on Cellier's contribution to the work, see *The Speaker*, Jan. 16, 1892, p. 77, and John Ardoin, "G&S: After the Carpets," *Saturday Review* (N.Y.), April 16, 1966, pp. 69, 72, and items in the *G&S Journal*: April 1927, p. 15; July 1927, p. 4; and June 1935, p. 85.


See "The Prentice."
first opera of Mr. Gilbert sans Sullivan glided to its close amidst ever increasing manifestations of merriment, delight, and pleasure," reported the Echo. "... in the opening act there were no less than six encores, and in the second, four," noted the Weekly Times and Echo. "There were others that the audience wished to hear over again, but Mr. Ivan Caryll, who conducted, did not comply with the expressed desire." The reviews that appeared in the London press the following day continued the praise begun by the cheering first-nighters; and the Musical Times announced, "The success of the work was complete. Mr. Gilbert has written a most quaint and humourous libretto which Mr. Cellier has provided with music at once charming and musicianly."

"A more genuine and triumphant success has rarely been achieved," acclaimed the Observer a week later, "and The Mountebanks is evidently destined to draw crowded audiences for many months—probably years—to come." However, an ominous, lengthy early exception to this praise appeared in the "Scrutator" column in Labouchere's Journal, Truth, which concluded,

... if 'The Mountebanks' may be accepted as unadulterated Gilbert, or at any rate as Gilbertism before it had passed through the purifying hands of Sir A. Sullivan, the doctrine that two heads are better than one will indisputably apply.

The knowledgeable critics of the Athenæum and the Saturday Review along with Bernard Shaw in the World were among others who noted some rather important flaws in the work. Gilbert himself confided to a friend three weeks after the opening, "I am the worst possible judge
Ruskin

I do not know that it is necessary to say anything more in justification of The Discourses than that it made me laugh hourly several times. The brigades whose motto is "Herold without fear" is the author who pays his bills with laughter, accompanied by a writtennowledgement to the publishers for this. There are many points, such as the graceful formality of the little portraits, with their own names "working out," and the many minor labours in the accusations, all done from their love of work, which will astonish Collier more effectually than his new dignity of de mœurs from the blend of real anecdotes which qualifies every minute expression of the Scalettaesco prose piece. But from the more unscrupulous manner in which he is accustomed to mislead the public, he has turned clever, this unscrupulous wile, pretending that he has confessed his papers and he is in the service of the censors, is forced to swallow a slice which he has the misfortune of giving these people so much trouble. The transformation of this same slice of the brigades into mad, the clowns and comedians into fantastic clockwork figures, the trifles taken in an old boy, the joke, a lunch, and the nuxt into a dish—all these went for no more than such a large price, the opera would not come out of many of the pies in point of fact. But then, however, the merits of the piece Ipego: every line that goes down to your heart is to the best. Mr. Gilbert has gone wrong in his old way: he has raised his prices. In this Shakespearean, there must be a slide for the amusing little scenes and plots; but I defy any dramatic to see the fantastic and the conventional, the Shakespearean and the sentiments, finding one another for stage-room without causing his play. The New Macbeth, I beg in an ourrful, silly, where the stage-room people want to play Shakespeare, and whose impossible brigades, presenting forward something, agree to hold a revel for twenty-four days as was ordained by the fashions and not to occur during all that time above a wigette, because of the founded allegory about the scheme. When the way he has admitted his readers into the transcription of the inferior, brigades, "menea, menea, and everyone else become worthy by drinking a magic potion, are restored to their natural, or rather, normal state, and the burning of the idol of the battle which contains the publicity. Unless there is no room for the round of them or the idol of Enemy Zone. There's a man so clever as Mr. Gilbert would have supposed that the champions of such a silly could be looked at as from the conventional figures of the Simplicity of the materia. Mr. unfothkoly did suppose, however; for one of the eloquent, a girl who loves the hero and is morally devoted to him, might have been turned out at the moment. When Alfred at the time of the king, and then thought that he must breathe, has the hero, thereby becoming his adopted wife. Instantly she delays the action, her situations, and being quite unfashionably, it is clearly the hero, the plot of the proper place. In the second act, she goes to the immediate lengths of a sudden denunciation. She "resists" at the sacrifice of the hero, not in the fashion of the Frigate of Pensone on hearing that his picture is an absurd—so it is only variety of rock en Face et en Follet—but actually is the orthodoxy of the Jason. I am afraid that Miss Leslie herself will think me greatly individualised when I say, as I must, that if her part were completely cut out, the play would be much improved, less that is in controllable my opinion. Alfred could quite unfashionably be represented as an abducter when he was at war, and the incident of the murder, might easily be managed otherwise, if not wholly, said. Under these circumstances, he is little to be found for Mr. Gilbert, though he is as ugly, if not less ugly. The old woman's part in the play is happily not a very Lady of the Lake, or a young woman, who makes up the scenes, blustering and antagonism, and pays the penalty like the rest.

Another weakness in the act is that there is no dramatic action in the second act—not only a simple exhibition of the characters in the sight by which the elder residing of them at the end of the fair. They walk in two lines; song does not mean the uncertainty of their condition in a certain room; and go off again, except the song by the cross-cut, which nobody wants to know. And there happens an incident planned in the first act and disposed of by the song of the chorus, and the mechanical release of events, which mingled in the song that is not quite as such in my eyes when the fair begins to occur. The result is that the opera is vice versa too involved in the entire flats, and this makes that the minor flats without fitness, equally as the composer signified to come to the crown of this particular play. Collier's strength lies in the working up of figures, but his characters do not get such that one can thrust gladness. Most of the chorus. The rest of the scene is what might have been expected from the composer—that is better than the occasion required it to be; and in this very capacity of musical accompaniment one recognizes his hand at the last which has saved Sir Arthur Sullivan from every musical sensation at Mr. Gilbert. Mississips will not think the
of my own work, and I was in despair about the piece. Time eventually proved Gilbert's early unfavourable prediction a sadly accurate prognosticator. The London production of The Mountebanks lasted for only 229 performances—not a bad run but far below the standard set by many of Gilbert's earlier works with Sullivan—and when the work opened in New York a year after its London premiere, it proved a dismal failure despite the fact that the renowned Lillian Russell headed its cast.

This relative popular disregard for The Mountebanks following the rapturous praise of most of the London press could be laid to the fickle irrationality of the public and the fact that this was not a work that carried the full, enticing label of Gilbert and Sullivan; yet there are certain flaws in the libretto itself that undoubtedly contributed to its failure at the box office. Although The Mountebanks has many admirable ingredients which will be discussed later in this study, many critics noted that Gilbert was repeating himself with most of his plot elements and characterizations. The Sporting Times called Gilbert "the Grand Old Tautologist," and went on to say that

The Mountebanks is a hash up of his own little Creatures of Impulse with ideas freely borrowed from The Princess of Teszende, and reminiscences throughout of The Pirates of Penzance, The Palace of Truth, and others of Gilbert's previous productions.

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3 W. S. Gilbert, letter to Mrs. Trouver, Jan. 28, 1892, in the Reginald Allen Type Copyist file, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City. Also in this collection is this letter dated Jan.11 to Mrs. Austin: "The piece is but a poor thing—necessarily so, considering the dolorous circumstances under which it was written. Much of the Music of Act 2 was still unwritten at the time of poor Cellier's death and the gaps had to be filled in with hasty and meagre dialogue. I have improved it a little since the first night—fortunately the public have not yet discovered how bad it is. It's good enough for them."

4 See pp. 50–52, above.
Critics also complained that the work possessed an excessively complicated plot structure and lacked thematic direction. Unlike the satire in most of Gilbert's successful earlier libretti, the satire in The Mountebanks is not centered on any particular topic. Although theatrical and Shakespearean allusions allied to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are clearly in evidence throughout the work, interest in the first act runs toward such diverse topics as secret societies, adoration of the nobility, and greedy hotel owners and theatrical managers, while the second act is given over to not altogether tasteful satire on such equally divergent topics as old age, monastic religious orders, and melodramatic heroines. The result is a libretto that in many ways lacks direction and purpose.

A similar fault in the dramatic unity of The Mountebanks lies in Gilbert's effort to incorporate too many events and characters into one plot structure. The Pall Mall Gazette noted that "... the story is somewhat overburdened with characters ...", resulting in what the Athenaeum decried as "the absence of anything resembling a connected plot." There are three separate groups of people represented, and their problems have little relationship one to another. Gilbert tries to give lengthy attention to a number of completely separate romantic relationships, and even the most favourable early reviews criticized the abnormally long playing time of the production—a span of almost three and a half hours, according to the Daily Chronicle.
The scene of *The Mountebanks* is a small Sicilian village at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and one of the three groups involved in the libretto is Arrostino Annegato's secret society of rather cowardly comic bandits who seek vengeance on almost everyone for supposed injustices against one of their ancestors:

We are members of a Secret Society,
Working by the moon's uncertain disc;
Our motto is 'Revenge without Anxiety'—
That is, without unnecessary risk (p. 355).

Their bumbling, affable ways are reminiscent of other outlaws (and law enforcers) in Gilbert's earlier work. As the libretto begins, the twenty-four members of the Tamasras have agreed to marry twenty-four of the local village maidens, planning a wedding a day for twenty-four days with the entire period to be spent in "unceasing revelry" (p. 356). The first of the marriage partnerships has just been completed between Risotto, one of the bandits, and Minestra, a sprightly village girl.

The villagers comprise another of the social groups in *The Mountebanks*. Among their number is the village maiden, Ultrice, whom the *Times* described as being "of forbidding appearance and strong character," who carries within her youthful frame all those damning characteristics that plague Gilbert's cruel proliferation of ageing, man-chasing spinsteres represented in differing degrees in Gilbert's

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5 Mascagni's light opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, had been a rousing success when it was first produced in London in the autumn of 1891, and it might have been a factor in Gilbert's selection of locale and treatment in *The Mountebanks*; however, the opinion of the *Times* was that "... it is, perhaps, fair to say that, in spite of the odd coincidence in subject no idea of parodying *Cavalleria Rusticana* seems to have occurred to the author."

6 Although he did not approve of the Ultrice characterization, Shaw found some solace in the fact that "... though she is ugly, [she] is at least not old."
later work by Lady Sophy in *Utopia Limited*, Baroness von Krakenfeld in *The Grand Duke*, and Dame Hedda Cortlandt in *His Excellency*. Ultrice is frantically in love with the sentimental peasant farmer, Alfredo, who, in turn, is in love with the pretty village girl, Teresa, who, according to Gilbert, is "in love with herself" (p. 354). Teresa was described by the *Times* as a female "whose high appreciation of her own charms will be recognized as one of Mr. Gilbert's favourite themes."

Her statements and songs of mock modesty are in typical Gilbert fashion:

> To be quite candid with you, I have often wondered what people can see in me to admire. Personally, I have a poor opinion of my attractions... But the conviction that I am a remarkably attractive girl is so generally entertained that, in common modesty, I feel bound to yield to the pressure of popular sentiment, and to look upon myself as an ineffective working minority (pp. 363-364).

Teresa's cruel plan to regain the visible affection of Alfredo after he decides to ignore her because of her open indifference to his advances in the first act presents an excellent illustration of Gilbert's portrayal of the vain, scheming aspects of womankind (a picture Gilbert will draw again in the same colours with Gov. Griffonfeld's selfish daughters and their treatment of their naive admirers in *His Excellency*).

Teresa sings,

> Despised! Rejected! Do I wake or dream? By him rejected? Oh, the shame of it! Rather than this I'll overwhelm him with The torrent of my passion—make him think My brain is tottering for the love of him; And when at last he yields to my protesting, I'll say, 'Ha! ha! poor fool—I was but jesting!' (p. 379).
Teresa's Song of "Self-Depreciation"

in The Mountebanks (p. 364):

BALLAD.—Teresa.
It's my opinion—though I own
In thinking so I'm quite alone—
In some respects I'm but a fright,
You like my features, I suppose?
I'm disappointed with my nose:
Some rave about it—perhaps they're right.
My figure just sets off a bit;
But when they say it's exquisite
(And they do say so), that's too strong.
I hope I'm not what people call
Opinionated! After all,
I'm but a goose, and may be wrong!
When charms enthrall
There's some excuse
For measures strong;
And, after all,
I'm but a goose,
And may be wrong!

My teeth are very neat, no doubt;
But, after all, they may fall out;
I think they will—some think they won't.
My hands are small, as you may see,
But not as small as they might be.
At least, I think so—others don't.
But there, a girl may preach and praise
From morning six to evening eight;
And never stop to dine,
When all the world, although misled
Is quite agreed on any head—
And it is quite agreed on mine.
All said and done,
It's little I
Against a throng
I'm only one,
And possibly
I may be wrong!
A third group of characters is found in the theatrical troupe which give Gilbert's libretto its title. When Pietro, the leader of these mountebanks, attempts to entice the townspeople to attend a performance of his company's show, his speech is a delightful character-revealing Gilbertian exposition, but it demonstrates the major weakness of the work in which it appears: too many satirical shafts going in too many directions. Gilbert not only projects the greediness of a theatrical manager, but also interjects satiric comment on the kitsch entertainment of the variety music hall, Shakespeare, the public's traditional attitude toward the theatrical profession, and English social class distinctions:

The greatest men have their weaknesses, and I have mine. I have been cursed through life with a morbid craving for copper! I was cradled in a copper. I have frequently been taken up by a copper. A bull once tossed me for a copper. 'Heads!' I cried. I came down tails, and he won. I was hurt. I felt it very much. . . . Now to business. At half-past three will be performed a dress rehearsal of the performance to be given before the Duke and Duchess of Pallavicini, comprising an exhibition of conjuring, necromancy, spirit manifestations, thought-reading, hypnotism, mesmeric psychology, psychography, sensory hallucination, dancing on the slack wire and ground, and lofty tumbling. Also will be exhibited the two world-renown life-size clockwork automatons, representing Hamlet and Ophelia . . . as they appeared in the bosoms of their families before they disgraced their friends by taking to the stage for a livelihood. The price of admission will be one penny for the aristocracy, members of the upper middle classes half price (p. 371).

The major members of this mountebanks troupe are the manager, Pietro; the clown, Bartolo; and the pretty dancing girl, Nita. This trio make up another romantic triangle in the libretto. Although Nita is now engaged to Pietro, she was formerly engaged to Bartolo, but she broke the engagement because Bartolo had told her that he was a tragedian, and she was broken-hearted to discover that he was only a clown (another
Gilbertian hit at the public's glorification of tragic actors. Bartolo's ironic reply to Alida's accusation of deception in the latter parallels the disastrous playwriting experience of Claudius in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and could be taken as a reflection of Gilbert's own failure in the realm of serious drama.

I didn't deceive you. I've played the first acts—and the first alone—of all our tragedies. No human eye has seen me in the second act of anything! My last appearance was three months ago. I played the moody Dane. As no one else had ever played him, so I played that Dane. Gods! how they laughed! I see them now—I hear their ribald roars. The whole house rocked with laughter! I've a soul that cannot brook contempt. 'Laugh on!' I said; 'laugh on, and laugh your fill—you laugh your last! No man shall ever laugh at me again—I'll be a clown! I kept my word—they laugh at me no more (p. 372).

The main attraction of the mountebanks troupe are a set of automated, life-size Hamlet and Ophelia dolls which allow Gilbert to continue the satire on Shakespeare he had brought to London audiences a year earlier in the first public showing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

Gilbert tries to unify his rambling dramatic structure in The Mountebanks by showing the effect of two incidents on all of these characters. The first of these incidents is the announcement that a passing duke and duchess will visit the village. Ironically, this duke and duchess never actually appear in the libretto—an omission that disturbs audience expectations built up throughout the length of the work. All of the characters—bandits, villagers, mountebanks—engage in selfish schemes to make money out of the visit of the aristocratic couple. The bandits, for instance, decide to attempt an abduction of the duke and duchess to hold them for ransom. They plan...
to do this by disguising themselves as monks from a local monastery and disguising Minesta as an old woman in need to lure the duke and duchess into their clutches. Ultrice's uncle, Elvino, a greedy but likeable innkeeper, sees a great future for his business because of the publicity of the visit of these dignitaries, although the accommodations of his establishment leave something to be desired:

Indifferent eating, / Hard beds and damp sheeting
(I hope they've some Keating),
Afford a poor greeting / To people who stop at this inn!
(p. 366).

However, Elvino persuades Ultrice and Alfredo to impersonate the duke and duchess in order that he may practice the etiquette of the nobility. The mountebanks hope to cash in on the visit of the duke and duchess by selling their Hamlet and Ophelia robots to the visiting nobility. However, the robots have been momentarily lost, and Pietro persuades Bartolo and Nita to disguise themselves as the dolls until a business transaction can be arranged with the visiting nobility for the purchase of the figures.

The second incident that involves all of the characters in the play is their accidental imbibing of a potion whose label states,

'\[ \text{Man is a hypocrite, and invariably affects to be better and wiser than he really is. This liquid, which should be freely diluted, has the effect of making every one who drinks it exactly what he pretends to be. The hypocrite becomes a man of piety; the scandler, a man of honour; the quack, a man of learning; and the braggart, a man of war.} \right \]' (p. 374).

The result is that the bandits find themselves trapped in their attitudes of being celibate, fun-hating monks; Minesta takes on the physical attributes of an old woman; Alfredo and Ultrice become convinced that
Alfredo and Ultrice imitating the Duke and Duchess

(Black and White, January 9, 1892, p. 39)

See also, p. 369, below
they really are a duke and duchess; Teresa falls madly in love with Alfredo (who rejects her for his duchess wife, Ultrice); Bartolo and Nita become mechanical beings who must be wound up to think and move; and Pietro, who tried to keep the other characters from drinking the potion by telling them it was poison, staggers about the stage believing that he really has been poisoned.

This motley collection of transformations indicates that Gilbert had allowed his plot to get out of control. There are so many characters involved and so many different changes arbitrarily effected that William Archer was forced to concede three years later, "... delightful though the piece was as a whole, the plot of the second act to this day remains a mystery to me." It is also important to note that the moral overtones implied in the inscription on the label of the potion are not really valid since not all of the characters were actually feigning "to be better and wiser" in their pre-transformation masquerades as the label prescribed (certainly not Minerva as an old woman nor Pietro as a man fearing to be poisoned); consequently, many of the changes follow no philosophical plan nor have a moral purpose.

Many early critics also found the plot structure of the second act of the work unsatisfactory in the sense that the different groups of characters individually take the stage, discuss their particular calamity, and then leave the stage with little or no contact with the other groups whose problems bear little resemblance to their own. Although Gilbert deplored music hall entertainment and even

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satirized it in certain lines of The Mountebanks libretto itself, a number of critics felt that music hall variety was just the type of entertainment he was giving them in the second half of The Mountebanks. The author ... proceeds to bring on all his transformed characters with as little order or sequence as in a "variety" entertainment," complained the Athenaeum, "and towards the close the spectator begins to weary of the never-ending gallery of grotesque portraits." There were similar comments in Bernard Shaw's review in the World. The first two characters to appear in the second act are Risotto and his now aged bride, Minestra. Much critical commentary has arisen over Gilbert's negative comments about feminine old age in this scene. Shaw expressed delight in the fact that Gilbert had omitted his ageing spinster from the libretto, but other critics found Minestra's transformation just as objectionable as a further demonstration of Gilbert's "strain of insensitiveness which deadened him to all charity for women past their first youth." Later the Tamorras, changed into celibate friars to the chagrin of their brides-to-be, appear on the stage, and their descriptions (pp. 390, 393) of the men of monastic life they are forced to impersonate are, like the

9In the song that explains the mechanism of the Hamlet-Ophelia robots, Gilbert even seemed to have stooped to music hall lyricism:

You wind 'em up, just in the back,
With cracky, cracky, cracky, crack—
And all the wheels, revolving quick,
Go ticky, ticky, ticky, tick.
It's very true—it's very quaint—
The one's a man—the other ain't! (p. 396).

comments of Minestra and Risotto about the horrors of aged womanhood (pp. 383-385), not at all flattering.

When Bartolo and Nita, now permanently transformed into the clockwork Hamlet and Ophelia, take the stage Gilbert once again satirizes the famous Shakespearean play, especially in a lyric which Arthur Guiller-Couch, who abhorred Gilbert's negative attitude toward Shakespeare, branded "a silly dust" (actually it is a trio) that allowed Gilbert "to drag the very weeds and mud out of Ophelia's end."

Ophelia was a dainty little maid,
Who loved a very melancholy Dane;
Whose affection of the heart, so it is said,
Preceded his affection of the brain.

Hair apparent to the Crown,
She thought lightly of her passion,

Having wandered up and down,
In an incoherent fashion,

When she found he wouldn't wed her
In a river, in a meadder,

Took a header, and a deader
Was Ophelia! (p. 400).

Teresa, who had been feigning love for Alfredo before she drank the potion, has been transformed into a love-sick maiden near insanity because of her unrequited love, and she becomes yet another vehicle Gilbert uses to parody the fate of Hamlet's Ophelia:

... I, whose very soul is possessed by my love of him, have retained the village fiddler to compose crazy love-songs for me to sing when occasion ariseth, for I am going mad—mad—
mad... (p. 386).

Love-lorn Teresa and prematurely aged Minestra try to console each other and come up with this bit of philosophy:

11 Ibid., p. 174.
"Tis well to be young when all is well,
And lovers are true to the tales they tell;
But ah! when love is a upas tree,
"Tis better an aged dame to be! (pp. 386-387).

After seeing the wretched state of everyone, Pietro decides that he must burn the label to break the spell of the potion. Unfortunately, the label has been stolen by Ultrice, the only character who approves of the transformation because it has given her the love of Alfredo. The transformed characters are in despair at their hopeless situation. This is especially true of Teresa who apparently has lost Alfredo to Ultrice forever. In fact, many writers have attacked the tragic intensity Gilbert seemed to give the Teresa-Ultrice rivalry in the second act as incongruous in light comic opera, and this criticism probably is one of the reasons Gilbert avoided serious love complications in his next two major works, Utopia Limited and His Excellency. Among early reviewers, the dramatic critic of the Daily Telegraph expressed the feeling that "the more serious air assumed toward the close" of the work negatively distracted from the general air of gaiety.

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12 Percy Reeve in St. Stephen's Review noted, "... there is no pretense of probability about the story; the magic wine is arbitrarily introduced, and its consequences are as arbitrarily dismissed."

13 The cry of Ultrice (pp. 397-398) bears striking resemblance to the words of another cunning female, the fairy Darine, in Fallen Fairies (p. 226). Gilbert again uses this plot device of allowing a supposedly temporary change in the situation of the characters to become permanent because of the selfish action of one of the characters (Ludwig) in The Grand Duke.
and the Pall Mall Gazette turned Gilbertian in its comment, "... in all probability if the sentimental element were omitted 'it would never be missed.'" Bernard Shaw in the World complained that Gilbert
had arbitrarily "mixed his genres" and went on to say,

... clearly there is no room here for the realism of Ibsen or the idealism of Drury Lane. That a man so clever as Mr. Gilbert could have supposed that the atmosphere of such a Sicily could be breathed by a figure from the conventional drama is a startling example of the illusions of authorship.

Perhaps the most obvious episode in which Gilbert's serious strain is revealed occurs in the climax of the libretto when Ultrice attacks Teresa for her past sins but relents when Teresa threatens suicide (pp. 401-402). Many critics found this solution unsatisfying. "This is not quite what might have been expected of Mr. Gilbert," said Vanity Fair. "He is usually so fertile of resource that it is disappointing not to be given a humorous reason for what is done."
Shaw was even more emphatic in his criticism:

In the second act, [Ultrice] goes to the incredible length of a sentimental dénouement. She 'relents' at the entreaty of the heroine, not in the fashion of the Pirate of Penzance in learning that his prisoner is an orphan—the only variety of ruth conceivable in Gilbert—but actually in the orthodox manner of Hubert in King John.

At the conclusion of the libretto, the three main groups happily join in the final chorus, expressing an optimistic view of their particular situations, but as Jane Stedman has noted, "cynically... the opera concludes with no lesson learned, except by Teresa and perhaps Ultrice, for the rest prepare again to waylay the real Duke and Duchess." 14

The universal moment at the conclusion of The Mountebanks is also
strained because Gilbert has not indicated the fates in store for
Ulrico and Pietro, both of whom have lost their mates to others.
Neither does Gilbert explain why Teresa's old sworn for Alfredo does
not return with the destruction of the power of the potion since all
the other characters are returned to their former attitudes. J.H. McC.
15 wrote in the Playgoer, "... Mr. Gilbert seemed to get tired of his
puzzle before he got to the end, and to cut it asunder as if with a
hatchet." Those unexplained loose strings along with the confusing
multitude of characters and situations throughout the work leave one
with a slightly baffled frame of mind at the libretto's conclusion,
that
and it is interesting to note here in his first major work in the
nineties Gilbert exhibits the excessively elaborate plot treatment,
self-indulgent theatrical satire, lack of thematic direction, confused
tragic-comic mode, and undue reliance on earlier works that would
negatively characterize his work throughout the last twenty years
of his life. 16

15 August 12, 1892, p. 8.
16 See A. F., "Assessing 'The Mountebanks, '" GSS Journal, May 1961,
p. 61.
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF
THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF THE MOUNTERBANKS (LYRIC THEATRE,
JAN. 4, 1892) IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN
THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

CAST: Bartolo (Mr. Harry Monkhouse); Arrostino Amagato (Mr. Frank
Kytch); Giorgio Ravici (Mr. Arthur Playfair); Luigi Spaghetti
(Mr. Charles Gilbert); Alfredo (Mr. J. Robertson); Pietro (Mr.
Idris Brough); Elvino di Pasta (Mr. Furnace Cook); Riccio
(Mr. Cecil Burt); Beppo (Mr. Gilbert Fortescue); Ulric (Miss
Lucille Saunders); Nita (Miss Ada Jeneure); Ministras (Miss Eva
Hoore); Teresa (Miss Geraldine Ullman).

Publications of Jan. 5, 1892
Evening Standard, p. 3. Globe and Traveller, p. 3. Licensed Victuallers'
The Standard, p. 3. The Star, p. 2. St. James's Gazette, p. 5. The Times,
p. 7.

Publications of Jan. 6

Publications of Jan. 7

Publications of Jan. 8
Licensed Victuallers' Mirror (Cox), p. 3. Musical News, p. 34. Public

Publications of Jan. 9
Ariel, pp. 30-31 (also Jan. 16, p. 46). The Athenæum, p. 60. Black &
White, review by Hafiz, p. 39. The Marion, p. 7. Dramatic Review,
Gentleman, review by Hafiz, p. 37. The Graphic, pp. 28, 35. Illustrated
London Mercury, unnumbered pages. Newspaper Review, review by
Society, review by The Peripatetic Pagan, pp. 345 (also Jan. 16, p. 275).
by Percy Reeves, p. 21. Vanity Fair, p. 32.
Publications of Jan. 10


Publications of Jan. 13


Publications of Jan. 14

Moonlight*, p. 11.

Publications of Jan. 15

Ruy Bells (B), p. 71.

Publications of Jan. 16

Moonshine (B), p. 27. The Speaker, review by A. B. W. [aldwy], pp. 74-76.

Publications of Feb. 1


Publications of Feb. 6

Pick-Up*, review by Jingle, pp. 310-311.

Publications of June 1892

Atalanta (B), review by M. M., pp. 557-559.
The July 27, 1892 premiere of Haste to the Wedding. Gilbert’s libretto treatment of his successful dray song of 1879. The Marriage scene resulted in an unprecedented first-night excitement for a Gilbert musical. It was so overwhelming was it the response of the gallery that The Daily Graphic in its review stated, “Mr. W. S. Gilbert has hitherto failed only in [sic] serious dramatic work; his latest work... will probably afford him the new sensation of making a failure as a librettist.”


Although there were occasional signs of impatience, the first and second acts passed off almost without expressed dissatisfaction, but not so the last. The scene begins soon after the curtain was raised, and gathering strength in the final scene, voluminously broke forth that Moore: Gilbert and Grosthe responded to the call.” The Daily Graphic, July 28, 1892, p. 6. See also A. B. Haldy’s review in the American (reprinted below, p. 375).
The July 27, 1892 premiere of *Haste to the Wedding*, Gilbert's libretto treatment of his successful farce comedy of 1873, *The Wedding March*, resulted in an unprecedented first-night situation for a Gilbert musical work: it was openly jeered by a large segment of the gallery and roundly condemned by most of the London critics in their reviews the following day. The Pall Mall Gazette commented that Gilbert was not "at even his second best," and the *Daily Graphic* complained that the work possessed "little of the true Gilbert flavour." Despite dissenting favourable reviews by J. T. Grein in *Life* and A. B. Walkley in the *Speaker* later in the week, *Haste to the Wedding* added to its negative singularity for a Gilbert libretto by closing less than a month after this disappointing opening at the subterranean Criterion Theatre in Piccadilly Circus and has never been professionally revived.

There was some disagreement among early critics about the reasons for the obvious displeasure of the gallery toward the work on the opening-night, but one recurring criticism of the work among early

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1"Although there were occasional signs of impatience, the first and second acts passed off free from expressed disapprobation, but not so the last. The storm began soon after the curtains were parted . . . and gathering strength in the final scene, vehemently broke forth when Messrs. Gilbert and Grossmith responded to the call." *The Daily Chronicle*, July 28, 1892, p. 6. See also A. B. Walkley's review in the *Speaker* (reproduced below, p. 375).
reviewers was that, being a reworking of a much earlier piece, it was out of touch with the new theatre of the nineties. Although he nostalgically enjoyed the work, Ibsenite Grein noted that "the style of the piece is thoroughly old fashioned . . ." The Wedding March, the work on which Haste to the Wedding was based, was itself an adaptation of an even earlier mid-century musical farce by Eugene Labiche called Un Chapeau de Paille d'Italie, and many reviewers complained with the Times that Gilbert had not altered the work "to suit the tastes of the present day." On the other hand, there were also certain "untraditional" things about the technical form of the production that apparently contributed to its popular failure. Gilbert labelled the work "an operetta" (p. 147), but it really does not have operatic cohesion. In this sense, it certainly did not resemble the comic operas with Sullivan that had given Gilbert his great fame. "It is quite likely that some of the malcontents last night went to the Criterion expecting to see 'The Wedding March' treated after the Sullivan pattern," suggested the Daily Chronicle, "and were disappointed when they realized that 'Haste to the Wedding' was not an opera but a farce with interspersed songs and dances."

Although there was general agreement among the critics that Gilbert's lyrical wit remained unimpaired ("Mr. Gilbert has written some of his

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2 The work was first produced in Paris in 1851 with music by Marc Michel. William Archer gives some interesting comments on Labiche's original play and its intents in his review of Haste to the Wedding in the World (see below, p. 191).

3 Indeed, the dialogue was essentially the same as that found in The Wedding March; the lyrical portions were the only real additions.
in stage costumes of seventy-five years ago is not exactly obvious. I am not at all certain that costumes of to-day would not produce a more comic effect. And of one thing I am sure, that the numbers of the wedding-party ought to be reduced. They take too long to dance in and out; the process becomes tedious. Let me counsel Mr. Gilbert to subtract eight lasses for eight cabs.

Mr. Wyatt, who is a capital extravagant comedian, was in his element as Woodpecker Tapping; Mr. Valentine was good as Major-General Baskul; Mr. D. S. James showed real humour as the Duke of Turnip-tophire; and Mr. Nelson Dale succeeded, under very trying circumstances, in making an amusing sketch of Creeps, the book-keeper. Mr. Lionel Bragg, as Magna, was the chief offender in respect of licentiousness. His version of "It's off!" is more zealous (the English equivalent of the French "Pant nos roguez, mon s'gensu!") might have been heard at Pattie-tweedle.

The excellent comedian has cause of late to regard more vigorously, whether of grime or utterance, as essentially comic—which is a regrettable error. The ladies, as usual in Labiche, play quite insignificant parts; but Miss Ellis Jeffreys looks handsome as the Marchioness of Market Harborough, and Miss Spill Carlisle performs, with Mr. Wyatt, a dance which is one of the chief successes of the production.

The drama which Misses Herbert, Keen and James Leader have written around Mr. A. van Blin's villainously, is no better and no worse than might have been expected under the circumstances. It is trivial and conventional in style, and full of alhamdulilsy of detail; but some of the scenes are not without a certain dramatic grip. The work of The Babes Melody is an excellent opportunity for ladies writers; it teaches them not only to mind their part, but to be careful of their costume. Mabel Horlick, when leaving home for the distant Duchesse, leaves a letter for her husband, which concludes as follows: "This is only a short adieu, and not my dear Paul farewell for ever." As ill luck will have it, the words "Paul farewell for ever," stand alone on the second half-sheet; so that the Duchesse, by merely tearing off the first half-page, puts an entirely new complication on the document. Now, if Mabel had pleaded aseconds after "Paul," as she ought to have done, I think even that middling-headed maidservant would have suspected that the word came at the end of a parenthesis, and that things were not precisely what they seemed. Mr. van Blin played the belle beautifully, and the maidservant's sarcasm and conviction. Unfortunately his presence is anything but imperious, and his method is more evidential than artistic. Miss Olga Brandson, as the wicked Duchesse, wore dresses worthy of a Princess of the Jordan Nights, and played with good discrimination. Miss Blancha Horlick made a sympathetic heroine, and Mr. Abington an unamplious villain.
drollest lyrics . . ." noted the Era), many critics felt that Gilbert had used poor judgement in attempting to adapt The Wedding March for musical production at all. The main argument put forward by these critics was that the dances and songs impeded the fast-paced action of the farce and emphasized the unreality of the already improbable story. "The bustle of the action is destroyed," said the Stage, "and the joke becomes flat and pointless, like a good story which is spoilt in the telling." In a very "unlady-like" attack on the piece in the Lady's Pictorial, Player Queen said:

Many and startling have been the problems the stage this season has presented, but none more bewildering or insoluble than this. How came Mr. Gilbert, with all his knowledge of the theatre, to attempt the conversion of a roaring, rollicking tornado of a farce into a fitfully gusty comic opera? . . . The Wedding March, familiar to us all, was without exception the funniest piece of absurdity known to the modern stage. Its shapeless shadow, produced at the Criterion on Wednesday, is not less deserving of superlatives—for incoherence, inexplicability, and resultant dulness.

It should also be noted that the plot did not lend itself to the sort of humour that best suited Gilbert's art of satiric characterization. One reason for this lay in the fact that many of the most interesting characters (such as a delightfully sentimental Duke and a blindly blustering Major-General) hold the stage only briefly and then disappear without being developed to their full potential. The Fall Fall Gazette remarked that "the result was not satisfactory; it gave the idea of a number of blind alleys." Gilbert also depended too heavily on confusion of identity to carry the humour of the piece.
There are so many cases of mistaken or bogus identity in the libretto that it is senseless to try to list them all in synopsis. The work becomes monotonous and strained with so much repetition of effect. Gilbert's decision to present the musical version in three full acts was also a mistake, and the writer for the Sunday Times was only one of several early reviewers who noted that "... the situations are repeated too frequently to stand the test of a third act, and here accordingly it was on Wednesday that the patience of the audience showed signs of giving way."

Other reviewers were not completely satisfied with the broadly farcical aspect of the production. The Echo remarked,

Alas! in such riotous funning the line of demarcation between the unspeakable and inexplicably droll and abject nonsense is a very narrow one; and Mr. Gilbert did not always find himself on the right side of it.4

The names of the characters, like the Italian cuisine names of some of the characters in The Mountebanks, are somewhat amusing, but only in an elementary music hall fashion that reveals the low comedy nature of the humour of the work. For instance, Woodpecker Tapping is the name of the protagonist, and as the libretto begins, his maid and valet chant,

Young Woodpecker Tapping / (Professed lady-killer)
Is rarely caught napping / By widow or maid (p. 150).

4In the twentieth century, Gilbert scholar, Isaac Goldberg, has expressed the opinion that the plot "contains altogether too much horse-play." See Isaac Goldberg, Sir William S. Gilbert: A Study in Modern Satire (Boston: Stratford, 1913), p. 130.
However, one Maria Maguire of "Pettytiddlins, in a remote corner of Wales" (p. 149) has apparently succeeded where others of her sex have failed, for on this day Tapping and Maria are to be married. Tapping's Uncle Bopaddy arrives on the scene and is the object of some cheap humour on his deafness (p. 150) hardly worthy of Gilbert and vaguely reminiscent of his cruel ridicule of old age in The Mountebanks.

In fact, Haste to the Wedding is filled with this type of humour based on cruelty or cynicism, and almost all of the characters in the libretto are selfish or insincere. This is especially true of the nominal hero, Tapping, who now makes his first appearance in the work with the news that while he was riding in Hyde Park his mount broke away from him and was later found

in the act of devouring a Leghorn hat belonging to a young and lovely lady who was indulging in an affectionate tête-à-tête with a military gentleman who may or may not have been her betrothed (p. 151).

The two people in question, Captain Bapp and Leonora, enter and demand that Tapping replace the ruined hat, explaining that it was a gift of Leonora's husband who will become enraged with jealousy if she goes home without it. It should be noted that despite the Frenchified overtones of their suspect relationship, both Leonora and Bapp are drawn in a Gilbertian vein. Leonora is one of Gilbert's attractive young ladies, outwardly demure but inwardly far ahead of the game; Bapp, the properly indignant Englishman full of military bluster even though he has been caught in a somewhat compromising situation,
Enter UNCLE BOPADDY, who catches them dancing. They stop abruptly when they see him. He is very deaf, and carries a band-box.

Bopaddy. Don't mind me—it's only Uncle Bopaddy—nobody minds Uncle Bopaddy! Anybody come yet?

Jack. (with great show of deference). Not yet, you ridiculous old rag-bag! Not yet, you concentrated essence of disreputable senility.

Pat. (aside to Jackson). 'Hush! hush! you'll make the old gentleman angry.'

Jack. Oh, no—he's as deaf as a post—he can't hear. (Shouting to him.) You can't hear, can you? (To Patty.) I always talk to him like that; it amuses me very much. (To Bopaddy, who is much struck with Patty.) Don't you think that at your age you might find something better to do than to go about chucking young girls under the chin, you disreputable old vagabond?

Bo. Yes, yes—you are perfectly right. I told him so myself; but, bless you, you might as well talk to a post! (To Patty.) Here, my dear, take this (giving her parcel). It's a little present for the bride—now, don't crush it, there's a nice little gal!

Pat. All right, old sixpennorth of halfpence!

Bo. (much amused). Yes—you're quite right. I often do so myself. Ha, ha! (Exit Patty with parcel.) What a nice little gal! Very nice little gal! Don't know that I ever saw a nicer little gal!

Jack. Go along, you wicked old pantaloon, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, at your age! (Gives him a chair.) There, sit down and hold your wicked old tongue! (Exit Jackson.)

Bo. (sits). Thank you kindly. Remarkably civil, well-spoken young man, to be sure! Don't know that I ever met a nice-spoken young man.
is also reminiscent of other creations of Gilbert, including Dudley Coxe-Coxe in certain sections of another of Gilbert's later works, *The Fortune Hunter*.

When Leonora threatens to remain in Tapping's parlour until a new hat is found, Tapping is beside himself with anxiety because of his fear that Mr. Maguire, his future father-in-law, "a human porcupine—one of the most ill-tempered, crotchety, exacting old market-gardners in Great Britain" (pp. 151-152), will see Leonora in the house, think the worst, and call off the wedding. Many early reviews looked with disfavour on the character of Maguire, including the *Evening News and Post* which commented on "the bride's father with an equipment of one joke, which consists in declaring 'It's off,' when the bridegroom offends him, and 'It's on again,' when peace is restored." The negative character of Maguire as the despotic and hard-headed father with a protective eye on his daughter is repeated by Gilbert in the character of Judge Whortle and his attitude toward his daughter in *The Fairy's Dilemma*. Maguire leads a party of wedding guests to Tapping's door, and at least part of the satire in the libretto is directed against these "semi-grotesque old fashioned and countrified couples" (p. 154) from rural Wales when Tapping takes on a wild jaunt in search of the aforementioned lost hat. None of the members of the procession is aware of the true purpose of the trek as Tapping blatantly lies to them about the nature of the places they visit during their sojourn. His snobbish attitude is that they are too backward to know the difference—and Gilbert
cynically allows Tapping to pull off his deception with complete success. Many early critics found this motley wedding procession, blindly trailing after Tapping in every scene, one of the most vexing and monotonous aspects of the production, and William Archer in the World noted,

By the very fact of transferring the scene to England, Mr. Gilbert changed the farce into a sheer extravaganza. Labiche’s piece is in itself a common object of the Parisian streets, however uncommon its adventures. Mr. Gilbert’s wedding-party is in itself, and quite apart from its adventures, a rank absurdity.

Among the wedding-party are the bride, Maria, and her cousin, Foodle; a “loathing simpleton” (p. 154), but the displays of affection between Maria and Foodle provoke much irritation for Tapping. Actually, in their mutual imbecility and countrified lack of sophistication, Maria and Foodle are probably much better suited for each other than Maria and Tapping.

The music hall brand of comedy apparent in the work comes through in these lines between Maria, Foodle, and Maguire which also serve to reveal the basic characteristics of the three:

Maria: Papa, what are they going to do to me? Mag: Nothing, my child. The Registrar will say to you, ‘Do your parents consent to this marriage?’ and you’ll reply, ‘I am.’ (Looking off.) Oh, the Registrar is coming. (To Foodle who has only got one glove on.) Put on your other glove, will you? Foodle. I can’t—I’ve lost it! Mag: Then put your hand in your pocket. (Foodle puts the gloved hand in his pocket.) Not that one; stupid! the other one!” (p. 159).

5 In a statement typical of that found in a number of reviews, the Clarion attacked “... the irritating and absurd meanderings of the Wedding Party. ... they become a weariness of the flesh. ... hardly have we drawn a free breath, and sighed a sigh of relief, ere they come streaming out, with the tiresome father in the van, and the tedious old Uncle Bopaddy at the rear, on the exasperating and everlasting trot.”
The first place Tapping takes the wedding procession is to a milliner's shop where he intends to buy a new hat for Leonora, but he tells his credulous followers that it is Doctor's Commons where he will secure the marriage licence. In farcical terms typical of the work, Tapping gives the shopkeeper a Whitmanesque description of the desired object:

I want a hat of finest straw,
At once—a handsome one,
Trimmed with an arandillo's claw,
Three truffles and a bun,
Two thingumajig of peacock blue,
A what's-its-name on each,
A snuff-box and a cockatoo,
Two mackerel and a peach (p. 157).

Unknown to Tapping, the shop is owned by one of his old girlfriends, Bella Crackenthorpe, and he is embarrassed to find her there. Bella's angry greeting when she meets Tapping was considered one of the humorous verbal highlights of the piece, and Tapping's frantic fabrications to placate her give further evidence of his unscrupulous character. After Bella leaves the show-room to try to find the hat Tapping has requested, the wedding-party enter and mistake Grips, the milliner's bookkeeper, for the Registrar of Licences. Some humorous dialogue ensues (p. 160), yet one feels more could have been mined from this situation and others throughout the libretto as Gilbert jumps from one confusion of identity to another without fully exploring the potential humour in each scene.

The first act ends when Bella returns and tells Tapping that she has sold the last hat of the type Tapping needs to the Marchioness of Market Harborough. Tapping exclaims, "A Marchioness! I can't call on..."
Bella’s song and dialogue with Tapping in

**Act I of Haste to the Wedding (pp. 157-158):**

**BALLAD.—Bella,**

You offer to take me, one fine day.
To the Naval Exhibition.
You borrow the money from me to pay
The price of our admission.
The rain pours down on my brand-new dress.
And boots of thin panella.
Do you stand me a hansom? Oh dear, no!
You stand me under a portico,
Like a shabby young fellow, and off you go.
To borrow a friend’s umbrella!

The rain goes on, and the days they grow—
To months accumulating;
And patiently under that portico
They find me waiting—waiting.
To her allegiance staunch and true
Stands your deserted Bella.
At length six weary months have passed;
The weather, no longer overcast,
Clears up—and you return at last.
Without that friend’s umbrella!

Wood. I forgot the umbrella. I’ll go and fetch it. [Going.

Bella (stops him). Not if I know it!

Wood. (aside). Confound it! And the wedding party at the door, in eight cabs!

Bella. To think that this contemptible creature actually promised to marry me!

Wood. Marry you? Why, of course! I did! Marry you? Certainly I will!

Bella. You will?

Wood. Why, of course! Why do you take me for?

Bella. And you didn’t desert me in order to run after somebody else?

Wood. Ha, ha! As if I’d dream of anybody else!

Bella. Oh, what a relief! Oh, Woodpecker! [In his arms.
a Marchioness and ask her how much she wants for her hat!" (p. 162), but in the second act this is exactly what he attempts to do as he visits the Marchioness's rooms in the exclusive Carlton Gardens.

Here we are introduced not only to the Marchioness but also to a bevy of her luncheon guests, including the Duke of Turnipshire, perhaps the most comical character in the libretto, although he appears in only this one act and his patter songs and statements about his "highly-strung sensitive" nature are highly reminiscent of Bunthorne and Grosvenor in Patience. The Echo, in an otherwise unfaﬁvourable criticism, stated:

"Here and there, as in the satire on the affectations of certain Society leaders who pet and pamper singers and such folk, and in the slightly Gilbertian-of-a-brighter-day patter of a caricatured duke, was it possible to conceive that our enter-
tainer was the brilliant Bab-Ballader."

The act ends with Tapping still not in possession of the coveted hat, and he and his motley followers are forced to look elsewhere.

In the last act, there are more cases of mistaken identity and a great deal of low comedy horseplay. Tapping and the wedding-party invade the house of Major-General Bunthunder because Tapping has been told that Bunthunder's wife possesses a replica of the coveted hat he has been seeking. There are some slightly risqué lines between Tapping and Bunthunder which are untypical of Gilbert, and Bunthunder's song on the "Order of the Bath" that opens the act (p. 173) was both praised for its wit and condemned for its "bad taste and silliness" by the early critics. Eventually, the wedding-party are carted off.


7 Review of Haste to the Wedding. The Echo, July 28, 1892, p. 2. In fact, the last two lines in the lyric (see below, p. 408) are a Gilbertian
Illustration in The Players, August 5, 1892, p. 5, depicting Uncle Bopaddy, Major-General Bunthunder, Maria, and Foodle.

Haste to the Wedding
at the Criterion
It's a little present for the bride!

I'm sorry! I forgot relief. It shall not occur again.

If you're valuing, etc.

H. W. BLAXLEY

H. H. STUDHOLME
& F. G. GROSSEHOLME

[Cartoon image]
to the police station, and it is revealed that Leonora is the wife of Dumbthunder and that Uncle Doppety’s wedding gift to Maria and Tapping is an Italian hat exactly like the one Leonora needs to place on her husband. Although one should not expect complete logic in such a light-hearted work, the undue employment of such coincidences throughout the plot caused the critic of the Morning Leader to express the view that “no one who wishes to analyze probabilities or even possibilities from any human standpoint would be able to sit the performance out,” an opinion reiterated in the Observer and other early publications, and “Cherubino” in the London Evening reported that “... a good deal of the last act is so farcical a character that some of the audience began to rebel ...”

The final scene is one of happiness for all with Tapping finally taking Maria for his own. However, this ending seems unsatisfactory since the audience is given no explanation of why such an obvious scoundrel as Tapping and such an empty-headed ninny as Maria should be accorded unfeathered bliss at the final curtain, traditional though it is in comic opera. Surely Gilbert could have invented a device (such as he does in His Excellency) to give some closing sense of moral justice to the piece—even if it had been only a speech of repentance from Tapping, but as William Archer noted in the World, it is impossible “to find a moral or decipher a meaning” in the piece, and years later Isaac Goldberg agreed that “composed for the sake of mere laughter, there is little, if any, thought to the farce.”

8For Goldberg’s complete discussion of Haste to the Wedding, see Isaac Goldberg, Sir William S. Gilbert: A Study in Modern Satire (Boston: Stratford, 1913), pp. 130-131.
It must be admitted in Gilbert's defence that Haste to the Wedding was not a major effort. Despite its three full acts, the production's middle-of-the-summer opening reveals that it was undoubtedly written for indiscriminating holiday-makers (not unlike the unsophisticated wedding-party in the libretto itself) rather than for the smart London theatre crowd. Some critics, including the reviewer for the theatrical Eva and A. B. Walkley in the Speaker, also blamed elements outside Gilbert's libretto for the failure of the production: the music by comedy star but composing novice George Grossmith was loudly condemned in all quarters and a number of critics felt that the cast had performed poorly. However, as we have noted, Gilbert's part in the

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9The critic for the Weekly Dispatch stingingly commented at the end of his unfavourable review, "Still, 'Haste to the Wedding' may prove to the tastes of our country cousins, who swarm into town about this time of the year,"


11Typical are these comments from the Weekly Dispatch: "... although the verses are on the whole quite up to their clever author's usual standard, the music is crude and almost infantile. Mr. Grossmith, we are told, wished to strike a happy medium between the grand inspirations of Wagner and 'the sweet simplicity of the street band.' There is plenty of simplicity in his music, but there is certainly no inspiration. The composer was wise in appropriating the old English tune, 'Haste to the Wedding,' for it is the only genuine bit of melody in the entire three acts. The accompaniments are wretchedly crude, and the concerted music is bald to the last degree."

12The Dramatic Review said, "That the reception accorded to the piece on Wednesday was decidedly 'mixed' can hardly be attributed to the author. His work is done well, but in the first place the company did not do justice either to the play or to the music; and, in the second place, the music is unsatisfactory."
failure of the work is also clear. There is an air of cruel cynicism in the libretto despite its rollicking framework and often clever lyrics, and the work is endowed with the complicated plot problems and the lack of thematic direction that plague most of Gilbert's later work. Perhaps of even more damning importance was the dated aspect of the production. The comment of the St. James's Gazette concerning Haste to the Wedding could apply to much of Gilbert's later work:

"Scenes which twenty years ago aroused hearty laughter scarcely succeeded on Wednesday in producing a smile; while when the curtain finally fell the applause was more than counterbalanced by unmistakable signs of disapprobation. Autres temps, autres moeurs."
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF
THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF HASTE TO THE WEDDING (CRITERION
THEATRE, JULY 27, 1892) IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS
DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

CAST: Mr. Woodpecker Tapping (Mr. Frank Wyatt); Uncle Bopaddy (Mr. W. Elkeley); Maguire (Mr. Lionel Brough); Duke of Turniptopshire (Mr. D. S. James); Major-General Bunthunder (Mr. Sidney Valentine); Capt. Begg (Mr. Frank Atherley); Cousin Fiddle (Mr. Geo. Grossmith, Jr.); Griggs (Mr. Weldon Dale); Jackson (Mr. W. R. Shirley); Barnes (Mr. Fred Bond); Wilkinson (Mr. Percy Brough); Marchioness of Market Harborough (Miss Ellis Jefferey's); Anna Maria Maguire (Miss K. Studholme); Bella Crackenthorpe (Miss Sybil Carlisle); Mrs. Leonora Bunthunder (Miss Day Ford); Patty (Miss Haidée Crofton).

Publications of July 28, 1892

Publications of July 29

Publications of July 30

Publications of August 1
Dramatic Opinion, review by Wm. Allison, p. 4.

Publications of August 1
The Daily Graphic, p. 4. The Referee, review by Caradoc, p. 2.

Publications of August 2

Publications of August 3
Publications of August 4

Publications of August 5
The Playgoer (illustrations only), pp. 3-6.

Publications of August 6

Publications of August 10
Bm(B), review by Nester, p. 54.

Publications of August 12

Publications of Sept.
Magazine of Music (B), p. 162.

Publications of Sept. 1
The premiere of Utopia Limited on October 9, 1893 united the recognition of Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan under the auspices of their old impresario, Richard D'Lycey Carter, after their notorious disagreement and lawsuit of the decade. The new work scored before a dancing first-night audience to the delight of the audience. The qips, whims, jests, the theory of topsy-turvy, the principle of paradox, the law of the unlikely, seem to have grown old in a single night."


"... We were all, then, traited with Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan till 1890; and now that they have fallen in again as all feel some to rejoice." After the performance, the St. James's Gazette praised the new creation as "as wroth as original as 'Hinlome,' as graceful as 'The Camilla,' as picturesque as 'The Mikado,' and as full of delightful satire as 'PATIENCE,'" and the Athenian said, "The wit, humour, and satire of the book have not been imperfect in any of the author's works."

The premiere of Utopia Limited on October 7, 1893, marked the reconciliation of Gilbert and Sullivan under the auspices of their old impresario, Richard D'Oyly Carte, after their notorious disagreement and lawsuit at the beginning of the decade. The new work opened before a dazzling first-night audience that came to the Savoy Theatre joyously enthusiastic about the reunion of the trio.

"Well, it would be a thousand pities if a genuinely native form of art like this, something which has grown from our English soil, and could have been raised on no other, should be allowed to die," said the Star.

"... We were all, then, vexed when Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan fell out; and now that they have fallen in again we all feel cause to rejoice."

After the performance, the St. James's Gazette praised the new creation as "a work as original as 'Pinafore,' as graceful as 'The Gondoliers,' as picturesque as 'The Mikado,' and as full of delightful satire as 'Patience,'" and the Standard said, "The wit, humour, and satire of the book have not been surpassed in any of the author's

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previous operas . . . . A more complete success has never been achieved in comic opera even at the Savoy." Even the hypercritical dramatic critic of the Times was impressed:

" . . . the latest is also one of the best of the [Savoy opera] set. Since The Mikado, indeed, it is hard to remember any work of the same hands that is worthy to stand beside the new production for pointed dialogue and easily-assimilated music.

The Echo and the theatrical Era agreed with the popular periodical, Black and White, in its appraisal that " . . . we are at the beginning of another of those historical runs which have established the European fame of the Gilbert-Sullivan-D'Oyly Carte dynasty."

The technical aspects of Gilbert's staging received a great deal of praise from the early reviewers. " . . . 'Utopia is, for mise-en-scène, by far the most beautiful of the Gilbert-Sullivan series . . . ." said "Prompter" in the Penny Illustrated Paper, and the critics were especially enthusiastic about the regal spectacle of the reception in the royal Utopian drawing-room and the satiric humour of the Christy Minstrel-type cabinet council meeting. Bernard Shaw in the World noted that " . . . the stage business is fresh and well invented . . . ." Gilbert's linguistic wit and style of lyrical execution were also highly praised by most of the early critics. "The most hilarious concerted pieces, 'patter songs,' topical duets of the approved pattern succeed one another with bewildering speed," reported the Times, "and the dialogue that separates them is so uniformly funny that it scarcely performs its original functions of allowing breathing space between the musical portions."
Of Gilbert's purpose in the work, E.A.B. in the Musical Standard said,

It is an elaborate satire, sometimes genial, often grim and always relentless, on the follies of our modern civilization, and the genius of the author is never more apparent than in the way he covers his bitter pills of cynicism in coatings of theatrical humour . . . .

The opening-night review in another contemporary paper revealed the

Gilbertian topsy-turvy atmosphere of the story:

The first scene is significant of much. A land of a dream, a South Pacific island, an isle all sunshine and radiance, an isle of glistening light and colour, an isle 'where it seemed always afternoon,' an isle of never ending siesta, an isle peopled with beauty and graceful indolence, in short—Utopia. The stage illusion is startling; with the music, a mere murmured melody, it is absolute. Lolling in hammocks, reclining on the ground, are the Utopian beauties, mellow-voiced, shapely, and classic of pose; these are a part of the landscape, and make the picture perfect. So perfect that we forget ourselves. Are we at the Savoy after all, or in some enchanted island, where civilization is unknown, where County Councillors counsel not, and speculators are unknown? Alas no, we are at the Savoy, and here come among the others the very beings of whom a mere thought had made us shudder, On they troop, blantly, vulgarly, incongruous, quite imprecise to the dazzling beauty of their surroundings. . . . here in Utopia idealised is one of the most absurd incongruities that even Mr. Gilbert's fertile brain has ever grown. A bespangled and silk-stockinged Lord Chamberlain, a frock-coated, patent-leathered company promoter, and a white waistcoated County Councillor, the very last people one should have dreamt of in this paradise.

It is not surprising, then, that the radical Weekly Times and Echo beamed,

"... the story is both interesting and thoroughly amusing, with a hidden meaning which the thoughtful will readily discover and cordially appreciate."
The early reviews of Utopia Limited were not without their thorns; however. Such well-known publications as Punch, Vanity Fair, the Pall Mall Gazette, and Clement Scott's Theatre could find little reason to rejoice. Vanity Fair ruefully noted,

Perhaps we are all a little older; perhaps Sir Arthur Sullivan and Mr. Gilbert have so surfeited us with good things that we wax epicurean; perhaps it is only the autumn melancholy that is upon us; but we cannot shake off the feeling that 'Utopia' is disappointing.

The critic of the Pall Mall Gazette was even more emphatic in condemning

"... the signs of strain, the symptoms of effort in the piece...
the thinness of the story, the obviousness of the situations, the meagreness of the jokes, the decrepitude of the action, the strenuousness of the epigrams," which proved to the Gazette writer that 'Utopia (Limited)' is but the scrapings of the platter, the rinsings of the cup. When Lavengro on a famous occasion invited his gipsy pal to drink again the gipsy declined, 'I can't, young man, my heart's too full, and besides, the pitcher's empty.' Mr. Gilbert's heart may have been full at reunion with his colleague of old time, but his pitcher was woefully empty.

The Theatre was also unfavourably impressed:

The famous collaborators are no longer the same men. They have grown eager, soberer; their art has gained in avoidance. Prolificome fantasy, flecked with sentiment, was once the rule, to which they found it impossible to make exception. But 'Utopia,' though fantastic, is ponderously so . . . .

Two days after the opening of Utopia Limited Gilbert's fellow dramatist, Sydney Grundy, wrote confidentially to a friend, '[Sullivan's] music is as good as the words permit of, but the libretto is very small.

3 The real reason for the Pall Mall Gazette's displeasure with Utopia Limited may have been less artistic: 'Little wonder, perhaps, that Mr. Bernard Shaw, the Socialist, who was then the musical critic on The World, found the opera the most enjoyable of all the series, or that the dramatic critic of the Pall Mall Gazette which, under the editorship of Mr. Harry Cust, had just become the leading Tory paper in London, found it the most depressing!" H. H. Walbrook, Gilbert and Sullivan Opera (London: 1910, 1922) pp. 117-118.
"THE ART OF 'SAVOY FARE.'"

Mr. D'OYLY CARTE is to be heartily congratulated on his brilliant mounting of Messrs. GILVRAN and SULLIVAN's most recent production entitled Utopia (Limited). It is in no sense a new one, nor, as it is said, "one old or ugly on the stage of the Savoy Theatre. And this, too, with a difference, supplies to Sir Arthur's music, in which there is nothing particular now—and the old familiar friends receive the heartiest welcome—there is at all events nothing dull, even though it may "hardly ever" rise above mere commonplace. Occasionally there is a snatch of sweet melody that brings to mind the composer's happiest inspirations, whether in oratorios or burlesque.

As to dramatic plot—well, strictly speaking, there is none; and it would be difficult to name a single telling "situation," in Utopia (Limited). The Monarch of Utopia wishes to introduce English names into his kingdom; there is a court party opposed to this innovation: that's the essence of it. In the First Act there is no hit, is the introduction Captain Corcoran from The Pirates of years ago, and the repetition of the once popular catch-phrase about "What never?" and "Hardly ever," which, taken applying to our most recent tragical ironical disaster, is thoroughly appropriate. Beyond this, as far as dialogue and music go, in the First Act there is very little anyone would care to "carry away with him" after first visit. And if that little were carried away the residuum would offer scant attraction.

As for the Royal Drawing-room scene, its splendid costumes, and its mimicry of Court etiquette, have we not witnessed a similar spectacle on a larger scale in a Drury Lane Pantomime, not so many years ago? And was not that arranged by the same artistic stage-manager, who is now, by a wise dispensation of theatrical providence, in command at the Savoy? Is it possible that Mr. Charles Harris is the same Rhinoceros in the Second Act, when the King, in Utopia (Limited), Mr. BARRINGTON, to whom author and composer are under considerable obligations for the success of the piece, and without whose acting, dancing, and singing the entertainment would have been indifferently well, with his counsel, an admiral, a Lord Chamberlain, and so forth, place their chairs in a row, and detaching from the back of each seat a musical instrument, turn themselves into a St. James's "Hall" not "Court" Christy Minstrel Company,

Mr. BARRINGTON is the life and soul of the show; without him there would be precious little left to draw, except of course, the music on scene, due to Messrs. Harris and CARTE, if I may put the Harris before the CARTE—and to the scenic artist, CHAPMAN, not must I forget to mention the Electric Lightings, Messrs. LYNDS and KERR, which last is a queer combination of names, from the king of the forest to the lowest of snappy dogs. Miss ROSINA BIANCHI is, of course, excellent in what she has to do, and Miss NANCY McFARLAN is equal to the occasion of her appearance; Prince ANDERSON'S costumes are gorgeous and artistic; and to the "Parisian Diamond Company" are due the gems of the piece. The dances are by the ever fertile and agile AUBIN, and everybody who has contributed to the success of the show obtains honourable mention in the next programme-card.

"Inquirer" writes: "I see an advertisement of a series called 'The Aldine Poets.' Exceptional bard I suppose, as I was always given to understand that poets rarely eat anything. Will this series follow 'The Allgood Poets,' 'The Allgood Poets,' and 'The Allgood Poets'? The last-mentioned, of course, will sing in praise of Allgood's Ales."
potatoes, and Act I seemed interminable.\(^4\) Although Grundy's negative reaction to Gilbert's part in the work might have been motivated by a tinge of personal frustration,\(^5\) his remark on the excessive length of the first act of *Utopia Limited* was not unfounded. The act ran for almost two hours, and most early reviews suggested severe dialogue cuts.\(^6\) Also, despite some new twists of characterization that will be discussed later in this study, Gilbert's lengthy list of characters were mainly extensions of personalities from earlier works with Sullivan. For instance, there is the characterization of King Paramount, the benevolent ruler of the tropical island where the story is laid:

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Of a tyrant polite / He's a paragon quite,
He's as modest and mild / In his ways as a child;
And no one ever met / With an autocrat, yet,
So delightfully bland / To the least in the land! (pp. 410-411).
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Yet in his affable, subservient attitude toward his ministers and in his optimistic willingness to institute radical democratic reforms for his people, Paramount is only a re-creation of Marco and Giuseppe, the counterfeit kings of *The Gondoliers*, a work produced only four years before.

\(^4\)Grundy in a letter to actress Kate Rorke, type-copy found in the Reginald Allen collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City.

\(^5\)Grundy had written the libretto for Sullivan's unsuccessful opera *Haddon Hall* in 1892 and had eagerly proposed another collaboration soon thereafter which Sullivan evaded. "It would not--he being Grundy and not Gilbert--have been *Utopia Limited* . . . but curiously enough it was essentially the same motif," said "Ignitus" in the *Dramatic Review* (Oct. 21, 1893, p. 262) concerning Grundy's libretto proposal. "His idea was the civilisation or humorous transformation of a barbarous community by the introduction of Britons and British 'notions.' One need not marvel greatly at this, Japan, at any rate, was an object-lesson for universal study." Paralleling the last statement, the Morning Advertiser in its review of *Utopia Limited* said, "The plot . . . it would seem was suggested by the reconstruction of Japan on European lines."

\(^6\)Coming under heaviest censure were the scenes with the Utopian wise men, Scaphio and Phoenix. A long article by R.G. Crick with practical advice on cutting the dialogue in *Utopia Limited* appears in the *C&J Journal*, May 1973, p. 12, under the title, "A Revised *Utopia Limited*."


Another borrowing from earlier works is found in Gilbert’s satire on Victorian propriety in his characterization of Lady Sophy, whom one of the other characters describes in highest adoration as “a most refined and easily shocked English lady” (p. 447). Paramount has entrusted to her care the education of Sekaya and Kalyba, his young twin daughters, who themselves are reminiscent of “the three little girls from school” in The Mikado. Lady Sophy has taught the Princesses “what, from the English standpoint / Is looked upon as maidenly perfection” (p. 414), and, as might be expected, she had made of her charges not only perfect specimens of English propriety but also intolerable bundles of vanity and artificiality. Lady Sophy herself often fails to exhibit those most noble of feminine virtues, compassion and forgiveness (see facsimile below, p. 216), and when she is sourly described as “the dragon” (p. 446) by two prospective suitors of the Princesses, one cannot help but think of the gallery of ageing, over-bearing females in Gilbert’s other works.

Yet another character with Gilbertian precedent is Paramount’s eldest daughter, Princess Zara, who has just returned from England where she has taken a degree at Girton, the women’s college at Cambridge. The chorus of adoration she receives from the other Utopian maidens because

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7 Audrey Williamson, p. 265, has suggested that perhaps Lady Sophy “was founded on Anna Leonowens that Victorian English lady who became governess to the children of the King of Siam, and who has been the subject of a modern biography, film and musical play.”

8 Lord Derry. But may I ask—is this extreme delicacy—this shrinking sensitiveness—a general characteristic of Utopian young ladies? Eek. Oh, no; we are crack specimens.  Kek, we are the pick of the basket. Would you not mind coming quite so near? Thank you (p. 447).
Humorous dialogue between King Paramount and Lady Sophy concerning the slanderous accusations against his character in "The Palace Peeper" in Utopia Limited (pp. 420-422):

Lady S. (referring to paper). I read, on the authority of Senor Senior that your Majesty was seen dancing with your Second-Housemaid on the Oriental Platform of the Two Gardens. That is untrue?

King. Absolutely. Our Second Housemaid has only one leg.

Lady S. (suspiciously). How do you know that?

King. Common report, I give you my honour.

Lady S. It may be so. Further read—and the statement is vouched for by no less an authority than Mephistopheles Minor—that your Majesty indulges in a bath of hot rum-punch every morning. I trust I do not lay myself open to the charge of displaying an indelicate curiosity as to the mysteries of the royal dressing-room when I ask if there is any foundation for this statement?

King. None whatever. When our medical adviser omits rum-punch it is as a draught, not as a statement. As to our bath, our valet plays the garderobe upon us every morning.

Lady S. (shocked). Oh, pray—pray spare me these unseemly details. Well, you are a despot—have you taken steps to slay this scribbler?

King. Well, no—I have not gone so far as that. After all, it's the poor devils living, you know.

Lady S. It is the poor devils living that surprises me. If this man lies, there is no recognized punishment, that is sufficiently terrible for him.

King. That's precisely it. I—I am waiting until a punishment is discovered that will exactly meet the enormity of the case. I am in constant communication with the Mikado of Japan, who is a leading authority on such points; and moreover, I have the ground plans and sectional elevations of several capital punishments in my desk at this moment. Oh, Lady Sophy, as you are powerful, be merciful!

Duet—King and Lady Sophy.

King. Subjected to your heavenly gaze
(Foetrical phrase)

My brain is turned completely
Observe me now,
No Monarch, I vow,

Was ever so far afflicted?

Lady S. I am pleased with that poetical phrase,

"A heavenly gaze."

But though you put it neatly,

Say what you will,

These paragraphs still

Remain uncontradicted.

Come, crush me this contemptible worm.

(A forcible term),

If he's assailed you wrongly,

The rags display,

Which, as you say,

Has moved your Majesty lately.

King. Though I admit that forcible term,

"Contemptible worm."

Appeals to me most strongly,

To treat this pest

As you suggest.

Would pain my Majesty greatly.

Lady S. This writer lies!

King. Yes, bother his eyes!

Lady S. He lives, you say?

King. In a sort of way.

Lady S. Then have him shot.

King. Decidedly not.

Lady S. Or crush him flat.

King. I cannot do that.

Lady S. O royal Rex,


[Joined—]

King. I blameless sex.

There, such conducts shady.

You I pleading in vain.

You I never will gain

Respectable English lady!

[Drums of repudiation by Lady Sophy. Exit, follows

by King.]
of her learning, and such lines as "At Girton all is wheat, and idle chaff is never heard within its walls!" (p. 457) are highly reminiscent of satiric material previously covered in full by Gilbert in Princess Ida. Zara and Captain Fitzbattleaxe, the leader of her English First Life Guards escort, form her main serious love interest in the libretto:

When soldier seeks Utopian glades / In charge of Youth and Beauty, Then pleasure merely masquerades / As Regimental Duty! (p. 425).

However, a number of reviewers criticized Utopia Limited because Gilbert did not give more prominence to the romance. The couple have already made their love vows before the libretto begins, and no real clouds ever appear on their horizon during the libretto that are not quickly extinguished.

Fitzbattleaxe's troopers receive a great deal of attention from the Utopian maidens, who exclaim, "That's trump-call, and they're all trump cards" (p. 423). Paramount questions Fitzbattleaxe about this situation:

King, Your troopers appear to be receiving a troublesome amount of attention from these young ladies. I know how strict you English soldiers are, and I should be extremely distressed if anything occurred to shock their puritanical British sensitiveness. Fitz. Oh, I don't think there's any chance of that. King. You think not? They won't be offended? Fitz. Oh no! They are quite hardened to it. They get a good deal of that sort of thing, standing sentry at the Horse Guards (p. 424).

"Oh, maiden, rich / In Girton lore, / That wisdom which / We prized before, / We do confess / Is nothingness, / And rather less, / Perhaps, than more, / On each of us / Thy Learning shed, / On calculus / May we be fed, / And teach us, please, / To speak with ease / All languages, / Alive and dead!" (p. 422).

10 When Fitzbattleaxe begs Zara to forgive him for not being able to express his love for her because of his emotional tenor idiosyncrasies, she replies, "He thinks slightly of the coconut because it is husky! Besides (disrespectfully) you are not singing for an engagement! (Putting her hand in his.) You have that already!" (p. 437).
Princess Zara and the First Life Guards of Utopia Limited (The Lady's Pictorial, October 14, 1893, p. 559).
Despite the humour here, one is reminded of a similar situation involving country Willis and the Queen of the Fairies in Isolantho.

Fitzbattleaxe, who "represents a military scheme / In all its proud perfection!" (p. 431) is one of six Englishmen whom Princess Zora calls when she brings them to her father's sleepy but happy kingdom. These men are considered "six representatives of the principal causes that have tended to make England the powerful, happy, and blameless country which the consensus of European civilization has declared it to be" (pp. 314-315), and it is decided that Utopia should be remodelled on the English pattern. Like Fitzbattleaxe, each of the other five Flowers of Progress has a name which mocks the thing he most typifies. There are Lord Dramaleigh (the Lord Chamberlain) and Mr. Blashington of the County Council, whose jobs, among other sensitive duties, include censorship of the theatre to "purify our Stage . . . .

And keep meanwhile a modest eye
On wicked music halls (p. 432).

Also included in the company are Mr. Goldbury, a Company Promoter, who sees "gold buried" in corporate financial undertakings; and Sir Bailey Barre, a barrister of great repute, who is

. . . a great Arithmetician who can demonstrate with ease
That two and two are three, or five, or anything you please;
An eminent Logician who can make it clear to you
That black is white—when looked at from the proper point of view;
A marvellous Philologist who'll undertake to show
That 'yes' is but another and a neater form of 'no!' (p. 431).
The sixth member of the group, Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, K.C.B., of the Royal Navy, is, of course, a conscious borrowing from H.M.S. Pinafore, and the Dramatic Review reported that paraphrases from the Captain's song in Pinafore were "undoubtedly the greatest hit of Act I" on the opening night. Yet this review went on to say of the Flowers of Progress,

... it is difficult to work up any interest in the doings of the persons concerned. They are largely what Mr. Oscar Wilde would describe as puppets, put up to enunciate the mottos, cynicisms, satirical comments, and epigrams emanating from Mr. Gilbert . . .

and the Pall Mall Gazette added,

[Gilbert's] different types of progress in England offered, one might think, ample chance for his rarest humour. But he has done nothing with his types; you could hardly tell one from another, the soldier from the speculator, the admiral from the county councillor.

(These criticisms may be a little too harsh when one considers that Fitzbattleaxe is the male half of the chief romantic interest in the work and that—as we will note later in this study—it is Goldbury and Dremleigh who step out to persuade the two young Princesses to stop being hypocritical prudes and start living by the dictates of human nature rather than by the artificial rules of social decorum).

The long-winded oratory and expository lyrics concerning the Flowers of Progress and their reforms caused many critics to attack the work for its non-theatrical philosophising. "... Whatever else it may be, it is not dramatic humor, said Spectator" (undoubtedly A. E. W. Blakley) in the Spectator. "I mean, of course, that it is merely verbal humor; not humor in three dimensions, humor in action, humor reducible—as all drama should be ultimately reducible—to panoptic expression." This
caused many critics to attack what they considered the lack of a coherent plot in the work. The Pall Mall Gazette roared,

Even the most extravagant fantasy is bound to have a certain order, a certain sequence, a certain coherence of purpose if it is to be regarded as a work of art. And 'Utopia (Limited)' has no coherence, no ordered sequence. Nothing comes of anything.\(^{11}\)

Actually, the Flowers of Progress do not appear in the libretto until near the end of the first act, a structural flaw since an earlier introduction of this group would have strengthened the unity of the work and shortened the lengthy first act. However, the reformers quickly, and by the beginning of the second act, Fitzbattleaxe is able to boast, "Freed from the trammels imposed upon them by idle Acts of Parliament, all have given their natural talents full play and introduced reforms which, even in England, were never dreamt of!" (p. 438). Later at a royal reception, the reformers exclaim:

It really is surprising / What a thorough Anglicizing
We have brought about—Utopia's quite another land;
In her enterprising movements, / She is England—with improvements,
Which we dutifully offer to our mother-land! (p. 440).

Returning to Princess Zara's important role in the work, we find that she is not only loved by Fitzbattleaxe but also cherished by two elderly Utopian Supreme Court judges, Scaphio and Phantis, and Scaphio's statement that "when I love it will be with the accumulated fervour of sixty-six years" (p. 286) reminds one of other comical old men who sought to gain the hands of women much younger than themselves in earlier works by Gilbert (the peer in Iolanthe, Joseph Porter in H.M.S. Pinafore).

Fitzbattleaxe arranges for Zara to slip out of this embarrassing situation

\(^{11}\)In recent times, Jane Stedman has called Utopia Limited "a sprawling un-self-contained construct" and condemned it as being "not so much a play as a satiric tract." Jane W. Stedman, "William S. Gilbert: His Comic Techniques and Their Development," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1955, p. 314, n. 73, and 374.
King Paramount's song on the beneficial reforms instituted by the Flowers of Progress in his country in Utopia Limited (pp. 440–441):

**Song.**—**King.**

Society has quite forsaken all her wicked courses,
Which emptied our police courts, and abolishes divorce.

**Chorus.**—Divorce is nearly obsolete in England.
**King.**—No tolerance we show to undeserving rank and splendour;
For the higher his position is the greater the offender.

**Chorus.**—That's a maxim that is prevalent in England.

**King.**—No peeress at our Drawing-Room before the Presence poses;
Who wouldn't be accepted by the lower-middle classes,
Each shabby dame, whatever be her rank, is bowed out neatly.

**Chorus.**—In short, this happy country has been Anglicized completely!

It really is surprising;
What a thorough Anglicizing.
We have brought about—Utopia's quite another land;
In her enterprising movements,
She is England—with improvements,
Which we dutifully offer to our mother-land!—

**King.**—Our city we have beautified—we've done it willy-nilly—
And all that isn't Belgrave Square is Strand and Piccadilly.

**Chorus.**—We haven't any slummeries in England!
**King.**—We have solved the labour question with discrimination—
So poverty is obsolete and hunger is abolished—

**Chorus.**—We are going to abolish it in England.
**King.**—The Chamberlain our native stage has purged, beyond question,
Of "risky" situation and indefatigable expressions;
No piece is tolerated if it's costumed indiscretely—

**Chorus.**—In short, this happy country has been Anglicized completely!

It really is surprising, etc.

**King.**—Our Peersage we've remodelled on an intellectual basis—
Which certainly is rough on our hereditary race—

**Chorus.**—We are going to remodel it in England—
**King.**—The Browsers and the Cotton Lords no longer seek admittance—
And Literary Merit meets with proper recognition—

**Chorus.**—As Literary Merit does in England!
**King.**—Who knows but we may count among our intellectual chickens—
Like you, an Earl of Thackeray and p'raps a Duke of Dickens—

**Lord.**—We count Millais (when, they come) we'll lose sweetly—

**Chorus.**—In short, this happy country has been Anglicized completely!

It really is surprising, etc.
by employing typically Gilbertian legal jargon on the two rivals, who unerringly agree to let Fitzbattleaxe take charge of her:

Fitz... In England, when two gentlemen are in love with the same lady, and until it is settled which gentleman is to blow out the brains of the other, it is provided by the Rival Admires' Clause Consolidation Act, that the lady shall be entrusted to an officer of Household Cavalry as stake-holder, who is bound to hand her over to the survivor (on the Tontine principle) in a good condition of substantial and decorative repair. See. Reasonable wear and tear and damages by fire excepted? Fitz. Exact. Well, that seems very reasonable (pp. 426-427).

However, several early critics complained that this solution is obviously only temporary and that Gilbert never returns to the problem to give a truly satisfactory conclusion. It is also obvious that the whole situation is patterned after the rival claims of Mountararat and Tolloller for the hand of Phyllis, who loves Stephon, in Iolanthe.

The activities of Phantis and Scaphio in the libretto are not confined to their comic rivalry toward Princess Zara. Along with Tarara, the Public Exploder, they hold great power over Zara's father, King Paramount:

Our duty is to spy / Upon our King's illidities, And keep a watchful eye / On all his eccentricities, If ever a trick he tries / That savours of rascality, At our decree he dies / Without the least formality! (p. 285).

When their political and economic control over the King and country is threatened by the reforms of the Flowers of Progress, Scaphio and

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12 See especially the review in the Saturday Review. An early manuscript of the libretto in the British Museum "contains a demonstration of high spirits on the part of Princess Zara which effectively persuades Scaphio and Phantis that she is not the bride for either of them, but Gilbert apparently excluded the scene from the original production and subsequent copies of the libretto. See K. W. Gransden and P. J. Millets, "Papers of W. S. Gilbert," British Museum Quarterly, XII (1957-1959), pp. 67-69. See also: Victor Golding, "The Evolution of 'Utopia Limited,'" GAS Journal, Jan. 1968, pp. 134-135.
The accusations of Scaphio and Phantis against the reforms of the Flowers of Progress in Utopia Limited (p. 443):

Sc. (Curiously) What do we complain of? Why, through the innovations introduced by the Flowers of Progress, all our harmless schemes for making a provision for our old age are ruined. Our Matrimonial Agency is at a standstill, our Cheap Sherry business is in bankruptcy, our Army Clothing contracts are paralyzed, and even our Society paper, the *Palace Peeper*, is practically defunct!

King. Defunct? Is that so? Dear, dear, I am truly sorry.

Sc. Are you aware that Sir Bailey Barre has introduced a law of libel by which all editors of scurrilous newspapers are publicly flogged—as in England? And six of our editors have resigned in succession! Now, the editor of a scurrilous paper can stand a good deal—he takes a private thrashing as a matter of course—it's considered in his salary—but no gentleman likes to be publicly flogged.

King. Naturally. I shouldn't like it myself.

Phan. Then our burlesque Theatre is absolutely ruined!

King. Dear me. Well, theatrical property is not what it was.

Phan. Are you aware that the Lord Chamberlain, who has his own views as to the best means of elevating the national drama, has declined to license any play that is not in blank verse and three hundred years old—as in England?

Sc. And as if that wasn't enough, the County Councillor has ordered a four-foot wall to be built up right across the proscenium, in case of fire—as in England.

Phan. It's so hard on the company—who are liable to be roasted alive—and this has to be met by enormously increased salaries—as in England.

Sc. You probably know that we've contracted to supply the entire nation with a complete English outfit. But perhaps you do not know that, when we send in our bills, our customers plead liability limited to a declared capital of eighteenpence, and apply to be dealt with under the Winding-up Act—as in England?

King. Really, gentlemen, this is very irregular. If you will be so good as to formulate a detailed list of your grievances in writing, addressed to the Secretary of Utopia (Limited), they will be laid before the Board, in due course, at their next monthly meeting.
Phantis provoke a rebellion among the populace to overthrow the new order. The dilemma is solved in the last scene of the libretto:

*Flourish. Enter King, his three Daughters, Lady Sophy, and the Flowers of Progress.*

King. What means this most unmanly interruption? / Is this your gratitude for boons conferred? / See Boons? Bah! A fico for such boons, say we! / These boons have brought Utopia to a standstill! / Our pride and boast—the Army and the Navy— / Have both been re-constructed and re-modelled / Upon so irresistible a basis / That all the neighbouring nations have disarmed— / And War’s impossible! Your County Councillor / Has passed such drastic Sanitary laws / That all the doctors dwindle, starve, and die! / The laws, remodelled by Sir Bailey Barre, / Have extinguished crime and litigation: / The lawyers starve, and all the jails are let / As model lodgings for the working-classes! / In short— / Utopia, stamped by dull Prosperity, / Demands that these detested Flowers of Progress / Be sent about their business, and affairs / Restored to their original complexion! — King (to Zara). My daughter, this is a very unpleasant state of things. What is to be done? Zara. I don’t know —I don’t understand it. We must have omitted something. King. Omitted something? Yes, that’s all very well, but— [Sir Bailey Barre whispers to Zara.] Zara (suddenly). Of course! Now I remember! Why, I had forgotten the most essential element of all! King. And that is— Zara. Government by Party! Introduce that great and glorious element—at once the bulwark and foundation of England’s greatness—and all will be well! No political measures will endure, because one Party will assuredly undo all that the other party has done; and while groused is to be shot, and foxes worried to death, the legislative action of the country will be at a standstill. Then there will be sickness in plenty, endless lawsuits, crowded jails, interminable confusion in the Army and Navy, and, in short, general and unexampled prosperity!

Although H. Sutherland Edwards in *Salas Journal* felt that this was a conclusion that added to the fun of the work (" . . . on an encouraging prospect of general incompeincy and confusion the curtain falls"), most early reviewers felt that this ending was not completely satisfactory.

Said the critic for the *Saturday Review,*

*pp. 451-452.*
The critic of the *Man of the World* even suggested that "... there is no reason why the opera, instead of ending here, on the eve of the experiment, should not run into a third act, showing the result of party government in Utopia. It is for that reason that I do not think the conclusion satisfactory, for the opera does not seem to end, but simply to leave off." It should also be noted that the climactic speech of Princess Zara, which the *Daily Graphic* called "about the bitterest thing Mr. Gilbert has ever penned," was a bit too strong in its satiric phrasing for the first-night audience. Apparently only one man was brave enough to emit a guffaw, "and his laughter was soon checked." It is also true that the problem that is solved by Zara's speech only surfaces in the last stages of the plot with no suspenseful build-up to the solution. As Jane Stedman has said, "The plot of *Utopia Limited* does not conclude in a dramatic sense; it is brought to an abrupt, almost slovenly end..."
Utopia Limited ran for only 245 performances during its original London engagement—a somewhat disappointing showing by Gilbert and Sullivan standards—and with Thespis and The Grand Duke is only one of three Gilbert and Sullivan works that have never been revived by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company during its long history. Writers have developed elaborate theories about the reason for this lack of enthusiasm for Utopia Limited during its own time and in the years since its original production.\(^{16}\) Some critics have forwarded the idea that Utopia Limited is too technically complicated to stand easy revival. The tropical landscape and refined drawing-room sequences require too much scenic elaboration,\(^{17}\) and there are too many parts that require top-flight interpretation from accomplished players. The exclusively English and Victorian subject matter of the work has also been cited as a harmful element (although arguments will be advanced later in this study to show that the satire is not as dated as some critics have claimed). W. A. Darlington, for instance, has written:

Nothing loses its point so quickly as satire which is mainly topical in its impact, and Utopia Limited was not merely topical but local... The satire there is addressed to the special absurdities of the late Victorian era in Britain, and has hardly any validity outside that time and that place.\(^{18}\)


\(^{18}\) Darlington, p. 149.
Even at the time of its inception, some reviewers felt that they detected a restriction in its appeal. The *Lady's Pictorial* said that "the opera appeals directly to an English audience, and particularly to a London one." This is one of the reasons given by critics to explain the popular failure of *Utopia Limited* in New York a year after its London premiere. At that time one American critic wrote, "The new operetta may possibly be very successful with the Knickerbocker Club, where certain ineffable youths will be carried away by its utter Englishness, but the general public will probably not care a great deal about it," and in 1920 a knowledgeable correspondent to the *New York Times* said, "... I have small hope of ever seeing [*Utopia Limited revived*] in this country, for it concerns itself too exclusively with the satirizing of British institutions."  

Some writers have felt that the apparent disfavour of the Monarchy influenced the early popular failure of the work, and that Gilbert's all-embracing satire on the modern Englishman of 1893 was too stinging, too direct, too excessive to be accepted by the audiences of the Savoy for a very long time, although, strangely enough, the early reviews did not make this a major complaint. However, it is interesting to note that after *Utopia Limited*, Gilbert never devoted much effort to political satire again—perhaps because he was vexed at *Utopia Limited*'s comparative failure or because he himself felt that he had gone too far in attacking his countrymen. After his "Anglomania" in *Utopia Limited*, Gilbert turned to Continental matters (at least in plot setting) in his last three works of the decade.

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20 See above, p. 114.
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF UTOPIA LIMITED (SAWY THEATRE, OCT. 7, 1893) IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

CAST: King Paramount (Mr. Rutland Barrington); Scaphio (Mr. W. H. Denny); Phantile (Mr. John Le Hay); Tarara (Mr. Walter Passmore); Calyx (Mr. Bowden Russell); Lord Drumaleigh (Mr. Scott Russell); Captain Fitzbattsec (Mr. Charles Kemingham); Capt. Sir Edward Coreen (Mr. Lawrence Gridley); Mr. Coldbury (Mr. Scott Flashe); Sir Bailey Barne (Mr. Enes Blackmore); Mr. Bludhington (Mr. Herbert Balland); Princess Pera (Miss Nancy Mantooth); Princess Nekaya (Miss Eunice Cuan); Princess Kalyba (Miss Florence Perry); Solata (Miss Edith Johnson); Helene (Miss Haly Bell); Phyilla (Miss Florence Easton).

(SEE ALSO: "UTOPIA LIMITED": A COLLECTION OF MISCELLANEOUS NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS, BRITISH MUSEUM: TH. CTs. 78. (4)).

Publications of Oct. 8, 1893


Publications of Oct. 9


Publications of Oct. 11


Publications of Oct. 12


Publications of Oct. 13


Publications of Oct. 14

Publications of Oct. 15

- The People*, p. 6
- Reynolds's Newspaper, p. 5

Publications of Oct. 21

- Moonshine (B), p. 204

Publications of Oct. 25

- Punch (B), p. 204

Publications of Nov.

- Magazine of Music (B), pp. 248-249
- Professional World, review by Deadhead, p. 166
- Theatre (B), pp. 294-295

Publications of Nov. 1

- The Lute (B), pp. 275-276
- Monthly Musical Record (B), p. 255
- Musical Times (g), p. 653


- Minstrel (B), review by Owen, p. 45
- The Theatre (B), photograph of Lady Sophia and the twins, p. 329 (facing)

George Brenchley, immediately prior to the opening of H. E. May.
His Excellency, a comic opera with music by Dr. Charles Caryl, was Gilbert's first work after the intensely topical Hail, Hail, Hail! and Gilbert reacted to the semi-failure of the Steadman satire by almost completely ignoring contemporary matter in the new work. "It avoids altogether that 'topical' satire which has so often proved a practical." Every version of the evening's notices at the Lyric Theatre on Oct. 27, 1894, apparently pleased the charge, and the following week, the Evening News reported,

Let it at once be set forth that His Excellency is a success, that it has received with enthusiasm knowing what was necessary on the first night, and that the audience appeared to be overwhelmed with satisfaction.

William Archer in the Daily News expressed the belief that Gilbert has "never been more nearly, or more pleasantly, inspired," and Charles Wilson in the Daily Mail said,

Sir, Gilbert is himself again. His little period of vacillation, of hesitancy, of warning—call it what you will—is past and gone. . . . 'His Excellency' is the product of his finest literary mood. It is most beautifully swift.

One early critic in a less erudite publication was as impressed by the work that he posed a tribute in the style of Mack the minimum of Gilbert himself.
His Excellency, a comic opera with music by Dr. Osmond Carr, was Gilbert's first work after the intensely topical Utopia Limited, and Gilbert reacted to the semi-failure of the Utopian satire by almost completely ignoring contemporary subject matter in the new work. "It avoids altogether that 'topical' satire which has so often proved a snare to this author," said "Spectator" (A. B. Walkley) in the Star. "... It spoilt 'Utopia'; in 'His Excellency' it passes almost unnoticed." Many members of the opening-night audience at the Lyric Theatre on Oct. 27, 1894, apparently welcomed the change, and the following week, the Pelican reported,

Let it at once be set forth that His Excellency is a success, that it was received with enthusiasm trenching upon frenzy upon the first night, and that the audience appeared to be overwhelmed with satisfaction.

William Archer in the Pall Mall Gazette expressed the belief that Gilbert had "never been more merrily or more pleasantly inspired," and Charles Willeby in St. Paul's ventured,

Mr. Gilbert is himself again. His little period of vacillation, of hesitancy, of weakness—call it what you will—is past and gone. ... 'His Excellency' is the product of his finest literary loom. It is most beautifully woven.

One early critic in a less erudite publication was so inspired by the work that he penned a tribute in the style, if lacking the artistry, of Gilbert himself:
The story told with Gilbert's gay verbosity
By favourites of old who talk and sing
Is full of topsy-turvy Humoriosity,
And often quite too droll for anything.
The situations quaint are very numerous,
And some of them—at least, to an extent—
Would strike a sober-minded soul as humorous.
In short, 'His Excellency's' excellent!

Of Gilbert's own versification for His Excellency, the critics were, as usual, ecstatic, and the staging of the libretto's 'dancing hussars' was widely praised.

Despite this critical acclaim, His Excellency closed after only 116 performances—a run that was less than half that of Utopia Limited—and it proved a total flop in New York a year later. Many critics have blamed the failure on Osmond Carr's score. It apparently was technically far better than Grossmith's music for Haste to the Wedding, but it did not match Gilbert's dramatic purposes. William Archer quipped that Gilbert could "write just as sparkling for Mr. Collier or for Dr. Carr as ever he did for Sir Arthur Sullivan—if only Dr. Carr could sparkle in response!" Yet inappropriate music is not the only

1 "Jingle" in Pick-Me-Up, Nov. 10, 1894, p. 86.


3 Many early critics agreed with the reviewer in Musical Notes, who said, "Dr. Carr's music has the great merits of refinement and scholarly diction, but it fails to echo the humour of the libretto... the work as a whole presents the rare picture of a composer being over-weighted by his librettist." The Theatre commented, "... the musical portion of His Excellency may fitly be described as belonging to that most terribly facile form of all commonplace—educated commonplace." For a more recent view, see Gervase Hughes, Composers of Operetta (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 201.
flaw of the work. Repeating the faux pas of Utopia Limited, Gilbert allowed the first act to spin itself out to too great a length. One early reviewer likened it to "the first act of Lohengrin without cuts," and Jane Stedman has commented on "a mass of diffuse incident large enough to furnish the old tight-knit plots of three or four Gilbert libretti."5

Despite the fact that Gilbert avoided topical references, one recent writer has described the libretto as "much more cynical than any of the Savoy operas," and early critics spoke vaguely of "a lack of a certain breadth and tenderness" which they had always appreciated in the softer moments of Gilbert's previous libretti. Even in "All men must love whom I adore;"—one of the libretto's most popular lyrics sung by one of the more positive characters—there is a jarring underlying strain of selfishness and belligerency, and a recent writer has complained that in the entire libretto "there are no memorable characters, and few that are really likeable."8

The main thread of the plot, which is inexplicably laid in Elsinore in the year 1801, concerns the cruel practical joking of the town's governor, George Griffenfeld. "On the basis of an exalted official


8 Bargainnier, p. 358.
Erling Sydke's song, "All Men Must Love Whom I Adore," from His Excellency (p. 97):

Song.—Erling.

When I bestow my bosom's store,
   No room for deeds;
Must I desery,
   All men must love whom I adore,
Or we fall out,
   All men and I.
Though poor their chance and slight their hope
   Who with my suit presume to cope,
Yet must all men to gain her try,
Or we fall out, all men and I.
When I am wed I'll hold them cheap;
   With joyous cry,
At such a time all men must weep,
Or we fall out,
   All men and I.
As all men must my rivals be,
   When Nanna gives her hand to me,
All men must broken-hearted sigh,
Or we fall out, all men and I.
If I my lady vainly woe,
   And, her without,
I pine and die,
   Mankind at large must perish, too,
Or we fall out,
   Mankind and I.
Who lives when I find life too long
   Would seem to say that I am wrong,
When I expire all men must die,
Or we fall out, all men and I.
who makes butter slides for his subordinates, issues bogus patents of nobility, and gives sham royal commissions to needy artists. A structure of almost limitless dimensions might be raised," felt the critic for the Daily Telegraph. "The mere notion looms large with possibilities of absurdity, and is ready to burst into laughter at a touch." Yet this seems like rather black humour—especially when one must laugh with, rather than at, the despicable perpetrator of the cruelties. "Things since Hamlet's time have obviously gone from bad to worse so far as Elsinore is concerned," noted the dramatic critic for Black and White, "where everything is now rotten and unreal." The townspeople under Griffenfeld's control—the helpless victims of his antics—characterize him as

> This mite of a man who'll plot and plan
> To ruin us all for his delight—
> This mummikin ape in human shape—
> This tuppenny ha'penny lump of spite! (p. 126).

In his selfish insensitivity to the feelings of others, Griffenfeld is reminiscent of tyrannical, bumptious, thoroughly unlikeable King Gama of Princess Ida, who expected people to appreciate his constant, blatant criticism of them. Griffenfeld in His Excellency fumes,

> Upon my word, there's no such thing as gratitude. I do all I can to make my soldiers amusing— I place them in all kinds of ridiculous situations— I make them a source of entertainment to a whole township of attractive girls, and instead of being pleased and grateful for the attention, they growl like so many sore-eared bears! (p. 104).

In fact, there is nothing commendable about Griffenfeld and no justification for the sadistic jokes he incessantly perpetrates on the other characters for his own amusement. "Griffenfeld is a one-trait character,"
George Grossmith as Governor Griffenfeld in His Excellency:

Governor Griffenfeld: "I do all I can to make my soldiers amusing—I place them in all kinds of ridiculous situations."

(The Sketch, November 7, 1894, p. 2 of Special Supplement)
it has been noted, "his desire to play practical jokes being his only
distinguishing feature."^9

The Governor's daughters, Numa and Thora, are as sinister and
as scheming as their father. Unlike most of Gilbert's earlier young
females who can be cruel and vain but still keep an air of innocent
charm because of their humorous naivety and steadfast belief in the
nobility of their every action, Numa and Thora have no illusions about
the moral righteousness of their deeds. They mercilessly taunt and
knowingly deceive their earnest and kind-hearted (but curiously uncomical)
suitors, Erling and Tortenssen, and then cynically glory in their
cruelty with no hint of remorse. At least one later writer has described
the daughters as "the most disagreeable, self-centered, snobbish, and
avaricious 'heroines' that Gilbert ever created. Sykke's and Tortenssen's
love for them is impossible to understand."^10 Indeed, such lines from
Erling and Tortenssen to Numa and Thora that "... though our future
you destroy it— / I don't mind ruination— I enjoy it!" (p. 128) and

Though you've ridiculed us sadly—
Cheated and deceived us badly,
As we love you fondly—madly—
We forgive you— . . . (p. 142),^11

only add to the general air of cynicism about human nature in the work.

^9Bargainnier, p. 352.

^10Ibid., p. 351.

^11These lines foreshadow Lutin's plea to Darine in Fallen Fairies:
"Oh, Darine, my love, / Do not forsake me, Treat me as thou wilt, / I will
bear it all. Be thou but true to me, / My masterful but well-beloved wife" (p. 224); and Selene's anguished cry to Ethais in the same libretto:
"My hope—my shattered hope, but still my hope! / My love—my blighted love,
but still my love! / My life—my ruined life, but still my life! / I'll work
and toil for thee— I'll be thy slave— / Thine humble, silent, and sub-
missive slave!" (p. 232).
The insensitive natures of the two girls and the oppressive air of cynical disillusionment in the libretto is well illustrated in a scene (pp. 119-121) near the end of the first act when Erling and Tortenssen learn that they have been sadly deceived by the Governor concerning royal appointments they thought they had been given. The daughters, who had sworn to marry Erling and Tortenssen if the two men could prove that they truly had been elevated to the Court, had known of the deception all along and easily renounce their former vows. Near the end of the opera, Gilbert attempts to redeem the daughters by intimating that they really care for Erling and Tortenssen (pp. 142-143). This, of course, was necessary to produce a happy ending, but it fails to be convincing because the daughters have been painted much too darkly throughout the rest of the action.

Negatively superfluous to the story is Gilbert's inclusion of Dame Heela Cortlandt, one of his menacing, man-chasing, ugly spinsters, whom the Sporting Times attacked as "the repetition of that infernal old woman that Gilbert is so fond of, and which nobody else likes a bit."

After criticizing Dame Cortlandt's appearance in the play, the critic of the Westminster Gazette added, "About her somewhat remote connexion with the plot nothing need be said." Actually, she is the female portion of a ludicrous triangle involving Griffenfeld and the town syndic, Nats Munck. "... The love episodes of the old woman are a trifle monotonous," said the Graphic, "and her continual struggle between 'two Tremendous Powers in perpetual antagonism—a Diabolical Temper and an Iron Will'—become wearisome."
Cruel, cynical aspects of Gilbert's libretto for His Excellency are revealed in these lines between Erling, Nanna, and Tortenssen (pp. 119-121):

**Enter Erling Sverre, with large unopened official letter in his hand.**

_Erl._ At last—the reply to my letter announcing to His Majesty the completion of the statue! Every hope and every fear of my life lies within the four corners of this document. What may it contain? Perhaps an order on the King's Treasurer for ten thousand rix-dollars! Perhaps my appointment as Court Sculptor! Perhaps even my patent of Countship! I tremble so that I can scarcely open it!

[Nanna has entered at the back. She creeps up to him with suppressed fun in her face.]

_Nanna._ Oh, what a big letter! Whom is it from, and what's it all about?

_Erl._ Nanna, this letter is to seal your destiny and mine—so, as you are as much concerned with it as I am, I think we ought to open it together. It—it's from the King's private secretary!

_Nanna._ Oh, be quick and let's see what's in it!

_Erl._ You open it—I can't! (Giving her the letter.)

_Nanna._ I can. Now then—one! two! three!—[Nanna opens it.]

_Erl._ Read—read!

_Nanna_ (looking at it). Oh! I don't think you'll like it. Oh! I'm sure you won't like it! (Reads.) "Sir—In reply to a letter in which you announce the completion of a statue of His Royal Highness Prince Frederick, alleged by you to have been commissioned by His Majesty, I have to inform you that His Majesty knows nothing about it."

_Erl._ (stunned). Knows nothing about it!

__Nanna._ There seems to be some mistake.

_Erl._ Some mistake! Why, what do you mean?

_Nanna._ Why that, at the first blush, he bears the appearance of being one of dear papa's practical jokes.

_Erl._ But—! It's ruin! Absolute ruin!— Why, I spent every penny I possessed on the marble alone!

_Nanna._ I'm so sorry!

_Erl._ Sorry! I can't realize it! It stuns me! It's too cruel—too cruel! And the promise you made me—

_Nanna._ Oh, the promise!—Ye—es—the conditional promise.

_Erl._ Don't tell me that was a hoax too! "Give me some hope to cling to! I can bear it all if you'll only tell me that you won't desert me!"

_Nanna._ Really, it's extremely awkward; but one must be a little prudent. I'm a very expensive young lady, and as it seems that you have no immediate prospect of being able to maintain an establishment, it would be really criminal on my part to involve you in further embarrassments.

[Enter Nanna.

_Erl._ Cruel, cold calculating girl! What on earth am I to do?

_Ruins and desolation stare me in the face!*

Enter Tortenssen in great excitement, with an open letter in his hand.

_Tor._ Erling! I am tricked, swindled, undone! I have just received a letter from the King's secretary to say that my appointment is a hoax! I've sold my house, and Thora repudiates me with indignation and contempt.

_Erl._ Again the Governor's doing! I, also, have just learnt that the commission for the Regent's statue is a heartless fabrication, and I, too, am ruined—utterly and completely ruined!

_Tor._ My poor Erling!
Dame Hecla Cortlandt: "Within this fragile body two tremendous Powers are in perpetual antagonism—a Diabolical Temper and an Iron Will."

(The Sketch, November 7, 1894, p. 2 of Special Supplement)
The serious romantic interest in the work is found in the Prince Regent and Christina, a village ballad singer who has fallen in love with the Regent's statue. Unfortunately, as a number of early reviewers noted, the Regent and Christina have only one scene together, and there are no love duets anywhere in the libretto, a conspicuous omission that amplifies the negative, cynical atmosphere of the work. It should also be noted that Christina's two main songs are reminiscent of earlier work by Gilbert. Her idealistic hymn to the Prince Regent's statue in the opening scene (pp. 24-25) reminds one of both Gilbert's 1871 play, Pygmalion and Galatea and Lady Sophy's search for the "perfect monarch" in Utopia Limited. The "Song of the Bee Who Tried to Swarm Alone" in the second act of His Excellency (pp. 127-128) is in the same vein as the "Fable of the Magnet and the Churn" from Patience.

The excessive length of the first act of His Excellency is indicated by the fact that we are deep into the libretto before the Prince Regent actually appears on the stage (a flaw that is similar to the late arrival of the mountebanks troupe in The Mountebanks and the Flowers of Progress in Utopia Limited). The Regent is disguised as "Hils Egilsson—a strolling player—a flotsam and jetsam on the world's tide—tossed hither and thither as the wild waves will" (p. 110), an image which immediately brings to mind Nanki-Poo, the disguised Mikado's son and his famous refrain, "A Wandering Minstrel I." In a scene (see below, p. 242) which many early critics considered the best in the libretto, the Regent and the Governor enter into an agreement for the perpetration of one of the Governor's cruel jokes. Griffenfeld persuades Hils to impersonate the Prince Regent,
The meeting between Governor Griffenfeld and the disguised Prince Regent in the first act of His Excellency (pp. 112-114):

Griff. Hallo, sir, who are you who presume to convert into a soliloquy what was intended for a soliloquy?  
Reg. I'm Nils Egilsson—strolling player—sadly out of repair; greatly in need of a handsome salary, paid weekly in advance.

Griff. A professional rogue, eh?
Reg. Well—a technical rogue—much as a lawyer is a technical gentleman—that is to say, by Act of Parliament.

Griff. You pipe to a sharp note, sir. We keep a cage for such birds as you. (Aside) Where have I seen this fellow's face?

Reg. Well, I think I sing best behind bars.

Griff. (aside) Where have I seen this fellow's face?

Reg. Surely you're not the Governor?

Griff. Ton pipe to a sharp note, sir. I've keep a cage for mending birds.

Reg. I've seen this fellow's face before. Where have I seen it? And you are singularly like him.

Griff. He's a common-looking fellow, and you are singularly like him. (Pointing at statue) Yes, sir. I am the Governor of this Province. A thousand pardons! I took you for the borough alderman. A hasty conclusion based upon a commendable absence of superficial polish which the vulgar are but too apt to associate with the conception of a gentleman. The Governor! (Bowing) A worshipful gentleman, PH be sworn, appearances notwithstanding. A thousand pardons!

Griff. (who, during this speech, has been studying the statue) I have it! It's the statue! Why, he's marvellously like it!

Reg. Five golden Freidrichs!

Griff. Then you consent?

Reg. Consent? What's there that I wouldn't consent to for five golden Freidrichs? But my dress—it's a conventional outfit for summer weather; but not, I should say, what the Regent of Denmark would wear—except, perhaps, in the bosom of his family after the cares of State are over for the day.

Griff. I've provided for that. The sculptor of that statue borrowed a left-off suit of the Regent's from His Highness' valet—for artistic purposes. It's now at the Castle, packed up ready to be returned. I should say it would fit you to a nicety.

Reg. You flatter me, I'm sure. There's no doubt of it; when am I to begin?

Griff. To-morrow morning. It'll be great fun.

Reg. It will be a tremendous joke.

Griff. So original! With such possibilities! Fancy—a dastardly Regent dispensing sham wealth and sham honours unto all my sham friends—and then their disappointment when they discover it's only my fun!
not knowing that Nils really is the Royal One. However, many early critics felt that from this point in the libretto, Gilbert failed to drain the juices from the dramatic grapes he had produced; he did not fulfill in the complications and climax of the second act the expectations begun in the first act. The critic for the *Sunday Times* complained:

The possibilities of the position [of an illustrious person impersonating himself] seem endless, and we look forward to a second act full of the most diverting complications and surprises. But here, strangely enough, the author's usual skill seems to have deserted him;"

and R.S.H. in the *World* presented a humorous critical analogy:

To be with the first act of his opera and with the second on one and the same evening is rather like taking down to dinner a lady who is brilliantly complex from the clear soup to the game, but who lapses into serene unworldliness with the advent of the ice-pudding, and by dessert nibbles almonds and raisins, and converses about the weather and the crops.

Since Griffenfeld comes to a bad end at the opera's conclusion by being demoted to the rank and post of a mere sentry by the Regent, some early reviewers accepted the idea that Gilbert's purpose in the work was to show "the bitter bit." However, most critics found this explanation unconvincing. The *Daily Telegraph* said,

It may, however, be assumed that 'His Excellency' was not written for the sake of its moral. Practical joking is no longer in fashion, and only at distant intervals do we hear of sporadic cases in barracks and universities. There is consequently small need to show it up or write it down, and in this instance Mr. Gilbert does neither as an ultimate purpose. He simply wanted a groundwork for a new libretto, and the practical joker was chosen.

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12. The plot, which is basically a parody of the Scribean play with power shifting back and forth between Griffenfeld and the other characters, is very thin, for it is based on a practical joke, whose end is known; that is, the audience knows that the 'fake' prince is the real prince." Bargainnier, p. 358.
The Scandinavian setting and names of the characters suggest a sly dig at Ibsen, and the choice of Elsinore as the town where the story occurs seems a further satiric thrust at Shakespeare, but neither Ibsen nor Shakespeare seems parodied in any substantial way in the libretto. Consequently, the early critics were at a loss to find a meaning or a satiric purpose behind the somewhat cynical incidents in the work, and in recent times Jane Stedman has attacked the libretto for being "little more than a series of practical jokes."  

13 Stedman, p. 315.
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF HIS EXCELLENCY (LYRIC THEATRE, OCT. 27, 1894) IN NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

CAST: The Prince Regent (Mr. Rutland Barrington); George Griffenfeld (Mr. George Grossmith); Erling Spicke (Mr. Gas. Kemingham); Dr. Turtenessen (Mr. Augustus Cranes); Mats Hunch (Mr. John Le Ray); Corp. Harold (Mr. Arthur Playfair); A Sentry (Mr. Geo. Temple); First Officer (Mr. Ernest Snow); Second Officer (Mr. Frank Horton); Christina (Miss Nancy McIntosh); Nanna (Miss Jessie Bond); Thora (Miss Ellaine Teviss); Dame Hecia Cortlandt (Miss Alice Barnett); Blanche (Miss Gertrude Ayerst); Ella (Miss Hay Cross).

Publications of Oct. 28, 1894

Publications of Oct. 29

Publications of Oct. 31

Publications of Nov.
Dramatic World, review by D.A., p.4.

Publications of Nov. 1

Publications of Nov. 2

Publications of Nov. 3

Publications of Nov. 4

Publications of Nov. 6
  Pulteney, review by The Odd Man, p. 191.

Publications of Nov. 7
  Sketch*, special supplement.

Publications of Nov. 8
  The Lady, p. 616.

Publications of Nov. 10

Publications of Nov. 17
  Punch, p. 240.

  Reid's London Entertainment Guide*, review by Noam, pp. 5-6.

Publications of Dec. 1
The failure here must sorrowfully be put down to the librettist. Plot, dialogue, characterisation, wit, everything, is mechanical. It reads like the work of a tired man. Had it been the work of any other author we should have said that it satirised Gilbert."

The Grand Duke, destined to be the final collaboration between Gilbert and Sullivan, was produced in the spring of 1896, four years after the first Gilbert libretto discussed in this study, The Mountebanks, and a comparison of the two librettos sheds some important light on Gilbert's work as the years of his popular decline deepened. Both works are comparable in their European setting, theatrical satire, complicated plot structure, and profusion of characters;¹ but The Grand Duke is much more cynical than The Mountebanks, its characters are not nearly so likeable, and Gilbert's linguistic brilliancy, so apparent in The Mountebanks,² can be found in only a few passages of The Grand Duke. In the space of the seven short years between The Gondoliers, Gilbert's last great success with Sullivan in 1889, and The Grand Duke

¹There are a number of more subtle similarities between these two works: the politically revolutionary theatrical company of The Grand Duke is a composite of the secret society of Tamorras and the troupe of mountebanks in The Mountebanks; Gilbert's obsession with decadent culinary topics in The Grand Duke is reminiscent of his employment of Italian-cuisine-based names (Giorgio Ravioli; Luigi Spaghetti; Elvino di Pasta; etc.) for a number of his characters in The Mountebanks; the miserliness of Rudolph in The Grand Duke was presaged by the greediness of the bandit leader, the innkeeper, and the mountebank manager in The Mountebanks; the problems of a theatrical manager are discussed in both works; Baroness von Krakenfeld's remark to Julia Jallitoe in The Grand Duke that "My dear, under the circumstances you are doing admirably—and you'll improve with practice. It's so difficult to be a lady when one isn't born to it" (p. 80) is closely related to Teresa's cutting comments to Ultrice on the same subject in The Mountebanks; the song incorporating Greek phrases that begins the reign of Rudolph in The Grand Duke reminds one that Gilbert gave the Monks at the beginning of The Mountebanks a dog-Latin processional chorus; Gilbert uses a similar plot device of allowing a supposed temporary change in the situation of the characters to become permanent because of the selfish, scheming actions of one of the characters in both works; and both works begin with weddings and light-hearted lyrics wishing the couples well.
in 1896 the librettist had fallen from the crest of his lyrical and dramatic abilities to the depths of mediocrity, and Minna's lament in The Mountebanks that "It's a sad thing to be transformed into an old woman in the very flower of one's life" (p. 385) never had more meaning.

Nevertheless, when The Grand Duke opened at the Savoy Theatre on March 7, 1896, it was rumoured that Richard D'Oyly Carte had "never mounted any of the series of Savoy operas in more tasteful, liberal, and thoroughly artistic style," and the opening-night audience—composed of the social and theatrical luminaries of London—responded with great delight to the overture and opening curtain. However, as the evening wore on, their enthusiasm became more reserved, leading to "some discordant cries at the fall of the curtain when the authors were heartily called." In the reviews that appeared in the press during the following week, the negative aspect of this reception was clearly laid to Gilbert's libretto:

2 In direct contrast to criticism by many reviewers that would be made against The Grand Duke, the critic for the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News wrote of the composition of The Mountebanks, "... remarkable ingenuity is shown in the themes, which are never 'arbitrary'."


4 For a complete listing of the notables in attendance, see The Daily News, March 9, 1896, p. 6.

Whether the superiority of Sir Arthur Sullivan's music, the splendid mounting of the piece, and the excellent acting and singing, especially on the part of the chorus with regard to the latter feature, can carry the weakest libretto that Mr. W. S. Gilbert has written for the Savoy to permanent success remains to be seen.

The disappointment of many reviewers—excluding such a Gilbert devotee as William Archer in the World—led the critic of the Times to conclude, "... signs are not wanting that the rich vein which the collaborators and their various followers have worked for so many years is at last dangerously near exhaustion." Gilbert himself confessed in a letter to a close friend only two days after the opening, "I'm not at all a proud Mother, and I never want to see the ugly misshapen little brat again!"

Although Gilbert's usual second act problems were cited by the early critics as the main reason for the trend of discomfiture, Mr. Gilbert only struggles lamely to the finish," said the Echo, the fact that Gilbert again allowed his first act to drag on for an hour and a half in performance must have also caused some irritation to the first-nighters. "A book of fifty-nine printed pages is a 'tallish'..."  


8 Letter to Mrs. Stoker, March 9, 1896, in Reginald Allen collection.

9 See review in the Morning Leader.
"THE THEATRE.

"THE GRAND DUKE"—"MRS. PONDERSBURY."

Wyndham trespassing on the domain of my colleague, may I state the impression produced by Mr. Gilbert's new libretto upon a sedulous Savoyard—may, a faithful and grateful adherent of the Gilbert-Sullivan-Carlyle triumvirate even from Dean Street days, before the Savoy was thought of?

Like the policeman in Dandy Dick, "I have a theory" as to the origin of The Grand Duke. It may not square with the facts, but as it conveys the gist of my criticism, I state it for what it is worth. Some sort of connection here certainly is betwixt The Grand Duke and that old "Tales from Blackwood," The Duke's Dilemma, which must have struck so many people as a readymade theme for a comic opera. Mr. Gilbert, I conceive, made a note of it for future use, but, other subjects intervening, found himself anticipated by Messrs. Alfred Murray and H. B. Farnie in The Prima Donna (so I think it was called), at the Avenue Theatre. Feeling, then, that he could not use the theme simply as it stood (though such an idea is surely common property), Mr. Gilbert thought to make it incontestably his own by introducing one of the peculiar inventions which all the world recognises at a glance as "Gilbertian." Hence the Statutory Duel, with all its complex consequences—and hence, alas! the feeling that there are two distinct themes in the piece, neither of which is thoroughly or satisfactorily worked out. We have the ingredients of a comic opera whipped-up into a Gilbertian extravaganza; as though a cook should set out to make a cherry pie, and, having got the materials together, should change his mind and try to pass them off as gooseberry fool. The idea of The Duke's Dilemma is that, for some reason which I forget, the courtiers of a German Grand Duke all go on strike just as he is expecting the arrival of the beautiful Princess whom he is to marry; whereupon he proceeds into the service a company of strolling players, who enact, for the nonce, the "highly-bred" officials of His Transparent's Household. Well, for this Mr. Gilbert gives us all the materials—the parasitical potente (his parsimony would account for the strike of courtiers), the beautiful betrothed, and the troupe of comedians to fill the different offices, from Prime Minister down to Liberator of Plays. But, practically, nothing comes of it. The courtiers do not strike, they vanish away without rhyme or reason; the Duke's puerilousness leads to nothing at all, and is simply an irrelevant deformity, like a cast in his eye; the beautiful betrothed has nothing to do with the action, except to spin it out for twenty minutes or so at the very end; one of the comedians does, indeed, take the Duke's place, but it is to save him from a conspiracy, not to help him out of a dilemma; and though the apportionment of offices among members of the company is elaborately prepared for, it never takes place. On the other hand, the laborious device of the Statutory Duel—which satirises nothing, symbolises nothing, travesties nothing—is made the mainspring of the whole action. Mr. Gilbert's really felicitous paradoxes are feats of verbal logic, fantastically burlesquing our tendency to take words for things. But this quibble is invented without provocation, as it were, without the smallest aptitude or relevance, merely to bring about a state of affairs which might have been brought about quite naturally, without any quibble at all; whilst the consequences of the frigid invention are relentlessly deduced until the brain reeks. Furthermore, the disappearance of all motive for the Grand Duke's misconduct makes it much more ugly and painful than entertaining. It was quite a relief to me to find him practically banished from the second act.

On the whole, then, The Grand Duke will never take its place in my affections with The Pirates, Patience, The Mikado, and The Gondoliers. Even in the individual numbers Mr. Gilbert gives us none of his very happiest ideas or most irresistible rhythms. He is rather too much inclined, I fancy, to fall back upon merely burlesque rhymes—"lowest, ghost;" "chooses, choose;" "people, weep!"—and those which require an italicised false emphasis to make them rhymes at all: e.g., "man's kick, Bacchus." These freaks are amusing now and then, but should be sparsely used. I presume it is a misprint in the libretto that makes Ludwig sing:

"There they'll satisfy their thirst on a reeverch a cold aquow."

It ought surely to read, "they'd satisfy their thirst on," &c. But the most surprising licence (for so punctilious a workman is this):

"Should he rate you rightly—leftly—
Shut your ears and love him deeply,"

which is mere anacrusis, not rhyme. Might not the passage run:

"If he ever acts unkindly,
Shut your eyes and love him blindly—
Should he call you names uncomely,
Shut your mouth and love him daintily—
Should he oblige you drollty,
Shut your ears and love him dearly?"

For "drollty," or at any rate "drollly," one can cite the classic authority of Bre'r Rabbit. But though neither in conception nor in workmanship will The Grand Duke rank with the best of its predecessors, it remains a delightful entertainment. After picking all these holes in it, I should be charmed to go and see it again to-morrow. I shall not be happy, indeed, until I have by heart the entry of the Herald in the second act, one of the most exquisite bits of musical humour which we owe to the inimitable humorist and musician, whose partnership, let us hope, has still many years and many triumphs before it.
'A REUNION OF ARTS.'

At the Savoy Theatre Sir Arthur Sullivan and W. S. Gilbert, recently re-united, have produced a new opera, entitled The Grand Duke. "The long and the short of it" is exemplified in the two Acts: the second being not nearly so long as the first. It is of the old Savoy popular pattern, but a good deal of "cutting out" is

Review of

The Grand Duke

in Punch.

March 21, 1896,

p. 141.

still essential. About a third of the first Act and an eighth of the second, including the "Roulette song and chorus," might be omitted with advantage. Also for the conductor to catch at the slightest possible indication of a wish to encore is a mistake. "When in doubt, play trumps"—but don't give an encore.

The Gilbert and the Sullivan
Once more are hand in hand,
With Barrington, Miss Brand-

The last of former band.
Consented have Sir S. and G.
A point or two to strain,
And D'Oyle Carte, with gladness

Cries, "Here we are again!"
So matter what has gone before,
I only ask for just one more!"

And so a two-act opera,
Unequal acts, they wrote;
Sir Arthur did the tuney tunes,
"With Gilbert for his" note;"

Frank Colliper beats the time,
Not much of reason I engage
Is here, but lots of rhyme!
Though what about it all may

Is, I admit, a mysteree.
At 8.15 begins the show,
With chorus, girls and men;
Fun kept alive by Barrington;
Piece ends 11.10.

Passmore, when seen, is comical;
Miss Perry's voice earns praise;
Madame von Palmay should
recall

Savoyard Palmy days.
It pleases and it puzzles,—but
One thing is clear,—it must be
out.
order for a Gilbertian libretto . . . ," commented one of the early
reviewers who had been supplied with a printed copy of the text. More important, the "dreadfully complicated and silly" plot undoubtedly
left much of the audience in complete confusion. One reviewer confessed,

I listened to every word, and, by the middle of the second act, after trying to figure out the situation with pencil and paper and use of a, b, c, gave it up as incomprehensible and ceased to consider the intrigue. Severe study of the book has cleared up some mysteries—not all—but, really, severe study seems out of place in comic opera. I am not pretending that the book is uninteresting or unamusing, yet certainly feel that it is irritating to those who pay the author the compliment of trying to understand his work,

and another complained,

It is dangerous for the critic to say that a work is incomprehensible—the retort, 'Yes, to you' is too obvious, but we venture to assert that those who understand the intricacies of the tale when simply listening in the theatre for the first time must be of startling quality of mind.

The aspect of the plot that resulted in the most confusion lay in the complications of a card game called the "Statutory Duel," one of Gilbert's notorious legal devices, on which the entire plot turns. The complicated changes of fortune to the three characters involved in the two statutory duels that occur in the libretto affect all the other characters and their relationships to one another, and the result

10 Sporting Times, p. 3.
Notary's song explaining the Statutory Duel

in The Grand Duke (p. 56):

SONG.—NOTARY.
About a century since,
The code of the duello
To sudden death
For want of breath
Sent many a strapping fellow.
The then prevailing Prince;
(Who useless bloodshed hated),
He passed an Act;
Short and compact,
Which may be briefly stated.

Unlike the complicated laws,
A Parliamentary draughtsman draws,
It may be briefly stated.

All.
We know that complicated laws,
Such as a legal draughtsman draws,
Cannot be briefly stated.

Not.
By this ingenious law,
If any two shall quarrel,
They may not fight,
With fulchions bright;
(Which seemed to him immoral);
But each a card shall draw,
And he who draws the lowest
Shall (so 'twas said)
Be thenceforth dead—
In fact, a legal "ghost".
(When exigence of rhym' compels,
Orthography foregoes her spells,
And "ghost" is written "ghost.")

All (aside).
With what an emphasis he dwells
Upon "orthography" and "spells"!
That kind of fun's the lowest.

Not.
When off the loser's popped,
(By little legal fiction),
And friend and foe
Have wept their woes
In counterfeit affliction,
The winner must adopt
The loser's poor relations—
Discharge his debts,
Pay all his bets,
And take his obligations.
In short, to briefly sum the case,
The winner takes the loser's place,
With all its obligations.

All.
How neatly lawyers state a case!
The winner takes the loser's place,
With all its obligations!
was total confusion for the audience during the roundly-condemned second act. The Musical Standard felt that "... the machinery of the duel, and the situations arising from it are so complex that we doubt if half the audience really understands the plot." In a discussion of the libretto in 1962, Frank Leslie Moore called the Statutory Duel "a contrivance that most playwrights would be too embarrassed to use," an opinion shared by a number of other later writers.

Yet the most damning and unprecedented criticism of The Grand Duke concerned charges of strained verbal humour and faulty verse construction in the piece. Even in this Gilbertian stronghold, the author of the Bab Ballads had failed. Such lines as

Rud... I daresay being blown up is not nearly as unpleasant as one would think. Rud. Oh yes, it is! It makes one up, awfully! (p. 66)

are hardly worthy of Gilbert, and the Clarion sadly announced that "... many of Gilbert's newest quips cross the frontier from Witland to Tomfoolery." Even more shocking is the shoddy work in The Grand Duke's versification. One early reviewer complained,

I have, without going out of my way to go through the book of The Grand Duke with a small tooth-crown, pointed out... more blunders in this work of his than could possibly be collated with the most industrious and microscopic research from the whole of the previous thirteen [Gilbert and Sullivan works] put together.  

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16 Review in The Sporting Times (see below, p. 256).

When the opera does not, in my opinion, come up to that standard of excellence which we are accustomed to expect in the works of the Sullivan-Gilbert combination, unquestionably in the "book." Mr. Gilbert is to my thinking nowhere stronger than in his best work in The Grand Duke. He has always been hitherto in my eyes the "Beau Brummel" of librettists, so scrupulously neat and tidy in his work, particularly in his lyrics, and so accurate in his facts. In The Grand Duke, I deeply regret to observe a marked tendency to slovenliness and carelessness on his part in those matters.

Take these as examples of what I mean — the kind of thing I defy anybody to discover in any of his former "books": —

"Should you rate yourself — say — that your ears and love him dearly,"
(The ladies are мира in all cases). Or this: —

"The then presiding Prince (who used a bloodshot hat); He passed an Act, &c., &c., &c."
This is surely unworthy of Gilbert; and again:—

When your lips are all erysary — like tallow, And your tongue is delicately yellow, With a pint of warm oil in your scallop —
Has Mr. Gilbert in his advancing years turned to a style that has hitherto been foreign to himself, and has been always a rather marked peculiarity of a brother humourist? —

Again, I find this, which is not in any way humourous, and is distinctly clumsy: —

Come hither, all you people. When you hear the fearful news, All the pretty women weep, Men will shiver in their shoes.
Surely the following, too, has a suggestion of lameness about it, an unwonted sacrificing of grammar to the not too pressing exigencies of rhyme: —

"We shall certainly be hung!"

It doesn’t appear to me either that rhyming “thoeses” with “loses” and choosing “savors” much of the originality in invention of rhyme that has always hitherto been one of the attributes of Gilbert’s lyrical writing that has commanded my admiration.

As to the question of inaccuracies to which I have alluded above, I was particularly surprised to find two of the most glaring character in one song, that of the Prince of Monte Carlo about “Roulette.” Mr. Gilbert is obviously unfamiliar with his theme (as the game is played at Monte Carlo, at all events), but I should have imagined that both Sir Arthur Sullivan and Mr. François Cellier, who are neither of them, I fancy, altogether unacquainted with the merry little wheel game as pursued in the Principality, would have pointed out to him that “le trente-cinq” is not “rouge” but “noir,” and also that such a monstrosity as “le double zero” does not exist, and never did exist, at Monte Carlo.

All this may seem hypercritical perhaps, but I maintain that even in the case of “ordinary” librettists it would not be so, and in the case of Mr. Gilbert, who is nothing if not an “extra-ordinary” librettist, such blemishes on his usual impecunious style invite hypercriticism (if it be such). I have, without going out of my way to go through the book of The Grand Duke with a small tooth-comb, pointed out above more blemishes in this one work of his than could possibly be collated with the most insignificant and microscopic research from the whole of the previous thirteen put together.

Apart from what I have (not unjustly, I hope) termed his “slovenliness and carelessness” in the lyrical portion of the present work, I find a marked absence of Mr. Gilbert’s usual terse epigram in the dialogue, which is at least one-third longer than it should be to prove effective. This is a defect that could very easily, but probably will not, be remedied.
Gilbert, of course, is known for his "word-manufacturing" for the sake of rhyme, and it can be a taking novelty on occasion, but there are too many such occasions in The Grand Duke, and clumsy, gauche phrasing such as

But bless my heart and soul alive, it's impudence personified! I've come here to be matrimonially matrimonified! (p. 79)

and

All state and ceremony we'll eternally abolish—
We don't mean to insist upon unnecessary polish—
And, on the whole, I rather think you'll find our rule tollollish! (p. 72)

are hopelessly artificial rather than quaint when used to excess. Any extended example of this kind of usage is found in the herald's lyric for the entry of the Prince of Monte Carlo in the second act (pp. 84-85), and in other sections of the libretto, Gilbert's astounding multiple rhyming lines of earlier libretti were replaced by rhymes of commonplace ingenuity:

Why, who is this approaching, / Upon our joy encroaching?
Some rascal come a-poaching / Who's heard that wine we're broaching?

(p. 84)

You booby dense—/ You saf immense,
With no pretense / To common-sense!
A stupid stuff / Who's made of stuff
Not worth a puff / Of candle-stuff! (p. 54)

"Mr. Gilbert has given us far superior work to that which he now offers," said the critic for the musical journal, the Lute.

A straining to get comic effects by unnatural rhyming is a dangerous game which all can play. From the circumstances and surroundings the rhyming of 'strategy' and 'sat-a-gee' in the well-known Pirates of Penzance could be appreciated, but if anyone with less reputation than Mr. Gilbert had dared to rhyme such words as 'tallow,' yellow (written 'yellow') and 'swallow,' he would hardly have been regarded as inspired. This straining after a comic rhyme is in reality more painful than amusing.
The Herald's song of entry for the Prince of Monte Carlo in the second act of The Grand Duke (pp. 84-85) with its profusion of forced rhymes:

Enter Herald.

Her. The Prince of Monte Carlo, From Mediterranean water, Has come here to bestow, On you his beautiful daughter. They've paid off all they owe, As every statesman ought,— That Prince of Monte Carlo And his beautiful daughter!

Chorus. The Prince of Monte Carlo, &c.

Her. The Prince of Monte Carlo, Who is so very particular, Has heard that you're also For ceremony a stickler— Therefore he lets you know, By word of mouth particular— (That Prince of Monte Carlo Who is so very particular)—

Chorus. The Prince of Monte Carlo, &c.

Her. That Prince of Monte Carlo, From Mediterranean water, Has come here to bestow, On you his beautiful daughter!
Considering the depths of linguistic mediocrity Gilbert fell to in the forced rhymes of The Grand Duke, one almost feels that Demon Alcohol's rhyming difficulty in the plot of Gilbert's later The Fairy's Dilemma had autobiographical overtones.

Gilbert also teased his audience with constant and somewhat offensive references to food and drink. One early reviewer rather playfully noted,

... what a prominent part eating and drinking play in the piece. To say nothing of the name Speisesaal and the mysterious sausage roll, the text teems with reflections on food and liquor. Is it internal evidence of a new development in the author's character or his constitution? [17]

Although such comments as that of the Notary who explains

I present myself in due course, and I find, not only that the marriage ceremony has taken place—which I regret very much— but the wedding breakfast is half eaten—which is a consideration of the most serious importance (p. 47)

are harmless, Gilbert's unceasing references to sausage rolls, with the accompanying "feeling of warm oil at the bottom of one's throat," (p. 48) were nauseating to the early critics who felt that such references were "enlarged upon to wearisomeness," Rudolph's song, "When You Find You're a Broken-down Critter," which appears in the first act of The Grand Duke (pp. 64-65) has also been attacked by [18]


18 Review of The Grand Duke, The Musical Standard, March 14, 1896, pp. 161-165. Among later writers, the sausage roll has become the negative symbol of the work. A. H. Godwin's reaction to the libretto was that "Gilbert's humour ... descended to the level of the sausage-roll" (Gilbert and Sullivan: A Critical Appreciation of the Savoy Operas (London: Dent, 1927), p. 29; and a writer in 1966 commented on Sullivan's abhorrence of the "transformation by lozenge" plots of Gilbert by saying, "Sullivan repeatedly refused to swallow a lozenge, but he could apparently digest a sausage roll!" A.F. "Assessing the Grand Duke", G35 Journal May 1960, p. 19. Gilbert's use of the sausage roll in The Grand Duke (and
Two songs of questionable taste in *The Grand Duke*: Rudolph's "Jim-Jams" Song (pp. 64-65) and Ludwig's "Sausage Roll" Song (pp. 47-48):

**SONG.—RUDOLPH.**
When you find you're a broken-down critter,
Who is all of a trimmel and twitter,
With your palate unpleasantly bitter,
As if you'd just eaten a pill—
When your legs are as thin as dividers,
And you're plagued with unruly insiders,
And your spine is all creepy with spiders,
And you've highly gamboge in the gill—
When you've got a bed in your head,
And a sewing machine in each ear,
And you feel that you've eaten your bed,
And you've got a bad headache here—
When such facts are about,
And these symptoms you find
In your body or crown—
Well, you'd better look out,
You may make up your mind
You had better lie down!

When your lips are all smearry—like tallow,
And your tongue is decidedly yellow,
With a pick of warm oil in your swallow,
And a pound of tin-tacks in your chest—
When you're down in the mouth with the vapours,
And all over your new Morris papers
Black-beetles are cutting their capers,
And creepy things never at rest—
When you doubt if your head is your own,
And you jump when an open door alarms
Then you've got to a state which is known
To the medical world as "Jim-Jams." 
If such symptoms you find
In your body's head—
They're not easy to quell—
You may make up your mind
You are better in bed,
For you're not at all well!

**SONG.—LUDWIG.**
By the mystic regulation
Of our dark Association,
Ere you open conversation,
With another kindred soul,
You must eat a sausage-roll! (Producing one.)
All. You must eat a sausage-roll!
Lud. If, in turn, he eats another,
'Tis a sign that he's a brother—
Each may fully trust the other.
It is quaint and it is droll,
But it's bilious on the whole.
All. Very bilious on the whole.
Lud. It's a greasy kind of pasty,
Which, perhaps, a judgment nasty
Might consider rather tasty:
Once (to speak without disguise)
It found favour in our eyes.
All. It found favour in our eyes.
Lud. But when you've been six months feeding
(As we have) on this exceeding
Bilious food, it's no ill-breeding
If at these repulsive pies
Our offended gorges rise!
All. Our offended gorges rise!

Martha. Oh, bother the secret sign! I've eaten it until
I'm quite uncomfortable! I've given it six times already—
—and (whispering) I can't eat any breakfast!
Bertha. And it's so unwholesome. Why, we should all be as
yellow as frogs if it wasn't for the make-up!
Lud. All this is rank treason to the cause. I suffer as much
as any of you. I loathe the repulsive thing—I can't contemplate
it without a shudder—but I'm a conscientious conspirator, and
you won't give the sign I will. (Eats sausage roll with an effort)
Lisa. Poor martyr! He's always at it, and it's a wonder
where he puts it!
critics on the same lines. One writer compared it to the Lord Chancellor's nightmare song from Lolanthe, but added, "Neither a nightmare nor greasy indigestion is agreeable. But the Lord Chancellor does not make one sick, and [Rudolph] very nearly does."

Continuing his dependence on negative characterization so prominent in His Excellency a year earlier, Gilbert populated his libretto for The Grand Duke with characters who "appear to be little better than moral idiots," and in the conclusion to his study of the positive aspects of Gilbert's female characters, Reginald G. Davis was so disgusted with those in The Grand Duke that he excluded them from discussion. The work is set in 1750 in the town of Speisal in the imaginary Grand Duchy of Pfennig Halbpfennig (a German half-penny state, one could say). The character who gives the libretto its title is the Grand Duke Rudolph, "the meanest, the cruellest, the most spiteful little ape in Christendom!" (p. 47). Immediately, of course, the description calls to mind Governor Griffenfeld of His Excellency; however, where Griffenfeld's major sin was cruel practical joking, Rudolph's is selfish miserliness. Even A. H. Godwin, whose unbounded enthusiasm for most of Gilbert's characters is sometimes annoying, was


Grand Duke Rudolph of The Grand Duke:
not pleased with the creation of Rudolph: "... the romantic
misadventures of this sorry mortal are not worth following up. He is
a poor specimen as a man and worse than that as a stage puppet." Rudolph's fiancée is the Baroness Caroline von Krakenfeldt, the
successor of Dame Heela Cortlandt in His Excellency as Gilbert's ugly
spinster. A good indication of her character is revealed even before we
meet her when Rudolph exclaims, "... her ideas of economy are quite
on a par with mine ... " (p. 61). Her conception of future bliss
with Rudolph comically bears this out:

I often picture us in the long, cold, dark, December evenings,
sitting close to each other and singing impassioned duets to keep
us warm, and thinking of all the lovely things we could afford to
buy if we chose, and, at the same time, planning out our lives in
a spirit of the most rigid and exacting economy! (p. 63).

However, many early critics felt that Gilbert played too heavily on the
negative humour of the stinginess of Rudolph and Caroline throughout
much of the first act, and the Times reacted,

There is doubtless much still to be made out of the time-honoured
jokes on the parsimonious disposition of the smaller German courts;
but to occupy the greater half of an exceedingly long act with
virtually nothing else is surely a mistake on Mr. Gilbert's part.

A character similar to Rudolph is the Prince of Monte Carlo, who
first appears in the later stages of the second act²³ with the claim

²²Godwin, p. 167.

²³Commenting on the late arrival of these characters, one early
critic in the Sporting Times complained, "The Prince of Monte Carlo ... 
and his daughter, the Princess ... are brought on the stage at the time 
that the curtain ought finally to fall. Their advent starts a fresh hare 
just at the moment when the first one should be run into and finished off, 
with the results of a pronounced anti-climax ... "; and looking back on 
the production, a writer in 1920 remembered "the introduction of new 
characters and fresh situations at the gag-end of the work just when the 
audience were getting their wraps—a fatal lapse of stage-craft." Musical 
that his daughter has been betrothed to Rudolph from the cradle. Although
he has been described by some writers as a much more agreeable character
than Rudolph, the Prince is a down-at-heel nobleman who promotes the
royal wedding of Rudolph and his daughter primarily for economic reasons,
and the Prince takes exception when his daughter describes Rudolph as
"a miserly little wretch".

Well, I shouldn't go so far as to say that. I should rather
describe him as an enthusiastic collector of coins--of the
realm--and we must not be too hard upon a numismatist if he
feels a certain disinclination to part with some of his really
very valuable specimens. It's a pretty hobby: I've often thought
I should like to collect some coins myself (p. 87).

Yet much of the satire in The Grand Duke is not aimed at the tight
conventions of Gilbert's own day. Almost all of the characters are
involved in theatrical enterprises, most of them under the theatrical
manager, Ernest Dummkopf. Dummkopf proposes to overthrow Rudolph
and set himself up as the ruler of the Ducky... on the understanding
that all the places about the Court are filled by members of his troupe,
according to professional precedence" (p. 49), a situation that Gilbert
borrowed from his first collaboration with Sullivan a quarter
of a century earlier. However, it is Dummkopf's leading comedian, Ludvig,
who actually pulls off the bloodless coup d’etat through the use of two Statutory Duels by which he replaces Dunckopf as the head of the theatrical troupe and then Rudolph as the Grand Duke. Adding to the catalogue of negative comments on the libretto’s characters, one recent critic has described Ludwig as a character of “Machiavellian dishonesty” who “also exhibits the minor vices of gluttony, drunkenness, and gambling.”

The “haughty and ambitious” (p. 50) English prima donna, Julia Jellicoe, is the leading lady of Dunckopf’s crew and the unresponsive apple of Dunckopf’s eye. Julia’s “hypocrisy, selfish ambition, and pride” lead her to agree first to become Dunckopf’s wife when it appears he will become the Grand Duke and then to shift to Ludwig when he gains the throne. She justifies her position by noting that she is the company’s “leading lady” and

The canons of dramatic art
Decree that this repellent part
(The Grand Duke’s wife)
Is mine! (p. 71).

Although Julia’s blood-curdling concept “of a first-rate part” (p. 52) was one of the most uproarious and well-received scenes on the opening-night, it further stamps her as a character who “lives her life by the rules of professional theatrical contracts, totally abandoning all moral considerations and human warmth.”


27 Ibid.

The real "comfy, easy / Rosy-posy / Innocent innocence" (p. 77) of the piece is the soubrette, Lisa, whose despair (pp. 72, 76) when she temporarily loses Ludwig to Julia is reminiscent of Teresa's melancholy laments in The Mountebanks (which many critics had attacked) and foreshadows lyrics Gilbert will give the equally love-flattened Selene in Fallen Fairies more than a decade later. However, in the libretto's happy conclusion, Lisa regains Ludwig, Dumkopf gets Julia, and Rudolph agrees to marry the daughter of the Prince of Monte Carlo. The denouement to this conclusion comes from another of Gilbert's last-second deus ex machina devices: it is discovered that an ace counts lowest rather than highest in a Statutory Duel. Yet, as with so many of Gilbert's later works, the ending is only superficially satisfactory because it is clear that simple Lisa does not realize what a cunning scoundrel her Ludwig is; good-natured Dumkopf really deserves someone better than heartless Julia; the Princess has already expressed a dislike for Rudolph (who, unlike Scrooge, is an unrepentant miser to the end); and the fate of the Baroness is as unknown as that of Ulrice and Pietro at the conclusion of The Mountebanks.

Utopia Limited had been an unlucky thirteenth collaboration for Gilbert and Sullivan, and The Grand Duke proved to be an even more unfortunate final fourteenth. It lasted for only 123 performances in London (compared to 245 for Utopia Limited), and the work was not unveiled in America until 1901 when a group of amateurs at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology presented it with the locally-reported result that "neither the plot nor the dialogue . . . lent itself
particularly to the interest of the audience . . . " In his unfavourable review of the original London production, William Archer in the World—undoubtedly realizing that the end of the great collaboration was near—concluded with a note of sympathetic, if patronizing, encouragement: But though neither in conception nor in workmanship will The Grand Duke rank with the best of its predecessors, it remains a delightful entertainment. After picking all these holes in it, I should be charmed to go and see it again tomorrow. I shall not be happy, indeed, until I have by heart the entry of the Herald in the second act, one of the most exquisite bits of musical humour we owe to the inimitable humorist and musician, whose partnership, let us hope, has still many years and many triumphs before it.

Discussed later in this study.

Despite Archer's kind tribute and the views of some writers who have found merit in The Grand Duke, that will be discussed later in this study, the consensus of the majority of later writers has been that "Gilbert and Sullivan might have soiled their record with another half-dozen operas, each worse than the last, but which we should have had to accept as the real thing. Let us be thankful we were spared."


A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND NORMAL REVIEWS OF THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF THE GRAND DUKE (SAVOY THEATRE, MARCH 7, 1896) IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

CAST

Rudolph (Mr. Walter Passmore); Ernest Duncopf (Mr. C. Kenningham); Ludwig (Mr. Rutland Barrington); Dr. Tamhauer (Mr. Scott Russell); The Prince of Mont Carlo (Mr. Scott Pitch); Viscount Mantone (Mr. Carlton); Ben Haszis (Mr. Wotman); Harald (Mr. Jones Howson); Princess of Monte Carlo (Miss Bertha Owen); Baronessa von Krakenfeldt (Miss Rosina Enders); Julia Jallicoe (Miss Eliza von Pairay); Lisa (Miss Florence Perry); Female Members of Duncopf's Theatrical Troupe (Miss Mildred Baker, Miss Ruth Vincent, Miss Jessie Rose, Miss Ethel Wilson, Miss Beatrice Perry).

Publications of March 8, 1896


Publications of March 9, 1896


Publications of March 11


Publications of March 12


Publications of March 13


Publications of March 14

Publications of March 15
Theatricals, pp. 9-10.

Publications of March 16
Sporting Mirror*, p. 1 (illustrations only).

Publications of March 17
Punch(B), review by Gossamer, p. 102. The Nineteen, pp. 329, 332.

Publications of March 18
The Sketch**, pp. 321-322 (photographs only).

Publications of March 19
The Solicitor, review by N. H. T., pp. 35-36.

Publications of March 21

Publications of April
The Nineteen(B), review by the Editor, p. 110.
Musical Times (B), pp. 249-250.

Publications of April 1

Publications of May 1
Musical Herald(B), p. 149.
THE FORTUNE HUNTER

"... had 'The Fortune Hunter' been conceived with the purpose of teaching the novice in play-writing what to avoid and what not to do, it could scarcely have accomplished the objective more thoroughly."

Review of the Birmingham Production of The Fortune Hunter.

The St. James's Gazette, Sept. 26, 1897, p. 5.
When his serious drama, Brantingham Hall, had proven a failure with both the critics and the public in 1888, Gilbert was so disheartened that he vowed to devote himself completely to the composition of his comic opera libretti. Ironically, the subsequent lack of popular approval for the comic operas he wrote in the decade that followed Brantingham Hall motivated him to reverse himself after the failure of The Grand Duke and announce that he was putting his hopes for renewed public and critical approval into straight dramatic work. Consequently, in the autumn of 1897, the dramatic company of Miss May Fortescue\footnote{Miss Fortescue took the role of the heroine, Diana Caverell, in the production.} (one of Gilbert's leading ladies from happier days), produced The Fortune Hunter, a new straight play by Gilbert.

The author was so enthused about the new work that he had return railway tickets sent to the major London newspaper critics to attend the first performance in Birmingham on September 27, 1897. The native members of the Birmingham first-night audience were undoubtedly gratified that the great Gilbert had selected their city (which was experiencing something of a theatrical revival during these days) as the premiere site, and they gave the play a cheering ovation at the closing curtain.
“The Fortune Hunter” at Birmingham.

MR. GILBERT’S NEW PLAY
WARMLY RECEIVED.

The Great Master of Comic Libretto Builds Himself a Fresh Reputation as a Poetical Playwright.

A fashionable evening imposed at the psychological moment to face up to a breach, appropriately, “She was a signature.” The Old Vic, Hammersmith, was the scene of the production, under the management of Sir Henry Irving, which has already demonstrated in previous productions that he has a discerning eye for the highest standards of dramatic presentation that has been comparatively seldom attempted. His new play, “The Fortune Hunter,” is a fresh and original contribution to the world of the stage, and is a demonstration of the power of poetic imagination to create a new and vital form of drama. The play is a comedy, and its plot is a study in the world of society, where the pursuit of fortune is the chief goal. The characters are drawn with skill and wit, and the dialogue is full of wit and charm.

In the first act, the character of Miss Foix, who is, of course, Hana, is almost silent, and the play is the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter.” In the second act, the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter” is followed by a scene where Miss Foix, who is, of course, Hana, is almost silent, and the play is the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter.” In the third act, the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter” is followed by a scene where Miss Foix, who is, of course, Hana, is almost silent, and the play is the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter.” In the fourth act, the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter” is followed by a scene where Miss Foix, who is, of course, Hana, is almost silent, and the play is the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter.” In the fifth act, the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter” is followed by a scene where Miss Foix, who is, of course, Hana, is almost silent, and the play is the dialogue of “The Fortune Hunter.”

The Fortune Hunter” is a study in the world of society, where the pursuit of fortune is the chief goal. The characters are drawn with skill and wit, and the dialogue is full of wit and charm. It is a fresh and original contribution to the world of the stage, and is a demonstration of the power of poetic imagination to create a new and vital form of drama.
Unfortunately, the London critics in attendance were not so favourably disposed:

One (critic) dismisses it as ordinary melodrama; another bemoans the thinness and tediousness of the story, a third accuses the author of wordiness, and a fourth suggests that Mr. Gilbert, being a humorist by nature, is incapable of dealing convincingly with a serious theme.²

The Times felt that the play seemed the work of a "novice," and the St. James’s Gazette concluded, "Very regretfully, we are compelled to say that 'The Fortune Hunter' will add nothing to its author's reputation; nor can we discover in it any real grounds for believing that his strength lies in serious drama."

O. B. Clarence, the young actor who played the elderly Duke of Dundee in the production, later recalled:

It must have been an expensive production. It was beautifully put on but it was difficult to understand why Miss Fortescue produced it. I have no doubt she owed a great deal to Gilbert for those early days when she came into prominence; he had an eye for beauty. But this production, though it raised a good deal of curiosity at first, made little stir. Gilbert travelled all the way up to Edinburgh (after the Birmingham performance) for another first night, and as I finished up early Miss Fortescue asked me to go up into the gallery and give him a hand for his call. I clapped as loudly as I could and shouted, 'Author!' and he came on and bowed but made no speech.³

The company eventually took the production to the London suburbs, where it opened on October 18, 1897 at the Queen's Opera House, Crouch End. The London critics again had a field-day attacking the piece, although


some did not even think the production was important enough to rate even passing mention in their columns. The general feeling of those critics who saw the play at Crouch End was exemplified by the critic for the *Dramatic World*:

> Whether or not it is that we have been so long accustomed to the paradoxical whimsicalities of what has become known to contemporary history as the Gilbertian method that we cannot bring ourselves to look upon him seriously, certain it is that *The Fortune Hunter* fails to please or satisfy.

Most critics felt that the greatest flaw in *The Fortune Hunter* was Gilbert's failure to employ realistic, modern techniques in characterization, plot, and language. "The fact is that Mr. Gilbert has resorted to stage methods of a bygone generation," said the * Pall Mall Gazette*. "which are no longer recognized as the best means for either the telling of a story, the teaching of a lesson, or the delineation of character."

An editorial in the *Era* concluded:

> *The Fortune Hunter* is evidently not one of those utterly silly efforts which the critics feel themselves ashamed of being asked to criticise; nor is it a work of a vicious tendency which they do well to be angry with. It was, if we may judge from the accounts which have reached us, a piece of rather theatrical and mechanical cleverness which might have passed muster as a good play somewhere in the 'fifties."

The critics felt that the most dated aspect of the work could be seen in Gilbert's melodramatic approach, a style that he had often satirised in his own comic opera libretti. J.F.N. in the *Academy* said that Gilbert

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4 "Conspicuous by his silence was William Archer of the World, a man who held a high regard for Gilbert's earlier work but who, as the translator of Ibsen, might have felt embarrassed by Gilbert's use of melodramatic techniques and language at this late date.

5 "Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Grundy," *The Era*, Oct. 16, 1897, p. 19. Other comments in this editorial were the basis of the Gilbert-Ledger lawsuit.

6 "It was truthfully be said that Gilbert's left hand (in serious drama) did not know what (in comic opera) his right hand was doing."

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Review of the Crouch End, London, Production of The Fortune Hunter in The Daily Telegraph, October 19, 1897, p. 10:

QUEEN'S OPERA HOUSE, CROUCH-END.

Like many other recent dramatic novelties, Mr. W. S. Gilbert's new play, "The Fortune Hunter," has been brought to the London stage in the comparative seclusion of the suburban Queen's Opera House, Crouch End. Mrs. Fortescue is appearing this week at the comedy and comfortable theatre which Messrs. Merrill and Monelle have just added to the institutions of Crouch-end and its environs, and she has naturally seized upon the occasion to make her audience acquainted with the latest addition to her repertoire.

It is, perhaps, just as well that the production takes this tentative form, for it is scarcely likely that the resources of a West-end theatre would have been profitably devoted upon the same play. Finally, the Fortune Hunter is far from representing Mr. Gilbert at his best; it is a story which is too closely hewn by the ancient play, the work upon the theme by the dramatist has no solid integument, while in the characters he has chosen to draw one finds not unnatural interest. A gentleman's horse has two riders, one an evidently worthy housekeeper, the other an equally obvious resident of the playground, unbusiness-like propriety. Of course, Diana Cavendish resolves on wrong right, and it is not until her spouse, who is a mayor by French law, takes advantage of a certain clause in the Code Civil to attempt the setting aside of his marriage that she sees the man in his true colours. On the eve of the degree of utility, however, Armand de Breville informs that he is a father, and, moved by the promptings of conscience from his amorous plan, fancies himself voluntarily upon the sword of his opponent in a duel, and so leaves his place clear for a more deserving man. This is the line that Mr. Gilbert unfolds with a singular lack of that attention which his work in other theatrical directions has so comprehensively shown. To the dramatist's long and transplant march through the degrees of utility we may attribute the fact that the case of writing across national lines (as it is truly at its best) in the manner of an episode, in particular, the subject is quite "fair," and on the point a little upon the far, when a French and properly Emersonian reader on a summer day, who has read the first two acts of a Far-Mar, has shouted, says: "To be that woman it is to have obtained that very crowning moment of the plot of our reader, when the same lady, in reading her mountains of dirt, finds that the first act has been disposed of, and when she), changing in such a manner as "the glorious sun's beams fell upon me in all its fiery fervour" (true we miss to some extent at these, we are forced of the conclusion that Mr. Gilbert, as he pointed them...,...)

In this week at the London stage in the comparative seclusion of the suburban Queen's Opera House, Crouch End, Mrs. Fortescue is appearing. The play "The Fortune Hunter," is not well suited for the resources of a West-end theatre, and it is perhaps just as well that the production takes this tentative form. Finally, the Fortune Hunter is far from representing Mr. Gilbert at his best; it is a story which is too closely hewn by the ancient play, the work upon the theme by the dramatist has no solid integument, while in the characters he has chosen to draw one finds not unnatural interest. A gentleman's horse has two riders, one an evidently worthy housekeeper, the other an equally obvious resident of the playground, unbusiness-like propriety. Of course, Diana Cavendish resolves on wrong right, and it is not until her spouse, who is a mayor by French law, takes advantage of a certain clause in the Code Civil to attempt the setting aside of his marriage that she sees the man in his true colours. On the eve of the degree of utility, however, Armand de Breville informs that he is a father, and, moved by the promptings of conscience from his amorous plan, fancies himself voluntarily upon the sword of his opponent in a duel, and so leaves his place clear for a more deserving man. This is the line that Mr. Gilbert unfolds with a singular lack of that attention which his work in other theatrical directions has so comprehensively shown. To the dramatist's long and transplant march through the degrees of utility we may attribute the fact that the case of writing across national lines (as it is truly at its best) in the manner of an episode, in particular, the subject is quite "fair," and on the point a little upon the far, when a French and properly Emersonian reader on a summer day, who has read the first two acts of a Far-Mar, has shouted, says: "To be that woman it is to have obtained that very crowning moment of the plot of our reader, when the same lady, in reading her mountains of dirt, finds that the first act has been disposed of, and when she changes in such a manner as "the glorious sun's beams fell upon me in all its fiery fervour" (true we miss to some extent at these, we are forced of the conclusion that Mr. Gilbert, as he pointed them...).
had "borrowed the dusty and moth-eaten 'properties' of the transpontine
dramatist," and the Times likened Gilbert's mode to "the style of the
sensational novelette." The Times critic went on to say that
its closest affinity in the stage at the present moment would
have to be sought in the melodrama of the suburban theatres. In
fact, it is with a purely melodramatic motive and situations that
the case is concerned . . .

Gilbert's dialogue came under heavy fire from the critics. By
constantly calling attention to their own "blunt and outspoken" (p. 396)
natures, Gilbert's characters attempted to justify long speeches in which
they explained their own personal characteristics, but the critics felt
that this was a cheap device on Gilbert's part to avoid the more
difficult task of character development through dramatic action. "Each
character weighs up his own, or her own, merits and demerits like a
self-explanatory catalogue," said the Stage, and the Daily Mail called
the play a "moment of words" in which, according to Lloyd's Weekly
Newspaper, "dramatic effectiveness . . . was sacrificed to talk." The
reviewer for Black and White noted that "nearly the whole of the first
act runs in a series of duologues—duologue, duologue, duologue again,
little done and not much of importance said . . . " Some critics felt
that the dialogue had literary merit, but that it was "so wordy, of such
inordinate length, and so unlike anything that people say in their
everyday intercourse, that it fails altogether to carry conviction across
the footlights." The judgement of the Dramatic World was that "Mr. Gilbert

7 Review of the Birmingham Production of The Fortune Hunter.
The Pall Mall Gazette, Sept. 28, 1897, p. 4.
seems to be constantly high falutin', and the result is disastrous."

Indeed, some lines in the play are unbelievable in their high-blown rhetoric, and one wonders how an experienced dramatist like Gilbert could have written them as serious dialogue to be spoken before English audiences that had already experienced the work of the mature Ibsen and the early Shaw:

To know Madame de Bréville is to accept her as a miraculous incarnation of an impossible abstraction! (p. 413):

...I have too much respect for the sentiment that inspires a burst of honest indignation to criticize too closely the shape in which it presents itself (p. 414):

Well, if your own conscience won't tell you, I will do so. You stated that you had reluctantly taken upon yourself to initiate these nullity proceedings, because if you did not do so your father would—and you desired to remove from his shoulders the burden of an act to which he was compelled by your own deception. I have ascertained from M. de Bréville that this is simply untrue—and, being untrue, it removes you from the category of those with whom a man of honour can consent to associate (p. 440).

Concerning an important scene in the first act in which the leading male character proposes marriage to the romantic heroine (pp. 404-406), the playwright:

...their love-making is about as amorous as an exposition of the properties of triangles. Each sets with a good will about the work of self-revelation, and the character analysis which follows shows that here at least Gilbert's legal bent of mind has served him in anything but good stead. The interest of the dialogue is almost entirely academic; and although it leaves the impression that a match is arranged, the mind is left cold and unthrilled.

But at times the false, frenzied lines of sensational emotionalism are employed:
Last act meeting between Diana and Armand in *The Fortune Hunter* (p. 437) revealing the melodramatic language of the play:

*Di.* My heart—my love—to you! Great heaven, have you lost your senses? To you? Do you know in what esteem I told you? Do you know—have you not realized—that such a woman as I—repudiated under the shelter of a cruel and infamous lie in order that you might ally yourself with a wretched wife—can have nothing for you but an unutterable detestation? I—the disavowed wife—the unwedded mother of your fatherless son? Oh, this is horrible—this is horrible!

*De B.* (gloomily). Is there no echo of the old love within that proud heart of yours? Is all dead, and has it left no memory?

*Di.* It is all dead—and God be thanked that it is so! Let it rest and be forgotten for ever between us! Go—take your course, whatever it may be! If you stay these proceedings it is from your child that you must claim acknowledgment. Whatever you may do you are to me as if you had never been.

[Going.]

*De B.* Diana—you must not go thus! Diana, in mercy—in pity—one word more!

[Seizing her hand.]

*Di.* Not a word—we have done with one another! Let me go—let me go, I say! Your touch horrifies me—your gaze sickens me! I hate you—hate you—hate you! (Freeing herself.) Go—I have done my duty—do yours, or leave me to myself for ever!  

[Exit DIANA.]

*De B.* So, Armand de Bréville, the end has laid its hand heavily upon you, and it remains for you to learn to live out your punishment. Bah! I talk like a child. What manner of man am I that I am to bow a meek head to this storm of misery? A man's life is, after all, but his bondsman—it is valuable to him so long only as it serves him well. When it turns traitor let it pay the traitor's penalty!
But I know how your restless spirit chafes under the galling
restraint of daily duty to be done, and how your mind frets
over the bitter disappointment I have caused you. It stands
between us like a dividing spectre—intangible—invisible—but
there—always and inevitably there—there—there! (p. 409);

I am the Vicomtesse de Bréville—your wife—and as such entitled
to hold my own among the proudest of your people. But you have
not just consented to acknowledge me—and in this multitude, in
which I yearn to mix, I am alone—alone—alone! (p. 410).

Gilbert also fills his play with soliloquy and dramatic asides. The
melodramatic way in which these lines are handled adds to the unrealistic
tone of the play, and some of them seem absolutely comic in the reading:

De B: This gentleman, whom you will permit me to present to you,
is M. Lachaud, who is to be my travelling companion. (Aside to
Lachaud.) Not a word about the Duchess! (Aloud.) M. Lachaud—the
Vicomtesse de Bréville. Lach. Madame la Vicomtesse, I am
overjoyed at the honour that is conferred upon me. (Aside.)
Poor lady! Poor lady! (p. 414);

Serv. A gentleman desires to see Madame la Vicomtesse. Maj. To
see me! (Takes card.) Sir Cuthbert Jameson! Show this gentleman
in, at once! (Exit Servant.) Sir Cuthbert Jameson, of all men!
It is well that he comes at this moment; it is well that he comes
when I can tell him, frankly and truthfully, that I am as happy
as he could desire me to be! (p. 416).

Gilbert even throws in some biblical rhetoric for good measure:

You will then acknowledge me publicly and before all men?
(p. 411);

Between kindness and such love as I give you there is a great
gulf fixed. I cross that gulf to go to you—you do not cross
it to come to me! (p. 412).

Consequently, the "serious" language Gilbert wrote for *The Fortune Hunter*
was no better than the awkward, forced rhymes he had composed for *The Grand
Duke* a year before.

Another similarity between *The Fortune Hunter* and *The Grand Duke*
lies in the device that motivated both plots. Just as a legalism—the
Statutory Dual—sparkled The Grand Duke, the 183rd Article of the French Code Civil was the mainspring of The Fortune Hunter. "Mr. Gilbert cannot be without his point of law," noted the contemporary periodical, Black and White. "Here he drives it home to heart's content." Although the law is only alluded to and is not specifically stated in the play itself, Gilbert had this note inserted in the programme for each performance.

Note.—By the 183rd Article of the Code Civil a Frenchman who is under the age of twenty-five CANNOT LEGALLY CONTRACT MARRIAGE UNLESS HE HAS OBTAINED THE CONSENT OF HIS PARENTS IF THEY BE LIVING. If, dispensing with this consent, he should go through the form of marriage, that marriage may be attacked by his parents or by himself. It is open to his parents to give a post-nuptial consent to such a marriage, but he is not bound by such consent, and is entitled nevertheless to apply to the Courts for a decree of nullity on his own responsibility (p. 396).

The actual plot of the play concerns a young Frenchman who marries a wealthy Australian-English girl and decides to invoke the Article to avoid the marriage when her bank fails, enabling him to marry the rich American widow of an English duke. In the last act of the play, the Frenchman is conscience-stricken and unable to carry out his plan. Himself deserted by the wife who is now expecting his baby, he provokes a duel with an old friend and is killed, an event that stops the annulment proceedings and allows his child to have a legitimate birth. Gilbert

8 In the original production and in very early privately printed copies of the play deposited in the British Museum, there is also a life insurance policy involved in the plot, but criticism from discerning reviewers (see, for instance, the review in the Referee) that insurance would be uncollectable in a case of death by duelling apparently caused Gilbert to remove the insurance references. Years before, legalistic Gilbert had included these lines in Hamlet: and Gildenstern: "Ham.

But that the dread of something after death— "Ham. that's true—post mortem and the coroner— Ese-de-se cross roads at twelve p.m. / And then the forfeited life policy— Exceedingly unpleasant" (p. 82).
possibly felt that this was his valid contribution to the new school of the "problem play," but J.F.N. in the Academy pointed out, "'The Fortune Hunter,' in subject and treatment, belongs to the period of Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins, who were both addicted to exposing the anomalies of the statute-book," and a number of critics expressed the opinion that a play based on an outrageous aspect of French law was hardly of burning importance or interest to an English audience. The Theatre remarked, "This iniquitous provision is so incomprehensible to the ordinary English mind that the play is at the outset menaced with the gravest of all dangers—the danger of being mistaken for a burlesque," and the Stage noted the "almost Savoy spirit" of the law, anticipating Jane Stedman's realization of "Gilbert's fondness for legal age as a plot complication" in his comic libretti and her conclusion concerning The Fortune Hunter that "... the former comic associations of the device made it seem strange in a melodrama which ends with the death of the leading male character."9

Indeed, the headings Gilbert gives each of his acts seem almost comic: I: Woo'd, II: Wedded, III: Widowed. The settings of these three acts are Port Said, Paris, and Monte Carlo—and there are references to such far-flung places as London, Athens, and Chicago. A.A.B. in the Daily Mail said.

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It ascribes to the recent Australian smash the ruin of its wealthy heroine. Its astringent draughts of humour are extracted from the marriage of a Chicago pork packer's daughter with a senile English duke (as that breezy recruit to the aristocracy expresses it) 'more or less alive.' Monte Carlo figures in it as a background for a duel and a romantic solution of the author's problem. And at all unessential points Mr. Gilbert appears to have marched with the times. Alas! that it is impossible to add in all that is vital too.

Although his characters are a motley international lot whose very names label them as national stereotypes, Gilbert failed to catch the popular temper of the time in that none of his characters are of Indian or African background, despite the fact that the play was written in the heyday of Kipling and the Empire.

The character who takes up most of Gilbert's attention, Vicomte Armand de Bréville, the young French adventurer who attempts to use the 183rd Article to annul his marriage contract, is a typical Byronic French dandy: "a lion in the matter of courage, morally somewhat of a cur, and financially in the state of La Fontaine's grasshopper."¹⁰

Armand rather flippantly confesses at the beginning of the second act, "I am a poor man with sporting instincts, highly extravagant tastes, and defective moral sense. Consequently it follows that I hunt" (p. 407). Most early critics found his selfish actions so loathsome that they condemned the play out of hand because Gilbert made him the nominal protagonist. The critic for the Star roared, "... he is but a slimy cad, no healthy, blackbrowed designing villain, but a crawling knave such as was never born of woman," and the Sketch felt

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that he exhibited "not even the one single spark of manliness that could lessen disgust." Armand's long, self-examining soliloquies were a subject for further critical attack. A typical criticism appeared in the Morning Advertiser, in which the critic fell into Armand's own verbose style and produced this rambling single sentence:

... [Gilbert] has made his leading personage such an unmitigated sentiment that not even the voluntary death of the man at the finish tends to give him a better place in the opinion of the audience, who can only heartily, if silently, express their satisfaction that long-winded speeches have come to an end, for never did villain in the commonest type of melodrama display a greater tendency to verbosity than the Vicomte Armand de Bréville who marries Diana Cavardel, an Australian heiress, for her money, and then, when her fortune has been lost owing to bank failures, seeks to take advantage of the 183rd article of the Code Civile, which says that a man under the age of 25 cannot legally contract a marriage without the consent of his parents.

The leading female character in the play is, of course, Armand's Australian-born wife, Diana Cavardel, a totally unconvincing personality. As a character who says of herself in the first act,

I am a strange woman—unlike others in many respects. I am wilful, wayward, not subject to control—a woman to whom excitement and adventure are as the breath of her life... I must live among scenes of excitement—I cannot wear the livery of sober respectability. I am but half-tamed—but half-civilized. I do odd things—I say odd things—I shock people. There is fire within me—there is even a touch of deviltry (p. 399).

Diana is incongruously conventional and dour-eyed throughout the rest of the play—like a Julia Jellicoe turned into a Lisa, to take an analogy from Gilbert's The Grand Duke. Indeed, the dramatic critic of the Star used Gilbert's phrasing from The Grand Duke in his appraisal of Diana:

The heroine is but Mr. Gilbert's own 'comfy, cosy, rosy, posy, innocent ingénue,' grown a little older, but very little wiser. Fresh and fair, no doubt, and cast in troubled waters, but too simple to bear the weight of a whole play on her shoulders.
The Duchess of Dundee, née Euphemia S. Van Zyl of Chicago, is the third person in the Armand-Diana triangle, and she good-naturedly describes herself as "a stupid, middle-aged woman with a thumping big British title, and a Niagara of dollars pouring, day after day, into her bank account" (p. 434). Although she began her life in modest circumstances, she is now the fabulously wealthy heiress of a father whom Armand cynically describes as "an aristocrat in pork" (p. 339) because he made his fortune in the hog markets of Chicago. Some early critics labeled Euphemia "ridiculously ill bred . . . a creature of farce," and her topsy-turvy role as a British noblewoman certainly seems fit for a character in one of Gilbert's fantastic comic opera plots. She is also a rather obvious stereotype. "In how many plays, during the past few years, have we seen the vulgar, illiterate American heiress, with a fortune of millions of dollars made out of pork?" asked J. F. N. in the Academy.

Yet here she is, trotted out again in all her conventionality, loud of speech, deficient in taste, and generally inadaptable to her new surroundings. . . . Mr. Gilbert's Euphemia S. Zyl is a puppet of the stage, from which the sawdust trickles as she walks. Euphemia's husband, the Duke, appears only in the first act, and the Era disdainfully described him as "a tottering octogenarian, brought into existence by the playwright in such a parlous state that he may reasonably be snuffed out when the exigencies of the play demand it."

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"Topsy-turvy" fortunes of the Duchess of Dundee, née Euphemia S. Van Zyl, are presented in these lines from The Fortune Hunter (pp. 401–402):

I was not aware that we had ever had the honour of her presence on board—and yet—. [As though recognizing her.

Duch. Don't you? Why, Mr. Macquarrie, I was reported to us for incivility to a second-class passenger, and you tried your best to give me a wigging and couldn't do it for laughing!

Pur. 1? Your Grace was reported to me!

Duch. Oh, I wasn't "her Grace" then. Why, don't you remember Euphemia S. Van Zyl, under-stewardess?

Pur. Euphemia—why, of course—but—!

Duch. Of course you do—shake hands on it: You may shake hands now that I've qualified for that honour.

Pur. (shaking her hand respectfully). I do assure you I'm distinctly thunderstruck.

Duch. So am I when I think of it. Lord, what a world of ups and downs it is!

Duke (Aside to: Duchess). Euphemia, my love—a little incense, I beg!

Duch. All right, Tommy.

Pur. But may I ask—for I've been at sea for six weeks...

Duch. Ask? Why, of course you may. When I was last on board, Poppa was in the small hardware line, but he saved money and got into a little pork ring, and I cut the sea. And when the little pork ring became a big pork ring, Poppa made his pile, and I blossomed out as a Society belle. Well, the rest is easy. Poor Poppa died and left me his pile, and after a week's courtship I married the Duke three weeks since. It's a record, I guess. Here, I'll present you—Tommy, this is Mr. Macquarrie—quite an old friend.

Duke. Sir, your most obedient.

Pur. (bowing). If you'll allow me, I'll tell the Captain you've come on board. I'm sure he would like to know. (Aside) Euphemia Van Zyl! Under-stewardess! Duchess of Dundee! Well, it's a great country!
Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Cox are a hypocritical, social-climbing English couple who provide the chief comic interest in the play. Although the value of the Coxes to the underlying theme of the work will be discussed later, it is important to note that many early critics felt that their farcical antics were completely out of tune with the serious intent of the story. The scene in the first act in which the Coxes "go down on their knees and worship the very deckchair upon which the Duke reposes" and mistake the Duke of Dundee's courier for the Duke himself was attacked by the Daily News as "being rather in the style of the author's comic operas, or of his Bab Ballads, than of sober drama." The scene that begins the tragic last act of the play is a confrontation between the Coxes and the now-widowed Duchess of Dundee in which the ridiculous couple—still thinking that it was the Duke whom they had encountered earlier—try to regain money they had previously given to the Duke's courier. Since this humorous scene (pp. 426-433) follows a dramatic meeting between Armast's parents and Diana that closes the second act, the critic of the Era echoed the views of a number of his fellow reviewers when he complained that

... the temperature of the play has fallen from intense to farcical. The transition gives the key of the failure of the piece. It is the work of two temperaments, and the attention has no sooner got accustomed to the one than it is disturbed by the other.

and the Sketch was of the opinion that the couple's "absurd introduction into the last act is an indiscretion that has done not a little to cause 'The Fortune Hunter' to be named as Mr. Gilbert's last play."
Sir Cuthbert Jameson, a middle-aged English baronet who appears as Diana's honourable, rejected suitor and loyal protector throughout the work, is a mid-Victorian character in the pattern of Dobbin in Vanity Fair and Mr. Jarndyce in Bleak House. One early critic sarcastically called Sir Cuthbert "... a high-minded gentleman who, rejected as a lover, is content to remain her friend for the rest of the play. Men will always do that—in plays." In the abominably stilted dialogue Gilbert gives Diana, Sir Cuthbert is called "a man whose name is a byword of punctilious honour and manly rectitude" (p. 399), and she tells him, "Whatever you think is right to do will be the best thing that could be done" (p. 417). The result is that Sir Cuthbert is not only stereotyped and melodramatic but also "inevitably a bit of a bore." 

Following the devices of melodrama, it is Sir Cuthbert who is goaded into dueling with Armand in the last act and it is he who inflicts the fatal wound which leads to the "unconscionably long death scene" at the end of the play in which "reconciliations all round are effected." Armand's melodramatic lines to the man who has just fatally wounded him are reminiscent of Sydney Carton's last words in A Tale of Two Cities—an analogy that holds special significance.

12 Ibid.

13 Review of Crouch End Production of The Fortune Hunter, The Sketch, Oct. 20, 1897, p. 518. The Theatre said: "... the part of Sir Cuthbert in The Fortune Hunter has a strong air of having been written with a view to its impersonation by Mr. Charles Wyndham."

when one considers that Gilbert was a devotee of Dickens and had
written a dramatic version of Great Expectations in the seventies:

Ah, Sir Cuthbert—my friend—ever my friend, and my truest
friend now—of all the kindly offices you have done me, this
last is the best and the kindliest! (p. 442).

But Armand isn't finished yet. A score of lines later, his last words
as the curtain falls are, "Cuthbert—my old friend—you will take good
care of Diana—I know you will take good care" (p. 442). Lawrence
Eastwood in the London Figaro approvingly noted that "... the play
ends with the death of this miscreant, and the young heiress, Diana
Caverel, is free to marry the fine, middle-aged Englishman, Sir Cuthbert
Jameson." However, most critics tended to agree with the Times
reviewer that this was a conclusion "commoner in sensational drama
than in real life."15

Not surprisingly, but much to Gilbert's disappointment, The Fortune
Hunter was never presented in the West End. The unfavourable critical
reaction that the provincial and Crouch End presentations received
angered Gilbert so much that he petulantly vowed that he would now
retire from professional life altogether. His detailed reasons for
doing so illuminate his intense life-long frustration over the popular
and critical failure of his attempts at serious drama and his apparent
refusal to accept the idea that the fault lay in the works themselves:

15An almost identical situation was treated in a satirical vein
at the conclusion of a recent Broadway musical in which a starry-eyed
couple literally strode over the dead body of the woman's husband on
their way to the altar.
Mr. W. S. Gilbert is disheartened, and means to retire; so, at least, he wearily sighed to an interviewer. The cause of his resolution is threefold. Firstly, because managers do not know a good play when they see one, and depend for the dramatic pabulum with which they feed the public on successful dramatists only, and will have nothing to do with new men. Secondly, our actors' declamation is monotonous, and wholly fails to electrify and enthral, and, incidentally, to do credit to the genius of the dramatist. Thirdly, and this is the gravamen of the whole indictment, the critics are a mealy lot who treat the dramatist as if he were a villain of the deepest dye, and had only been set up as a cockatoo for them to knock down. 17

Sydney Grundy sarcastically noted in his Introduction to William Archer's The Theatrical World of 1897, 'Mr. W. S. Gilbert has shaken the dust from his feet and departed.' 17


A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF
EARLY PRODUCTIONS OF THE FORTUNE HUNTER IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND
PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

I. Theatre Royal, Birmingham, Sept. 27, 1897

Cast: Duke of Dundee (Mr. C. E. Clarence); Sir Cathbert Jameson
(Mr. Edmund Maurice); Marquis De Breville (Mr. Ivan Watson);
Viscount Armand De Breville (Mr. Luigi Lablanche); Hailre
Lachnud (Mr. Geo. P. Kantree); Mr. Dudley Cone (Mr. Compton
Goutts); Mr. Parker (Mr. W. R. Stavelley); Hons., Paillard
(Mr. C. O. Axt); Mr. H'Quinque (Mr. Vivian Stonehouse);
Pollard (Mr. A. Clay); Capt. Monro (Mr. Charles Bone); Mr. H'Fle
(Mr. Howard Sturge); Quarrantaster (Mr. Chas. Leighton);
Duchess of Dundee (Miss Clely Richards); Marquise De Breville
(Miss Adalina Baird); Mrs. Dudley Cone (Miss Nora O'Neil);
Miss Conerton (Miss Regina Repton); Miss Bailey (Miss A.
Beauchamp); Diana Caveral (Miss Fortesue).

Publications of Sept. 28, 1897

The Morning, review by H. A. K., p. 5. Morning Advertiser, p. 5. Morning
p. 4.

Publications of Sept. 29, 1897

Globe and Traveller, p. 6.

Publications of Sept. 30, 1897

The Stage, p. 17.

Publications of Oct. 1

Licensed Victuallers' Gazette and Hotel Courier, p. 629. St. James's
Indust, p. 28.

Publications of Oct. 2

Academy, review by J. F. M., pp. 265-266. Black & White, p. 419. The Clarion,
review by Bubbles, p. 315. The Era, p. 13. The Graphic, p. 450. The

Publications of Oct. 3

Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, p. 7. The People, p. 6. The Referee, review by

Publications of Oct. 5

Life, review by H. Pollak, p. 7.

Publications of Oct. 6

Man of the World, review by H. A. K., p. 5.

Publications of Oct. 9

Lad's Illustrated, review by Player Queen, p. 490.

Publications of Oct. 16

Moonshine (B), p. 189.

Publications of Nov. 1

The Theatre (B), pp. 259-260.
London,

II. Queen's Opera House, Crouch End, Oct. 18, 1897

CAST: Identical with Birmingham presentation given above except that Mr. Arthur Merton replaced Mr. Ivan Watson as the Marquis De Réville.

Publications of Oct. 19
- *Daily Telegraph*, p.10.

Publications of Oct. 20

Publications of Oct. 21
- *The Stage*, p.16.

Publications of Oct. 23

Publications of Oct. 24

Publications of Oct. 30

Publications of Nov. 1
- *Dramatic World*, p.5.
That for so long a time to enjoy in amiable imitation his great名叫 try will be recognized as a species of that beware against the insufferable 5th assent in

"It is as if Mr. Gilbert had determined to make the public laugh, and he said to himself, 'Now I think I know the kind of thing you want in these days; if you won't have Savoy opera—why, take this!"


Despite the general animosity of the press, the success of Gilbert after such a long silence was the fact "the most important theatrical event of the season," and pre-local copies called it "a gleam"
Noting that "Mr. Gilbert is still a monarch of a world of
delightful topsy-turvydom," P. F. W. Ryan wrote in the *Week's Survey*
of May 14, 1904:

That for so long he should have chosen to enjoy in splendid
isolation his quaint empire, may well be regarded as a species
of high treason against the unfortunate folk condemned to
drudge on a merely commonplace planet.

The occasion for this statement was the May 3, 1904 Garrick Theatre
premiere of *The Fairy's Dilemma*, the first work written by Gilbert
since his avowed retirement from the stage in 1897. Perhaps the
dramatist could argue that he really had not broken his oath to write
no more comic opera libretti or straight dramatic plays since the new
work was something quite different from either and did "not revive
either the Gilbert of Savoy opera or the Gilbert of the poetry-plays
that went before." In fact, the full title that appeared on the
opening-night programme was "Harlequin and the Fairy's Dilemma,"
a satiric thrust at the old pantomime titles, and the closest descrip-
tion of the "genre" of the work would be "a two-act comedy based on the
traditional harlequinade pantomime," although satire and personalities
far removed from the harlequinade are involved.

Despite the generic ambiguity of the piece, the emergence of Gilbert
after such a long silence made the work "the most important theatrical
event of the season," and one local scribe called it "a glorious

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   May 7, 1904, p. 15.
resurrection. Among a host of favourable reviewers, positive endorsements of the work were forthcoming from A. B. Waldcley in the Times, J. T. Grein in the Sunday Times, and William Archer in the World. A week later the Pelican noted that "... the favourable verdict of the first-night audience is being echoed nightly ..." and the London correspondent for the New York Globe reported to his overseas employer:

In old age when his work was supposed to be done, Mr. Gilbert has once more written the play of the season. They had actually stucced his name, along with those of dead and gone British playwrights, on the balcony of the theatre that his newest piece is now filling. They quoted him in London as a classic. Some, even, weren't quite sure whether he was alive or dead. Yet here is 'The Fairy's Dilemma,' the success of the theatrical year, and bits of its wit cropping up in talk and print, just as the good things in the old librettos and satirical comedies used to do. In their blessed imitative way the managers are talking of reviving his early pieces.

Gilbert himself wrote a few days after the opening, 'I have every reason to be satisfied with the reception of the child of my own old age.'

Unfortunately, the fate of The Fairy's Dilemma followed the frustrating pattern set by many of Gilbert's works in the nineties: its enthusiastic early reception was not validated by later receipts at the box office. O. B. Clarence, a member of the cast, later wrote,

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"There were high moments in this play but on the whole it fell flat; and it didn’t run very long." In fact, the production failed to last through the summer, although it was accorded a provincial tour at the close of its Garrick run in July.

There had been, as usual, a number of people who had demurred from the favourable opening-night response. Dissidents in the gallery, in fact, had vociferously expressed their displeasure with the work at the closing curtain on the first night. Since this gallery restlessness was a common occurrence during these days of Edwardian permissiveness, Gilbert refused to appear at the closing curtain, and he later complained, "If I were a manager, I would close the gallery on first nights." However, the discerning critic of the Athenaeum commented:

Quite the last are we to accept the opinion of the dull and unenlightened crowd which considers itself the arbiter of the fate of the drama. What is true, however, of Mr. Gilbert, as of some of his rivals, is that the work hovers in the borderland of sense and silliness, while to some the world of topsyturvydom is a land of enchantment, to others it appears to approach the confines of that of depression.

Notable among other unfavourable reviewers were the dramatic critic of Vanity Fair and the thirty-two-year-old critic for the Saturday Review, Max Beerbohm, who admitted, "Frankly, 'The Fairy's Dilemma' bored me."

Beerbohm felt that a major flaw in the work was Gilbert’s decision to


7 Gilbert added, "These butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers are the curse of the theatre. Utterly ignorant brutes, they take upon themselves to decide what is to be received and what is to be rejected . . . . Quoted in Dark and Grey, p. 143.
Mr. Gilbert's Rentree (And Mine).

A year or so a fearful thing belied me. Or, Arthur Bourchier ceased to send me seats for the matinées of his theatre. Yet, cast thus into outer darkness, I uttered no cry of anguish. In the language of our police force, I "went quiet." The presumptive reason for Mr. Bourchier's sternness was that I had rather regularly chidden him for playing comic parts in a serious mood; and I rather hesitated that Miss Violet Vanbrugh's true vocation was not for comedy, but for tragedy, melodrama, romance. Now, those may have been truths; but, at least, they were—or seemed to me—true; and I had no malicious intent in speaking them. Therefore, I suppose I ought to have been very angry at being cast out. I suppose I ought to have rushed through the outer darkness into print...a free country, vanity of actors-managers, intolerable attempts to stifle honest criticism, shall such things be allowed?—shall such things be permitted? But questions of principle, except when there is remorse to my own personal convenience, do not (if at all) trouble me very deeply. And it has been for me no personal inconvenience not to go to the Garrick Theatre. I have once or twice been in a drama, and I therefore a purveyor of news besides criticism. I should have come out strong on the question of principle. As it was, I went away to other artists, except singers—for that themselves are the medium of their art. How, then, could I have grown philosophic, sympathetic person. I never can be angry for any infamous deed during the week. One smiles at that. But one laughs aloud at

Max Beerbohm's Review of The Fairy's Dilemma in The Saturday Review.

On Sundays they were good—

Even so, however, it would not have quite "come off." Veris is not the only thing that it ought to have been written in; it ought also to have been written in the seventies. For in the Seventies pantomime was flourishing still. Demon King and Fairy Queen, transformation scene and harlequinade, were familiar and popular things. But to assail them row, in the thoughts, as Mr. Gilbert does, is to shoot at a target long since removed from the range of vision. Mr. Gilbert once wrote a delightful parody of Martin Topper. Surely he would not now sit down and write another parody of Martin Topper. Indeed, he evidently does not recognize to some extent, the need to be contemporaneous in parody; for he has a shot at the critics in the "Times." But this skit, like the references to motor-cars and other recent things, seems queerly out of key with the play as a whole. For the moral character "date" not less obviously than the fairies. There are no mild young curates, with side-whiskers, and with a horn of the stage, nowadays. There are no young military baronets who compose love-verses and sing them with a piano-accompaniment nowadays. There are no ladies who sit at their toilet-table combing treasan of false hair, nowadays. Such ladies ceased to exist when chignons ceased to exist. And the Rev. Aloysius Parfitt, M.A., and Col. Sir Trevor Maunder, Bart.—they too are as extinct as chignons. They are not the ghosts of the Rev. Hopley Porter and of Lorenzo de Lory, arisen from the pages of the "Bab Ballads." They are interesting enough to the connoisseur of change in fashion. But there is little fun to be got out of them. Had "The Fairy's Dilemma" been written and produced in the seventies, and were this production of it a revival, then the satire in it would seem to us all (as the satire in the Bab Ballads) too interesting enough to the connoisseur of change in fashion. But there is little fun to be got out of them. Had "The Fairy's Dilemma" been written and produced in the seventies, and were this production of it a revival, then the satire in it would seem to us all (as the satire in the Bab Ballads) too interesting enough to the connoisseur of change in fashion. But there is little fun to be got out of them. Had "The Fairy's Dilemma" been written and produced in the seventies, and were this production of it a revival, then the satire in it would seem to us all (as the satire in the Bab Ballads) too interesting enough to the connoisseur of change in fashion. But there is little fun to be got out of them. Had "The Fairy's Dilemma" been written and produced in the seventies, and were this production of it a revival, then the satire in it would seem to us all (as the satire in the Bab Ballads) too interesting enough to the connoisseur of change in fashion. But there is little fun to be got out of them. Had "The Fairy's Dilemma" been written and produced in the seventies, and were this production of it a revival, then the satire in it would seem to us all (as the satire in the Bab Ballads) too interesting enough to the connoisseur of change in fashion. But there is little fun to be got out of them. Had "The Fairy's Dilemma" been written and produced in the seventies, and were this production of it a revival, then the satire in it would seem to us all (as the satire in the Bab Ballads) too interesting enough to the connoisseur of change in fashion.
write the dialogue in prose rather than in verse. P. C. in Vanity Fair
agreed:

The prose form is certainly not the most happy expression
of Mr. Gilbert's wit. . . . The effect of . . . suddenness
of actual momentary invention has the art to transfer to his
neatly and ingeniously constructed lyrics . . . falls rather
flat in cold prose.

Although there was an overture of nineteenth-century music hall songs³
(included, according to the Westminster Gazette, "to take us back in
thought to the time when Christmas pantomime was treated so seriously
that a burlesque upon it was possible"), there was no music in the play
itself, and the Daily Express called the premiere "a Savoy first-night
without its Sullivan."⁹ The dramatic critic for the women's journal,
the Queen, confessed:

. . . one becomes conscious of the enormous assistance that the
music has rendered on other occasions in sustaining the elaborate
scenes of incongruous absurdity in which Mr. Gilbert delights to
revel, and in preventing them from falling, after a while, upon
the minds even of their most appreciative spectators.

In fact, on at least two occasions, one of Gilbert's characters tantalizes
the audience with a Joseph-Porter-style announcement that he has
composed a song to fit the occasion, but before he can perform his hymn
he is always interrupted by another character (pp. 19, 21). Commenting
on the need for musical accompaniment, L. F. A. in the Daily Chronicle

3 The man who wrote the incidental music for The Fairy's Dilemma,
Edmond Rickett, gives an interesting discussion of the work (and other
later works) and Gilbert's direction of the original production in
"Certain Recollections of W. S. Gilbert," The New York Times, April 1, 1934, sec. 10, pp. 1, 2. See also: A. H. Godwin, "Gilbert and

⁹ Like Victoria, both Sullivan (1900) and Richard D'Oyly Carte (1901)
had passed away at the dawn of the new century.
said of another incident in the work, "Lady Angela, suddenly brought up through the ground in the Judge's garden in the middle of her toilet, was delightful. But if she had only had a song to sing, 01" Many years later, London columnist Robert Lynd wrote, "Gilbert's genius was not a genius for writing plays that are complete works of art in themselves. It was a genius in writing plays that needed music to bring out their full flavour." 10

Neither was Gilbert's purpose in satirizing the pantomime appreciated or understood in all circles. Since harlequinade pantomime was usually reserved for the Christmas trade, one critic complained, "There was something in the fun of "The Fairy's Dilemma" which would have been more seasonable, it seems to me, in December than in May." 11 Many critics also felt that the subject matter was not important enough, in any event, to be given such considerable treatment. One early critic called it "an exceedingly pleasant 'jeu d'esprit,'" but added that "the attempt to elaborate it into a performance of conventional length has injured it," 12 and another reviewer said,

As a skit, say, of an hour's duration, with the music of an Arthur Sullivan as accompaniment, it would have been a laughable, and, in a sense, satisfying entertainment, but as the main attraction of one of our first theatres it does not come up to the standard which the author and the manager (actor Arthur Bourchier) have set for themselves. 13

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Several critics noted that Gilbert had failed to include a "poetic and humanising" foil for his satire and warned that audiences "cannot wax enthusiastic over the obviously artificial and insincere." The St. James's Gazette concluded,

But the thing, when all was said and done, wanted the great essential of all drama, whether serious or humorous—the note of humanity and sympathy. Scintillant as a diamond with clean-cut wit, graced with all the charms of romantic comedy, it was obviously only a mere joke, containing no appeal whatever to the emotions.

A more serious charge against the work was that Gilbert's use of the harlequinade pantomime for satiric treatment, while unique, was hopelessly behind the times. The pantomime had seen its heyday under Victoria, and this was the age of Edward. E.P.S. in the Westminster Gazette wrote:

Nowadays, of course, to burlesque pantomime is to paint the lily, and trying a little oppressively over the whole piece even in its best scenes was a sense of antiquity. This involves no denial of the fact that there are plenty of comic ideas and clever lines, but the critical were at times in the mood which expresses itself by the phrase 'How clever this would have been!'...

Although a good deal of favourable criticism of the work came from middle-aged reviewers who looked back with nostalgia at the satiric

14 "Drama," The Athenaeum, May 7, 1904, p. 604.
17 Gilbert himself had been a talented amateur pantomime performer (see H. M. Walbrook, "Pantomimes of the Past," The Observer, Dec. 22, 1935, p. 3) and was the author of at least one pantomime early in his career (1867); for an interesting discussion of its production, see A. E. Wilson, Pantomime Pageant (London: Paul, 1946), pp. 70-74.
allusions to the harlequinade traditions, younger critics and members of the audience were somewhat mystified. The critic for the Daily Telegraph mused, "It will be beloved by the middle-aged, but perhaps some of the young people will occasionally wonder why we enjoy it so."

The dramatic critic for The World recorded,

I saw a high-collared youth in the stalls on the first night looking very gloomy and perplexed, and the sight of his wondering and wandering face recalled to me the case of 'Peter the Wag,' who got lost in Soho:

'The haughty boy, too proud to ask,
To find his way resolved,
And in the tangle of his task
Got maze and more involved.'

Certainly, the intricate trappings of the mid-Victorian harlequinade play a vital role in the plot of the work. The "fairy's dilemma" that gives the play its title concerns the dire necessity of Fairy Rosebud, a pantomime good fairy, to find a human calamity in which she can exhibit her altruism and perform her traditional noble deeds. Consequently, the play begins with an unprecedented visit by Rosebud to the "Abode of Demon Alcohol" (the household of evil intentions where all pantomimes inevitably began) to enlist the Demon's aid in promoting a situation where the services of a good fairy would definitely be needed.

Concerning this pair of unlikely conspirators, the Daily Express reported, "The demon has a Lancashire accent; the fairy a ridiculously practical view of her purpose in the piece; and both speak in rhymed couplets, with

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a mocking air." The critic for the Lady's Pictorial quipped, "Of a
surety, if ridicule kills, we should never again the mechanical
rhymes of the one [the Demon] or follow the amiable but artificial
altruisms of the other [the Good Fairy]."

Rosebud's explanation of her problem to Demon Alcohol (p. 5) reveals
that her motivations are not altogether altruistic (later when her plans
fall to pieces, she says, "It'll be a mess for me if it gets about!
I'm not going to be put back among the extra ladies at a pound a week,
and only allowed to walk on without a word to say!" p. 29) and that her
conception of human nature has been derived mainly from melodramatic
literature. The lines also serve to introduce the "human" characters
they ensuing dialogue in the play and give Gilbert a chance to make satiric reference to both
the theatrical world of "Shaftesbury Avenue" and the more august region
of "Whitehall Mansions." We learn that Fairy Rosebud believes that Jane
Collins, a young and innocent nurse, beloved of a pious clergyman, is
in danger of being molested by a wicked baronet of the Household Cavalry.
Rosebud implores Demon Alcohol to encourage the baronet in his evil
intent so that she can intervene and perform a good deed by saving the
girl from a fate worse than death. Unfortunately, Rosebud's interpreta-
tion of the situation is far from accurate, although her confusion is
easy to understand since, as the Times quipped, "the confused quartet
of lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream is simplicity itself by comparison."
However, the real situation is something like this: the nurse is actually
Lady Angela Wealdstone in disguise, and she plans to marry the baronet,
Fairy Rosebud explains her plan to Demon Alcohol
in the first scene of *The Fairy's Dilemma* (p. 5):

Now, it's my duty as a Good Fairy to watch over respectable young couples and bring their courtship to a happy termination, and it's your duty as a Demon to thwart this intention by every means in your power. Now, there's been very little doing in my line of late—and I've received a pretty strong hint from the Fairy Queen that if I don't find a worthy young couple to protect, whose courtship is threatened with destruction by a Malevolent Demon, my office will be abolished, and I shall be relegated to dance in the back rows with the stout ones. And that's a pretty look-out, isn't it?

Al. It isn't cheery. But where do I come in?

Rose. I'll tell you. After a deal of trouble I've found the very people I want—a mild young clergyman of blameless life, and a very respectable hospital nurse, who are over head and ears in love with each other. Now, the hospital nurse—

Al. Pretty?

Rose. Fine girl—is pursued by Colonel Sir Trevor Mauleverer, a wicked Baronet in the Life Guards, whose intentions towards her are too dreadful to talk about. Will you believe it, this bold, bad man actually intends to carry her off to his flat in—

Al. I know—Shaftesbury Avenue.

Rose. Not this time—Whitehall Mansions.

Al. Oh, naughty, naughty! But are you sure of your facts?

Rose. No doubt at all about them. Why, I've seen him making love to her!

Al. Sure he doesn't want to marry her?

Rose. Want to marry her! Don't I tell you he's a Baronet?

Al. I see—a bad Baronet!

Rose. Why, aren't all Baronets bad? One would think you'd never read a shilling shocker in your life! Now, I want you to introduce yourself to Sir Trevor Mauleverer and explain that you're his Familiar Spirit—that you know he entertains the worst designs against this young woman, and that you are willing to help him in every way. He'll jump at your offer. You'll carry her off to Whitehall Mansions, and I'll interfere just in time—before any mischief happens, you know—and restore her to the arms of her faithful clergyman.
Demon Alcohol mistakes the intentions of Sir Trevor (pp. 19-20)

[Sits down at harmonium—plays a Symphony. At this moment the Demon Alcohol rises from trap immediately behind him, unperceived by Sir Trevor. The Demon is dressed like a man about town, but otherwise presents the same aspect as in Act I. Sir Trevor sings the first note of the song, and the Demon, standing behind him, joins in. Sir Trevor wheels round on music stool, and looks coolly at him, glass in eye.

Al. Good morning, guv'nor! Hope you're pretty well?
Sir T. May I ask whom I have the pleasure of addressing?
Al. Now, what d'ye take me for?
Sir T. Really it is difficult to say. Not the new curate, I should imagine.

Al. I am here to help you if you mean to persevere in your pursuit of Jane, attractive gypsy! Oh, she's a fascinating play-actress! [Plays Sir Trevor in trap.]

Sir T. (coldly). If this conversation is to be pursued, I must say that when you have occasion to refer to that lady, you will show a becomingly respectful reticence. Otherwise—

Al. All right, I'm off, and don't you ever doubt it. Now give it lip, and tell us all about it.

Sir T. Really, sir, you make a very cool request. You can scarcely expect me to discuss my most delicate private affairs with the very first Demon I happen to come across.

Al. To that remark I merely answered Pooh! If you won't tell me, why then I'll tell you. You love Jane Collins, nurse to some girl's mother.

Sir T. Allow me to assure you that you entirely misconceive the situation. Miss Collins is no other than—

Al. Nothing of the kind, sir! I know through, (rap.

Sir T. Once for all—no, I will speak. Once for all I tell you that my intentions towards the young lady to whom you allude are of the most honourable description. In half an hour—

Al. Get out! Don't try to sell your conduct shady. Why, Jane, by this time, is a married lady!

Sir T. Nothing of the kind, sir!

Al. Ooh! you rogue, pokey! bad young man! But never fear, I will assist your plan. Your rival shall be paid out, tit for tat. In half an hour you'll find her at your flat! [Stalks through trap.]
Col. Sir Trevor Mauleverer, "a thorough English gentleman of the best type" (p. 7) who has graciously helped her escape the control of her "haughty and despotic" father, the Marquis of Harrow (p. 9). The clergyman in question, the Rev. Aloysius Parfitt, is in love with Clarissa Whortle, the daughter of another dictatorial "flinty-hearted" old man, Mr. Justice Whortle of the High Court of Judicature (p. 21). Since Lady Angela does not want her aristocratic birth to be known, she and the Rev. Parfitt have announced a bogus engagement, and Sir Trevor and Clarissa have done likewise to deceive Judge Whortle who wants his daughter to marry well. At the moment of the marriage ceremony, however, they all plan to exchange partners.

Although "devil traps and country parsonages make an irresistibly humorous combination," in these topsy-turvy and mock melodramatic situations with supernatural characters invading the mortal world, Gilbert was offering to the new century nothing that he had not already given to the old. Sir Trevor, for instance, laments a fate Gilbert had previously satirized in Ruddigore two decades before when he contends that he is unjustly counted among the world's "abandoned profligates" because he inherited the title of Baronet (pp. 20-21); Sir Trevor's moreover, the constant cuddling of Clarissa to the hapless consternation of her real lover, Parfitt, is reminiscent of other such humorous triangles in many of Gilbert's works (see the discussion of this recurring comicity in Gilbert's later material, below, pp. 458, 466).

19The Theatres," The Graphic, May 7, 1904, p. 626.
The Fairy's Dilemma (pp. 11-12)

"The Fairy's Dilemma"

ACT I, SCENE 2.—THE VICARAGE OF ST. PARABOLA.

Mr. Justice Whittle fails to understand the situation.

Moy, I see, I didn't know it was in the blood—that makes

difference, of course. At the same time—

Clar., Alexander, I think you are unjust. You cannot but

see that we have to create a certain impression, and that we

must be realistic if we are to be convincing. I love you, dearest

Alexander, with a fervour—with a devotion—

Mr. Justice Whittle in full robes and full-bottomed

wig, saluted by Miss Cremer.

[Clarissa, turning to Sir Trevor with simulated affectation,

continue—]

—with a devotion, with an enthusiasm which I can scarcely

expect you, dearest Trevor, to rival in the overflowing fulness

of its intensity. It is not in man's nature to do so, and I do

not complain. (Lady Angela has crossed affectionately to

Alexander, who, formerly holding her at arm's length by the

waist, has much preoccupied by the proceedings of Clarissa with

Sir Trevor.)
Clarissa's father, Judge Whortle, is but another of Gilbert's egotistical comic magistrates in the long tradition of the Judge in *Trial by Jury*. Judge Whortle also follows the pattern of "extremely irritable, arbitrary," and dictatorial old men (p. 8) in Gilbert's work from the nineties. He resembles Maguire, the bride's father in *Haste to the Wedding*, in his domineering insistence that he choose the proper mate for his daughter. One of the funniest lines in the play occurs when Clarissa pleads with him to "listen to reason," and he retorts, "Great seal! Haven't I been listening to reason all the time I've been talking?" (p. 13). Similar to Governor Griffenfeld in *His Excellency* who debased his public office by continually engaging in cruel practical jokes, Judge Whortle takes great delight in telling jokes in his court despite the anxiety and anguish of the poor people whose cases he is hearing.

The relationship between Fairy Rosebud and Demon Alcohol is treated in the typical Gilbertian fashion of topsy-turvydom. The affable demon is a much more sympathetic character than the self-seeking good fairy, and his sense of the impropriety of many of her actions is humorously ironic. At one point when Alcohol questions one of her "good deeds," Rosebud screams in exasperation, "Oh, I never saw such a Demon as you—you're always raising conscientious difficulties" (p. 29). In many ways, Alcohol and Rosebud are reminiscent of King Paramount and Lady Sophy in *Utoria Limited*. Certain speeches and songs between Paramount and Sophy in which the King seems more humane in his attitude
toward others than the gentle lady (see above p. 216) are echoed in
Alcohol's reaction to Rosebud's plan to allow the evil Baronet to
carry poor Jane Collins off to his flat:

Al. . . . But look here, for a Good Fairy you're an uncommonly
cool hand. Rose. Good Fairies are naturally cooler than Demons.
Al. But, I say, aren't you taking it rather low down for a Good
Fairy? Rose. What do you mean? Al. Respectable young girl, you
know—clerical lover—bad Baronet—flat in Whitehall Mansions,
ch? Rose. Well, you are squawish! . . . (p. 6).

Similar to the Paramount-Sophy relationship, Alcohol adores Rosebud;
but while expressing a secret warm feeling for him, cannot promise
to return the affection because of the supposed evil of the Demon's
character:

Al. . . . Sit down, Rosy, and let's be cosy. Come, that's not
so bad! Rose. Cosy, indeed! You surely don't expect me to be
cosy with a person of your stamp! You seem to forget that I'm a
good fairy. Good fairies have to be very particular. Al. How
dull. Rose. It is dull. Now, I've an aunt who is a bad fairy—
dark, black hair, heavy eyebrows, dresses in black and red
satin—Al. I know her. Rose. Well, you've no idea what a good
time she has—although she's not received. However, to business.
Al. (seductively). Now, come and sit here—do! Rose. You've
such a way with you, I never did! Well, just for once, although
it's really very wrong. (She sits by him; he puts his arm round
her waist.) Now, do behave! (Removes his arm.) I'm not my aunt,
you know! . . . . . . Al. . . . But, Rosy—come a little nearer.
Rose. No, it's not right. Besides, your scales scratch. Al.
(pleadingly). What am I to get for this, eh? Rose. Get for it?
Oh, you don't want to get anything for it. A good action is its
own reward. (Aside) He's rather a dear! I wish he wasn't so
spotty! (pp. 4-6).

Alcohol is a lovable, very human character who exhibits some irritation
with the responsibilities of his position. Just as Paramount deplored
the task assigned him of writing libretti against his own character
(although he did not mind writing slanderous journal articles against
himself), Alcohol detests the fact that as a demon of pantomime he
must always speak in rhyme:
It is a demon's fate that every time
He speaks he must express himself in rhyme,
And though to do my utmost I endeavor,
For rhyme and metre I've no ear whatever (p. 3).

Just as Lady Sophy tried to make the world conform to her rigid rules
of social propriety, so does Fairy Rosebud attempt to force human life
into melodramatic clichés. Both characters fall into the pattern of
Gilbert's "radical idealists"—ranging from Bunthorne in Patience to
the Flowers of Progress in Utopia Limited—whose idealistic zeal
proves either hypocritical or harmful (or both). When Rosebud suddenly
appears on the scene to tell [unreadable] Lady Angela,

I am the Fairy Rosebud, I am here
To help both you and Mr. Barfitt dear,
Such love as yours we fairies much admire,
And I'll afford the aid that you require (p. 16).

Fairy Rosebud refuses to listen to the pleas of Barfitt and Angela that
she has completely misconstrued their relationship and that they have
no need of her assistance. After Rosebud leaves as suddenly as she
appeared, Lady Angela exclaims, "That middle-headed young woman is about
to put her foot into it to an extent of which she has no notion" (p. 17),
which, of course, proves correct. "No Malevolence, but Stupidity, is
the mischief-maker in human affairs—that, I take it, is the philosophy
of Mr. Gilbert's fable," wrote William Archer in the World. When Rosebud
sees the error of her ways, she implores the outraged victims of her
deeds, "Do give credit at least for good intentions!" and Lady Angela
angrily replies, "I'll give you credit for being a thoroughly wrong-headed,
maddling, mischievous little donkey!" (p. 27), which seems a fair
representation of Gilbert's attitude toward the many naive reformers
who tread through his work going all the way back to Joseph Porter in
Fairy Rosebud appears before the Rev. Parfitt and Lady Angela to offer her assistance in The Fairy's Dilemma.
(The Tatler, May 18, 1904, p. 288):

THE FAIRY, ROSEBUD, MAKES HER APPEARANCE AT THE VICARAGE

The Rev. Aloysius Parfitt (Mr. O. B. Clarence) and Lady Angela Wellesley, daughter of the Marquis of Harrow (Miss Violet Vaudrey), being interviewed by the good fair, Rosebud (Miss Jessie Bateman).
H.M.S. Pinafore and the feminist scholars in *Princess Ida*. Gilbert will return to this theme to some extent in his next and last major work, *Fallen Fairies*.

Lady Angela is an obvious foil to the silly Fairy Rosebud and the fairy tale logic of pantomime. Except for a bit of melodramatic dialogue in which she extols the selfless virtues of Sir Trevor (p. 18), Lady Angela is depicted as a rational, self-assured type of female with a somewhat superior air—kinswoman of Julia Jellicoe in *The Grand Duke* and the Governor's daughters in *His Excellency*. When all the characters are transformed into pantomime performers in the second act, Lady Angela's conversation with the Rev. Parfitt reveals her rational displeasure with the situation as well as her scornful attitude toward such naive dolts as Rosebud and Parfitt, the latter a character whose ridiculously prudish behaviour is another Gilbert *vieux jeu*:

*Alas... Leaving my parish at a moment's notice will, I fear, involve a most angry interview with my churchwardens. And what explanation can I give? I can't imagine what has happened!*

*Lady An.* Oh, I know what has happened well enough! That meddlesome fairy has taken the liberty of changing us into Harlequin and Columbine. *Alas.* (puzzled.) Harlequin and Columbine? *Lady An.* Yes. I've often seen it happen to other people at Christmas time, but I never, never thought it would happen to me. *Alas.* I beg your pardon—it's extremely stupid of me—but I cannot quite remember—as I a Harlebine or a Columquin? *Lady An.* Neither—you're a Harlequin, and a very bad one (p. 33).

From contemporary reports of the reactions of the first-night audience, it appears that the introduction of the characters and their problems in the first act was enthusiastically received, and the curtain was raised repeatedly, but the high spirits of many members of the

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audience turned to confusion and boredom during the second act in which, as we have just noted, Fairy Rosebud in the "Grand Transformation Scene" transformed all the human characters into pantomime personalities and had them perform, much against their wills, the antics of Harlequin, Columbine, Clown, and Pantaloon in "The Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation!" (p. 30). The critic of the Queen noted that there was a great deal of humour in watching the society characters "compulsorily living up to their new characters whenever the Fairy Rosebud waves her wand, and protesting frantically against their humiliating position whenever her back is turned," and the Critic and Traveller commented on "such revolutionary proceedings as the Columbine quitting the immortal embrace of Harlequin to bestow hurried kisses upon Clown," but most critics were not amused. P. G. in Vanity Fair observed,

The original premise is that a benevolent fairy has made a foolish mistake in the identity of the lovers she has set herself to unite, but the harlequinade is not in any way a logical outcome of this. It merely happens for no reason at all, which is very un-Gilbertian indeed. It was this, I think, which disturbed the audience at the first performance—the lack of justification for the harlequinade.

E.F.S. in the Westminster Gazette also blamed the gallery disturbance on the confusing pantomime scene and added, "If 'The Fairy's Dilemma' had ended ere the transformation scene the reception would have been enthusiastic."

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21 My transformation in the sight of the audience in full limelight was very effective. I wore the harlequin dress under my clerical coat and trousers; the latter were threaded down the side through rings and I stood over a small trap on the stage; at the given cue these were suddenly drawn through the stage while my coat to which my hat was attached was whisked away into the flies. Bournier playing Sir Trevor and Violet Varbrugh playing Lady Angela each had doubles on the stage who walked off at the cue and these too took their places as Clown and Columbine. This was
The Pantomime Transformation
Scene in
The Fairy's Dilemma

The Sketch,
May 11, 1904,
p. 114.
Among Gilbert's stage directions for the lengthy pantomime scene are these:

Sir Trevor takes a pound of butter from the cheesemonger's shop, and makes butter-slide. Enter nursemaid with perambulator with life-guardman as described, soldier slips down on butter-slide, and makes inartificial attempts to get up. Nursemaid proceeds, not having noticed what happened. Sir Trevor gets up to nurse saying, 'I love you to abstraction!' Seals her hat, feather boa, and parasol, and puts them on. Judge sits on perambulator, and children squeal. Nurse runs off screaming. Sir Trevor rushes perambulator off, walking affectedly like a woman. Soldier by this time has got up, and taking Sir Trevor for nursemaid, walks alongside, flirting. (p. 38).

Years later, Isaac Goldberg labelled this scene "inferior horse-play that Gilbert is famous for eschewing rather than employing." Goldberg, in fact, called the play "a fairy farce," and he apparently did not realize that the scene was meant to be a parody of pantomime, but even critics and audiences who saw the production and accepted this as Gilbert's intention were not happy with the drawn-out episode.

"From the moment of the grand transformation scene the piece lost its hold on the audience," said the critic for the Morning Advertiser, and F. F. W. Ryan in the Week's Survey noted that "the contrast with the intellectual humour of the first portion of the piece is too sharp to be pleasant."

An unusual but recurring early criticism of the pantomime scenes concerned the actors who took the roles. A surprisingly large number of critics looked with disapproval on the fact that Gilbert engaged some of the best actors of the day for a play in which he would turn pretty tame after my bewildering change. Of course it was obvious that all the changes should have been simultaneous to be effective but Gilbert wouldn't have it that way, which was a pity." O. B. Clarence discussing his transformation in the role of Rev. Farquitt in No Complaints, pp. 88-89.

23 See especially the reviews in the Clarion, the Register and the Sunday Times.
them into nonsensical pranksters. In actuality, the germ of this idea had been in Gilbert’s mind for a very long time. In 1875 he had written of pantomime performances:

Let Mr. Irving or Mr. Phelps courageously take the part of the clown by the hand; give it the stamp of respectability, and there will not be an emotional actor in the profession who will not burn to play it. If this communication should have the effect of bringing about this result I shall not have written in vain.

Unfortunately, critics in 1904 did not agree:

... the play is not good art. So much of the humour of the finish depends, not on the circumstances that an officer in the guards is turned into a clown by the fairy, but on the fact that Mr. Arthur Bourchier is turned into a clown; and so it is with Lady Angela Wealdstone. We do not really care much about her; it is the fact that Miss Violet Vanbrugh is turned into a columbine in pink tights and short skirt that amuses us. Mr. Gilbert, I should say, has no respect for the actor’s art. He is a brilliant cynic, and I dare say the play amuses him vastly; but when I saw Mr. Arthur Bourchier (who is one of our few actors who improve instead of going back) and Mr. Sydney Valentine (whom also I greatly admire) playing the fool as clown and pantaloon, I felt much inclined to weep, and I furtively sought my handkerchief when Mr. Bourchier tumbled Mr. Valentine off the stage in the time-honoured wheelbarrow fashion, 25

At the end of the scene, Rosebud decides, “I’ve been very stupid over this, and I begin to think I’ve mistaken my profession [in trying to be a pantomime good fairy].” Demon Alcohol admits that he, too, feels he should change his occupation: “I’m thinking of retiring from business and selling the stock, fixtures, and goodwill at a valuation” (p. 39). He later confesses, “I’m thinking of buying a snug little concern in the firework line” (p. 42), and the critic of the Globe and


25 Review of The Fairy’s Dilemma, The Evidenter, May 18, 194, p. 706. One is reminded of similar criticisms in more recent times when Laurence Olivier took the role of Archie Rice, the decadent music hall performer in John Osborne’s The Entertainer.
Fairy Rosebud and Demon Alcohol in normal street attire in the final scene of *The Fairy's Dilemma* with the other characters ready to be returned to their previous states in society.

(The Sketch
May 11, 1904,
p. 114)
Traveller added: "... somewhere, it may be supposed, in the
neighbourhood of the Crystal Palace." Rosebud agrees to turn the
mortals back into their original personalities if Farfitt will officiate
at the wedding of ... and Alcohol, and the work ends on a happy note.
This conclusion does not have the loose ends prevalent in much of
Gilbert's later work, but after the excessive confusion of the
harlequinade, the obligatory happy ending seems rather abrupt and too
easily arranged. "The winding up of the whole grotesque business must
be decidedly stronger," noted A.M.L. in the Lady. The music
in the production is once again emphasized as one misses the hymn of
joy that always concludes a Gilbert libretto.

Although more than half a decade separated The Fairy's Dilemma from
Gilbert's work in the eighteen-nineties, many of the faults of the earlier
pieces linger in this later work: the subject matter is somewhat dated
and basically theatrical, lacking appeal for large segments of his
audience; the thematic motives are too vast and not clearly defined;
the second act material is confusing, and the conclusion is not
convincing. Basically, the main problem of The Fairy's Dilemma in its
original and only professional production was its failure to identify
itself to its audience. The work was neither Savoy opera satire,
pure farce, nor Christmas pantomime—yet it had elements of all three.

26 In this closing scene, Fairy Rosebud reveals that the Demon's
first name is "George" (p. 42), a name that Gilbert, for some undisclosed
reason, delighted to give to his comic characters; among his later works,
Governor Grifenhend in His Excellency is also a George (after George III,
said some early critics) — because of his practical joking and dictatorial
nature). Among Gilbert's dramatic contemporaries, Shaw, it will be
noted, always detected his own first name of George. Also one of the
Savoyard "star players" was George Grossmith.
It was too light to warrant heavy study, but too cryptic to be understood without thought (and the covert thematic possibilities of *The Fairy's Dilemma* will be explored in more detail later in this study). Concerning the dissidents who expressed their disapproval from the gallery on the opening-night, one early reviewer said,

I fancy the 'opposition' that marked the end of the evening arose more from the innate conservatism of the first-nighter than anything else. Give him comedy, and he will probably understand and enjoy it. Give him strong romantic melodrama, and he will be delighted. And so on through all the plainly classified and labelled departments of stage art. But give him a new hybrid, puzzle him a little, make him think smilingly or confess that he is entirely obfuscated and he may mistrust you...  

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A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS
OF THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF THE FAIRY'S DELIGHT (CARRICK
THEATRE; MAY 3, 1904) IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

CAST: Beauf Alcohol (Mr. Jerrold Robertshaw); Fairy Rosebud (Miss Jessie
Bateman); Col. Sir Trevor Haulever (Mr. Arthur Bourchier); Rev.
Aloysius Parfitt (Mr. O. B. Clarence); Dr Justine Shortle (Mr.
Sydney Valentine); Lady Angela Waldstone (Miss Violet Vanbrugh);
Clarissa Shortle (Miss Dorothy Grenstone); Mrs. Grumble (Miss Swell).

Publications of May 4, 1904
Mail, p. 2. Globe & Traveller, p. 4. The Mail, p. 5. Morning Advertiser,
p. 7. Morning Post, p. 7. Pall Mall Gazette, p. 3. The Sun, review by C.P.,

Publications of May 5, 1904
The Stage, p. 14.

Publications of May 6
Licensed Victuallers' Gazette and Hotel Courier, p. 300. Public
Review,*** review of first-night reviews by Sherlock, p. 375. St. James's
Gazette, p. 15.

Publications of May 7
Illustrated London News, p. 677. My Programme,***, p. 2. The Outlook,
review by St. J., p. 353-354. Saturday Westminster Gazette, review by

Publications of May 8
The People, p. 4. The Review, review by Carades, p. 2. Sunday Sun, p. 3.
p. 2. Weekly Times & Echo, p. 4.

Publications of May 10

Publications of May 11
The Sketch, review by E.F.S. ("Monocle"), pp. 114, 124. To-Day, review
by Phil Istine, pp. 20-21.

Publications of May 12
The Lady, review by A.M.L., p. 800. Truth, pp. 1192-1193. Vanity Fair,
review by P.C., p. 612.

Publications of May 13
The Clarion, review by A.M.T., p. 3.
Publications of May 14


Publications of May 18


Publications of June


Publications of June 1

*The Sketch*, pp. 232-233 (photographs only).

"Well, Miss Macdonald: I simply must see the new film. They have failed so far that they have apparently quite forgotten how to dress and live in colour. Indeed, they have created unendurable music and a scandalous taste in most public singing."

*Miss Doris Hey, Review of Miss Macdonald's "Doris"* (critic, Nov. 23, 1909), p. 792.
"Fallen Fairies indeed! I should think so. They have fallen so far that they have apparently quite forgotten how to dance and how to charm. Instead, they have acquired melodramatic habits and a dreadful taste in moral platitudes."

A serious interest of Gilbert during most of his later life was a project to adapt his 1873 blank verse success, The Wicked World (which had originally starred the famous acting couple, the Kendals, and the comedian, Buckstone), into an operatic form. He had written long, detailed letters about it to Mrs. Richard D'Oyly Carte as early as 1897, and on various occasions he had offered the libretto not only to Sullivan, but also to such noted composers as Elgar, Mackenzie, Messager, and Liza Lehmann, before Edward German finally agreed to do the musical treatment in 1909.

Gilbert christened the piece Fallen Fairies; or, The Wicked World, and his fervent belief in the value of the work was apparent in a number of lengthy interviews he gave to the press prior to the premiere at the Savoy Theatre (no longer under the ownership or managership of the Carte family) on December 15, 1909, and his expectation of its success seemed

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1 The fact that Gilbert returned to this work repeatedly for ideas that emerged in later works is discussed in Earl Franklin Bargaminier, "W. S. Gilbert and Nineteenth Century Drama," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1969, pp. 225-226.


4 See especially The Daily Telegraph, Dec. 9, 1909, pp. 11-12.
justified on the opening-night by "the magnificent enthusiasm of the audience, which wanted every lyric repeated, which laughed uproariously at every witty line, which called again and again for the actors, the author and the composer..." Gilbert received the congratulations of the cheering throng with the remark that "there was life in the old dog yet."

However, December 1909 marked the forty-third anniversary of Gilbert’s first professional production, Falstaff, or, The Little Duck and the Great Quack, produced at the St. James’s Theatre in December, 1866, and the enthusiasm of the first-night audience for Fallen Fairies undoubtedly was prompted more by nostalgic appreciation for work written decades before than because of real critical approval of the piece that was then on view. Despite the fact that "the first night reception seemed to give promise of another Inland Fair," and favourable reviews appeared in some influential quarters, the attitude of many early...

7 "It was a public full of good wishes to the veteran librettist... that greeted the new work... with generous applause, and mindful of past delights was not, perhaps, prepared to be hypercritical of present gifts..." Review of Fallen Fairies, The Globe and Traveller, Dec. 16, 1909, p. 5.
8 Ernest Short, Sixty Years of Theatre (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1901), p. 139.
9 The Pall Mall Gazette noted a few faults in the libretto but, reminiscing about Gilbert’s past triumphs, stated that "by the time the opera has reached its 200th or 300th performance" these little flaws would have evaporated. Favourable reviews also appeared in the World, the Era, Illustrated London News, and Musical News.
reviewers was reflected in the obser

"... the early birds, who beguiled the time on Wednesday by singing lustily in chorus a selection of favourite airs from the old Savoy operas, seem to have brought more with them than they carried away..." and an indifferent public response during the following month forced the management to close the piece by the end of January, a run of only a month and a half during the height of the theatrical season.  

The frustration of Gilbert's high hopes for the work "had evidently cut him to the quick," noted an acquaintance who visited him during the following year. The main reason for Gilbert's great disappointment lay in the fact that despite its fantastic title and the inclusion of a number of typical Gilbertianisms (fairy characters with an exaggerated sense of propriety, magical transformations, secret potions, "half-forgotten" laws of great importance), Fallen Fairies, like The Fortune Hunter, was another of Gilbert's unsuccessful later attempts at serious writing. Indeed, it was the serious, moralistic air about the piece that produced the greatest unrest among the critics. "A good many of the sentiments at the Savoy Theatre would not have been out of place in the adjacent Chapel Royal," complained "Jingle" in the Bystander, and the critic for the Daily Graphic said, "... we fear that 'Fallen Fairies' will seem

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10 See Roger Dawson, "Fairies That Failed to Please," G&S Journal, April 1926, pp. 4-5.

11 See above, p. 69.

12 This criticism of Fallen Fairies has continued up to the present time. In an article published in 1971, H. A. Hargreaves opined that "... the emphasis upon moral statement had pressed the juice of healthy laughter from his work." "Sir William Schwenck Gilbert and the Lure of the Fallen Fairies," Gilbert and Sullivan Papers, edited by James Helyar (Lawrence: University of Kansas Libraries, 1971), p. 70.
rather ponderous to those who revelled in the rollicking fun of the earlier Savoy operas." For most critics, the result was an unexpectedly heavy evening with "not enough dancing, not enough fairness," not enough mystery. The word "dull" was used repeatedly in the early reviews. "It would almost seem, indeed, at times as though Sir William had been so carried away by his own mock eloquence as to have ended by taking his blank-verse heroics quite seriously," wrote H.A.S. in the Westminster Gazette; "and this makes for dulness."

Most critics felt that Gilbert's lyrics for Fallen Fairies were well-phrased and perfectly constructed, but something was missing.

"There was all the old mechanical dexterity, the elegance of the blank verse, and the neatness and ingenuity of the rhymes," noted E.F.S. in the Sketch, "but not too much of the Gilbert spirit and humour." On the other hand, the flashy, multi-syllable rhymes Gilbert incorporated into Fallen Fairies detracted from the intended air of seriousness and confused the general purpose of the work. Critics also questioned

13 In a humorous review comparing Fallen Fairies with three other current London productions dealing with fairyland--The Blue Bird by Maurice Maeterlinck, Pinkie by Graham Robertson, and Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie--Keighley Snowden in the Clayton said, "What! To mar the fair face of Fairyland with an Adam and Eve story! With a discarded libel upon the dear old daylight World! I spy a daring traitor. This is to pollute the fount of honour itself." For further discussion of other "fairy plays" in London at this time, see the review by Owen Stair in the Outlook, reproduced below, p. 326.


15 A notable exception was Boyle Lawrence in the Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette (Dec. 16, 1909, p. 4) who went into great detail to show alleged errors in the verbal aspect of the libretto.
The Theatre.

FALLEN FAIRIES AT THE SAVOY.

MORE of them? Fairies at the Haymarket; fairies at His Majesty’s; fairies, or at any rate a magic spell, at the Garrick; a djinn at the Vaudeville; Peter Pan’s friends just about to open the Duke of York’s; the old-style pantomime fairies reserving themselves for Boxing Day! Even without Sir W. S. Gilbert’s contingent, there are enough fairies in London just now to reduce the population of Fairyland considerably. It is to be noted that each theatre is manned—or fairied—by a particular kind of fairy. Maeterlinck’s fairy is of the humpbacked, red-cloaked, stick-tapping sort. Pinkie’s fairies are small people, bearing a general resemblance to flowers; Peter Pan’s are smaller still, invisible to the naked eye indeed, though melodiously audible; the pantomime fairies—well, we all know that glittering, nasal, thirteen-stone institution, the pantomime fairy, the toughest of all the links that still bind the civilised playgoing public to the theatrical ideals of twenty years ago. Sir William Gilbert’s fairies of course are cousins of the pantomime variety. They are adult, and they have none of the charming whimsies and quaintnesses of the modern fairy, who talks like a bell, is invisible to grown-ups, and falls down dead when a child says “I don’t believe in fairies.” The Gilbertian fairy, in fact, is a woman; she is well-bred; she is capable of feeling in love, as she does in this play, and of other and less amiable human weaknesses. She is also the vehicle of a great deal of humour of a kind which, even the old guard of the Savoy public must be beginning to perceive, is a little mechanical.

This story of the transport of two very ferocious knights to fairyland for the amendment of their characters, and of the havoc worked by their manly attractions in that feminine society, can only be disappointing to those who believe that miracles still happen, and that a man can repeat in 1909 the triumphs of the eighteen-eighties. The neatness and flow of the Gilbertian humorous versification is much the same as it was in the days when “Gilbert-and-Sullivan” was in its prime, when the stuff of the story was rich and varied, the fun unforfeited, the element of burlesque strong and irresistible, the music unapproachable of its kind. But to pretend that Fallen Fairies is up to the standard of Patience or Pinafore would be the insanity of flattery. It must stand on its own feet as comic opera, and in a theatrical world wholly possessed, so far as music-drama is concerned, by “musical comedy,” and musical comedy brought to a high degree of perfection as a popular form of amusement, it is doubtful if it will stand very firmly. The view of life, moreover, underlying the work is somewhat brutal in its cynicism. And the music of Mr. German is nothing, to say the least of it, out of the way.

The lighter passages of the piece are entirely in the hands of Mr. Workman as Lutin, the squire of one of the knights, and he makes a marvellous use of slender opportunities. Miss Nancy McIntosh is the fairy queen, who loves Sir Ethais, and Miss Maidie Hope as the jealous sister who supplants her in the knight’s easy affections—both do all that can be done with perfectly uninspiring parts.
Gilbert's wisdom in presenting the dialogue in blank verse, a medium that apparently neither the cast nor the Edwardian audience fully appreciated. More damaging, perhaps, was the fact that Gilbert used only three male characters in the entire play and relied on an exclusively female chorus to carry the musical part of the programme.

The result, according to most early critics, was false monotony.

"Mr. Edward German struggles nobly against impossible conditions," said the Daily Graphic.

His music, taken number by number, is delightfully fluent and melodic, though not perhaps very distinctive in style; but its cumulative effect is monotonous, simply because a man cannot go on writing for female voices throughout a whole opera without coming to the end of his tether.

The tedium induced by the female-only chorus was accompanied by the monotony of the single-scene setting of the entire work.

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19 Gilbert was not happy with the design of the scene prepared by the set designer although he had to accept it. He openly expressed his displeasure to the cost and the press. The critic of Truth said in his review, "As for the one scene, I entirely agree with Sir William's own strictures on it. It is garish and crude, suggestive of a ballet or a provincial pantomime," and "Jingle" in the Bystander complained that "the raw colouring made the eyes blink all the time, and the whole scene reminds you of the kind of valentine you send to a girl to whom you have made up your mind to be resolutely distant, and on which you never meant.
THE CONTROVERSIAL SCENERY FOR THE SINGLE SCENE OF FALLEN FAIRIES

"The single scene is hardly up to the Savoy mark, for it suggests the gaudy transformation-scenes of ordinary pantomime, and there is no suggestion of clouds or of the view of earth which Fairyland is said to possess." Review of Fallen Fairies. The Times, Dec. 16, 1909, p. 12.

Photograph from The Queen, Dec. 25, 1909, p. 1168.

"FALLEN FAIRIES" AT THE SAVOY THEATRE.
Similar to Utopia Limited, the curtain of the first act of Fallen Fairies opens to reveal "a land of ideal beauty" (p. 189); however, this is not a palm-dotted tropical island, but Fairyland "situate on the upper side of a cloud" (p. 189). In a manner reminiscent of the beginning of the story of the biblical Job or the medieval Everyman, Fallen Fairies commences with a discussion of the evil world of mortal man viewed from an alleged morally perfect one.

The fairy maidens chant:

Oh, world below! / Oh, wicked world,
Where sin and woe / Lie all unfurled!
Oh, world of shame, / Of guilt and greed,
Where joy in name / Is woe indeed!
May angels' tears be shed on thee,
Thy wicked world of misery! (p. 189).

The appearance of their wise and beautiful queen, Selene, produces a lyric in dramatic contrast to the previous song of the fairies:

Pure as the air, sweet as the morning dew, / Cometh our Queen!
Bright in all eyes as Heaven's ethereal blue, Cometh our Queen!
Spirit of love! as thou hast ever been,
Be to us evermore, oh sister-Queen!
Unsullied source / Of tranquil joy,
Pursue thy course / Of pure employ—
Be thou, as thou hast ever been,
Our all-beloved sister-Queen! (p. 190).

Of the moral aphorisms which fall from the lips of Queen Selene throughout the work, Francis Toye in the sophisticated Vanity Fair said, to spend much anyhow." Gilbert's disapproval of the scenery is discussed by Joseph Barker, the designer of the set, in Barker's book, Studio and Stage (London: Methuen, 1924), pp. 35-36.

"Surely, the earthy prototype of this lady—for the author insists that all fairies have their counterparts here on earth—must be a particularly indigestible curate in a provincial town."

Selene tells her sister fairies that one of their company, a male fairy named Lutin, is returning from a visit to the wicked earth. All of the fairy maidens eagerly await Lutin's report on the damnable place, but when he arrives they find that he has been so shocked by all that he has seen on the earth that, fearing he will violate the sanctified propriety of Fairyland, he refuses to discuss his travels in any great detail. The fairy maidens' obvious disappointment in not being allowed to hear the juicy details of Lutin's travels shows Gilbert in a typical stance: striking out at the hypocrisy of straight-laced propriety. Such satire had vitality and point when Gilbert used it in works in the eighteen-seventies and eighties, but in 1909 it was somewhat redundant and dated.

After Lutin leaves, one of the female fairies asks Queen Selene how men on the earth are able to endure such lives of wretchedness, and in a song one later writer described as "near to being a grand opera number," Selene replies, "the gift of Love"—a reference to romantic love between men and women—and the curiosity of the fairy maidens is further aroused (pp. 194-195). It is disclosed that every fairy has an unsuspecting identical twin among the mortals on earth who can be

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21. Ernest Short, Sixty Years... p. 140.
Selene's song in praise of mortal love
from *Fallen Fairies* (pp. 194-195):

**SONG.**—**SELENNE.**

With all the misery, with all the shame,
That stain the earth,
One holy influence these mortals claim—
A gift of priceless worth!
The gift of Love—shield against deadly foes,
That crowd in serried shafts—
A Love that's anodyne to all the woes
That wring their souls!
Oh, kindly Love! Man sorrowing and oppressed,
Beneath his load of shame would surely fall,
But for the sweet enchantment in his breast,
That tells him that he bears no load at all!

In its most pure and most enduring form,
It knows no end;
To deed or shame or stress of worldly storm
Such love will never bend.
Time cannot wither it, nor Death destroy;
When the relentless Thief
Has robbed it of the power to live on joy,
It lives on grief!
Oh, wondrous Love—pure as the silver sky!
Even when Death has set the loved one free,
This love supernal doth not—cannot die;
It lives upon the loved one's memory!

[During this song, the Fairies, who at the commencement were scattered over the stage, have very gradually crept nearer and nearer to her, until, at the finish, they are grouped closely around her.]
transferred to Fairyland if his fairy counterpart is absent, and when
two male fairies, Ethais and Phyllon, are called to earth by "the great
king" of the fairies to receive "some gift, some precious privilege"
(p. 193) to bring back to Fairyland, the fairy maidens decide that
they will summon to Fairyland the earthly counterparts of these two
male fairies in order to teach man the ways of virtue:

Man is a being all accurse / Of every vice detestable;
To virtue blinded, he pursues / A course that's unarrestable;
Yet if we let one man of shame / Observe our lives immaculate,
He would (returning whence he came) / Estatically ejaculate—
'Atone, atone! / Repent, Repent!
The pure alone / Know true content!'
These tidings good, / No doubt, he would / Estatically ejaculate!

However, it is obvious that the motives of the fairy maidens are not
altogether altruistic: they are eager to learn from these two mortals
the secret of "loving as man loves!" (p. 196), and the humorous
hypocrisy of the "pure" maidens again shines through their moralism.

The two men in question, Sir Ethais and Sir Phyllon, are abruptly
transported to Fairyland while engaged in a duel, and their barbaric,
Viking natures are immediately apparent upon arrival (198-199). Unlike
the comically naive or blustering dolts of Gilbert's usual making, these
men are presented as selfish realists who are capable of taking cruel
advantage of any situation. They are crude but worldly-wise and make
perfect foils for the naive and idealistic fairies; just as realistic
Lady Angela is a perfect foil for the silly Fairy Rosebud in The Fairy's
Dilemma. Gilbert's cynicism toward idealistic reformers is once again
apparent. The fairy maidens are completely enthralled by their mortal

22Ironically, it is the privilege to love as mortals love, and at
the opera's conclusion, Selene rejects the gift for her Kingdom.
visitors and even prudent Selene explains, "Why, what can
gods be like if these be men?" (p. 200). By the end of the first
act, Ethais and Phyllon have convinced the fairy maidens that they
should teach the maidens the ways of mortal love. Unheeded is the
male fairy Lutin's warning, the antithesis of Selene's earlier
balled concerning romantic love, Lutin cautions,

Oh, love's the source of every ill! / Compound with unholy skill,
It proves, disguise it as you will, / A gilded but a poisoned pill!

Oh, love's a poison foul and fleet, / Nor is its horror less
complete
Because, with devil-born deceit, / It looks so fair and tastes
so sweet! (p. 205).

Because Lutin opposes the presence in Fairyland of the two men from the
wicked world, he is banished to earth by Selene, and in the second act
a comical mortal Lutin takes his place in the land of the fairies. This
new Lutin is enraptured by the attention the fairy maidens lavish on him,
and he and the fairy maiden, Zayda, exchange some witty lines (pp. 219-220)
that emphasize the negative transformation that mortal love has affected
in the fairies, turning them into scheming, selfish frauds.

Queen Selene treats the duelling wounds of Ethais and falls
hopelessly in love with him. Diana Everson's ill-fated speech of
acceptance—Armand de Bréville's marriage proposal in The Fortune
Hunter (p. 406) is called to mind when Selene pledges her love to Ethais:

I am a woman, and thou art a man,
Well, thou art comely—so, in truth, am I.
We meet and love each other—that's to say,
I am prepared to give up all I have,
My home, my very fairyhood for thee—
Thou to surrender riches, honour, life,
To please the fleeting fancies of my will.
And why? / Because I see in thee, or thou in me.
Dialogue between the Fairy Zayda and the mortal Lutin revealing the sinister effect of the inspiration of mortal love on the fairy maidens (pp. 219-220):

Enter ZAYDA unobserved.

Locrine. But stay! Thou shouldst be faint for lack of food—
Neodic. Nay, let me minister unto his needs—
Zayda (coming forward).
Then go, beloved sisters. Gather fruits
And bring them here to him. Such frugal fare
Will have a daintier flavour than its own
When served by such fair hands!

Locrine, Neodic, and the others.

Zayda (changing her manner). We are alone!
One word of caution—sir, my sisters all—
Lutin. Are all these lovely girls your sisters?
Zayda. Rejoice that they are not thine own.
Lutin. I very much prefer them as they are!
You're a fine family.

Zayda. (Fair to the eye,
But take good heed—they are not what they seem;
Locrine, the fair—the beautiful Locrine—
Is the embodiment of avarice;
Darine is vain beyond comparison;
Neodic is much older than she looks;
Camilla hath defective intellect;
Maias is a bitter shrew, Colomba's a thief;
And, last and worst of all, I blush to own,
Our Queen Selene hath a tongue that stabs—
A traitor tongue that serves no better end
Than wags a woman's character away!

Lutin. I've stumbled into pretty company!
It seems you fairies have your faults.

Zayda. Alas!
All but myself. My soul is in my face;
I, only I, am what I seem to be;
I, only I, am worthy of esteem.
If thou wilt love me, I will dower thee
With wealth untold, long years and happy life,
Thou gallant churl, thou highly favoured bower,
Thou pleasant knave, thou strange epitome
Of all that's rugged, quaint, and picturesque!

Kissing him on the tip of his nose.
A astounding virtue, brilliant intellect,
Great self-denial, venerable years,
Rare scholarship or shining godliness?
No! / Because, forensically, we're comely specimens,
Not of our own, but Nature's industry! (p. 211).

However, in Gilbert's serious works, such fanciful romantic matchings,
built on the shifting sands of mere physical attraction, are doomed to
failure, and, like Diana in the earlier play, Selene is eventually
brutally betrayed by her lover. In fact, Diana's emotional tirade
against Arnaud in the last act of The Fortune Hunter (p. 437) parallels
Selene's curses of hatred toward Ethais after he abandons her in
Fallen Fairies:

Away, and touch me not! My nature's gone!
May Heaven rain down her fury on thy soul!
May every fibre in that perjured heart
Quiver with love for one who loves thee not!
May thine untrammled soul at last be caught
And fixed and chained and riveted to one
Who, with the love of Heaven upon her lips,
Carries the hate of Hell within her heart! (pp. 230-231).

In the meantime, Selene's affair with Ethais has turned the
envious other fairy maidens against her. This is especially true of
the scheming designs of
Darine, whose sinister jealousy (p. 213) is reminiscent of Ultrace in
The Mountebanks. In the tragic climax of the work, Queen Selene
loses both the homage of her jealous sister fairies and the companionship
of false Ethais, and her romantic ideas about the goodness and value of
human love come crashing down around her. The play ends on a positive,
if somewhat sombre, note, however, as the mortals return to earth and
the negative influence of human love is removed from Fairyland. The
fairies reinstate a sadder but wiser Selene as their queen, and she
counsels them with a humanistic philosophy not foreign to Gilbert's more serious Ehdarian poetic contemporaries, Hardy and Housman:

Shall we, from our enforced security
Deal mercilessly with poor mortal man,
Who struggles, single-handed, to defend
The demon-leaguered fortress of his soul?
Shall we not rather, seeing how we fall,
Give double honour to the champion who
Throughout his mortal peril holds his own,
E'en though / His walls be somewhat battered in the fight?
Oh, let us lay this lesson to our hearts! (p. 233).

However, the critic of the Observer echoed the views of a number of other early reviewers concerning this last act when he said, "It is all very mundane, and petty, and tragic; and the effect is little like that of an act of 'Othello' pieced into 'The Merry Wives of Windsor.'" Of the work as a whole, the Observer found Fallen Fairies "a strange compound of trifling and tragedy; of gossamer and gnashings of teeth," and Truth called it "a fanciful morality play which goes too deep for light opera and yet not deep enough for anything else . . . ."
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF FALLEN FAIRIES (SAKY THEATRE, DEC. 15, 1909) IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 163, above)

CAST: The Fairy Ethais (Mr. Claude Fleming); The Fairy Phyllon (Mr. Leo Sheffield); Fairy Queen Selene (Miss Nancy McIntosh); Darine (Miss Madie Hope); Zayda (Miss Jessie Ross); Loreine (Miss Ethel Morrison); Zara (Miss Mabel Burrell); Core (Miss Rita Otway); Lila (Miss Ruby Gray); Nocie (Miss Alice Cox); Flota (Miss Harjorie Luces); Chloris (Miss Gladys Lancaster); Mair (Miss Miriam Lyceett); Clytie (Miss Isabel Agnew); Fairy Lutin (Mr. C. Herbert Workman); Sir Ethais (Mr. Claude Fleming); Sir Phyllon (Mr. Leo Sheffield); Mortal Lutin (Mr. C. Herbert Workman).

(SEE ALSO: "FALLEN FAIRIES" [AND THE DEATH OF W. S. GILBERT]: A COLLECTION OF MISCELLANEOUS NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS. BRITISH MUSEUM: TE. GTS. 76. (8.).)

Publications of Dec. 16, 1909
Daily Chronicle, p. 5.
Daily Express, p. 1.
Daily Graphic, p. 7.
Daily Mail, review by A. H., p. 6.
Daily Mirror, pp. 1, 3, 8, 9.
Daily News, p. 5.
Daily Sketch, p. 7.
Daily Telegraph, p. 11.
Evening News, p. 4.
Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette, review by Boyle Lawrence, p. 4.
Globe & Traveller, p. 5.
Morning Advertiser, p. 5.
Morning Leader, review by Staceo, p. 1.
Morning Post, p. 8.
 Pall Mall Gazette, p. 4.
The Stage, p. 17.
The Standard, p. 10.
The Star, p. 2.
The Times, p. 12.
Westminster Gazette, review by H. A. S., p. 5.

Publications of Dec. 17
The Mail, p. 5.
Public Opinion, p. 622.

Publications of Dec. 18
The Athenaeum, p. 770.
The Era, p. 17.
The Outlook, review by Owen Stair, p. 574.

Publications of Dec. 19
The Observer, p. 6.
The People, p. 12.
The Review, review by Garrod, p. 2.
Reynolds's Beacon, review by The Candid Critic, p. 4.
Sunday Times, review by L. R., p. 4.
Weekly Dispatch, p. 6.
Weekly Times & Echo, p. 4.

Publications of Dec. 21
The World, review by Alfred Kalisch, p. 1101.

Publications of Dec. 22
The Pelican, review by Pelican, p. 6.
Truth, p. 1513, 1514.

Publications of Dec. 23
The Lady, review by A. M. L., p. 1202.
Vanity Fair, review by Francis Toye, p. 782.

Publications of Dec. 24
The Clarion, review by Keighley Snowden, p. 2.
Publications of Dec. 25


Publications of Dec. 29


Publications of Jan. 1910

A theme which makes, to say the least, an unhealthy form of entertainment."


On February 27, 1911, say The Hooligan, a crudey action portrayal of the last hours of a convicted murderer in a prison cell. It is a striking departure from any of Gilbert's previous efforts. "The question of the possibility of the death for the stage-hall representation must not be discussed here," said one study critic, "in a plot--so has another writer's study—a musically a more intimate performance."

The writer of The Hooligan that appeared in the "musical society" column of the columns a week after the first performance presents the basic plot of the work and simplifies the favorable reaction of some of the early reviewers.

Considering Gilbert's lifelong amazements for the stage hall, it is ironic that his last work was written for a variety performance. For an exciting timeliness on this, see George W. McCall, Anglo-American Newspaper, second series (London: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 252-293.

Review of The Hooligan, The Times, May 10, 1911, p. 3.
One night during the year following the closing of *Fallen Fairies* in early 1910, Gilbert saw the comedian James Welch in a humorous role at one of the London theatres. The seventy-four-year-old dramatist was so enthused with the performer's acting potential that he decided to write a short sketch for him that would show the actor in a dramatic rather than a farcical light. The result, presented as part of a variety bill at the London Coliseum for a month's duration beginning on February 27, 1911, was *The Holigan*, a deadly serious portrayal of the last hours of a condemned murderer in his prison cell. It was a striking departure from any of Gilbert's previous work. "The question of the suitability of the sketch for music-hall representation need not be discussed here," said one early review. "As a play—as a grim emotional study—it is undoubtedly a remarkable production."\(^2\)

The review of *The Holigan* that appeared in the "Dramatic Gossip" column of the *Athenæum* a week after the first performance presents the basic plot of the work and exemplifies the favourable reaction of some of the early reviewers:

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Considering Gilbert's life-long antagonism for the music-hall, it is ironic that his last work was written for a variety performance. For an amusing aside on this, see George W. Smalley, *Anglo-American Memories*, second series (London: Duckworth, 1912), pp. 292-293.

\(^2\)Review of *The Holigan*, *The Star*, Feb. 28, 1911, p. 3.
We scarcely expect new departures from veterans, especially veteran playwrights. Sir William Gilbert, however, has provided a surprise at the Coliseum this week. He, the great exponent of fantasy and humour in the playhouse, has challenged, as it were, our new school of stage-authors on their own ground and taught them that an old hand is as capable as they of turning out studies in dramatic realism. Mr. Galsworthy has exposed to view the grimmer traits of 'Justice,' and the horrors of solitary confinement. Sir William has gone further; in his new 'sketch' of 'The Hooligan' he takes us into the cell of a condemned murderer and shows him being roused and prepared for his doom on the very morning of his execution.

The dramatist spares nothing, but he exaggerates nothing. We see the poor wretch wakened out of his sleep; we watch the warders trying to encourage him into making a brave end by telling him of the fortitude of other tenants of his cell. We hear him describing the nightmares that have haunted his dreams. We listen to him as he prays for a reprieve, and assures the officials that he had never meant to kill, but only to wound his sweetheart. With the entry of the governor and the chaplain he loses all self-control, and his whole behaviour is one long frenzy of hysteria. When he is at last informed of the arrival of a reprieve, the strain is too great, and he falls dead from heart failure.

The very strength of this play depends on the austere restraint of the treatment. Mr. Galsworthy has never been more severely realistic than Sir William. The author is greatly indebted for the success of his new experiment to the fine acting of Mr. James Welch. Never can we remember to have seen the agony of fear so convincingly and poignantly realised on the stage. Too long condemned to farce, Mr. Welch reveals in this performance an almost unsuspected side of his talent.

However, some were greatly offended by the piece. The Fall Hall Gazette reported that many cheered the performance on its first showing, "though less flattering sounds were heard from spectators who had, presumably, been reduced to anger by the play rather than to thoughtfulness," and E.A.B. in the Daily Express agreed that "... as to the desirability of producing such a piece there were certainly two very differing opinions in the theatre last night." Although the on-stage

3 Since Welch had been known before this performance strictly as a comedian, many reviewers were surprised and excited about his fine dramatic acting in the piece. 'Tristram' in the Referee went so far as to say, 'Mr. James Welch's impersonation of the hapless Hooligan ranks with the great pieces of acting of our time.' Unfortunately, Welch died only a few years later in 1916.
GILBERT IN GRAND GUIGNOL MOOD: "THE Hooligan,"

BY SIR W. S. GILBERT, AT THE COlISEUM.

1. MEET (Mrs. JUNE WILCOX, standing in the Costume Room, when the Meets are in progress. The woman is Mr. Gilbert, and the man is Mr. Verdi."
2. The man at the right is Mr. Gilbert, and the man at the left is Mr. Verdi."
3. The woman at the right is Mr. Gilbert, and the woman at the left is Mr. Verdi."
4. The woman is Mr. Gilbert, and the man is Mr. Verdi."

* * *

So W. S. Gilbert, the most brilliant of all English comedians, has found a new amusement for his idle moments in the Coliseum, called "The Hooligan," and one which will certainly prove a success, as it is the latest method of doing with capital cases. The place requires very little to make the audience laugh, and the comic effects are produced by the simple art of mimicry. The audience has come to appreciate the merits of the show, and Mr. Gilbert is now in great demand for his character."
heart attack was the only "sensational" feature of the work, the
dramatic treatment of the naturalistic subject matter caused some women
in the audience to faint, and one female writer later confessions that
"... it turned my blood cold."\(^4\) The \textit{Weekly Dispatch} noted that

there were children present at the Coliseum matinée on Monday;
and, of course, they witnessed that gruesome tragedy. I wonder
what those young people thought of it all? What they thought of
seeing the curtain taken up again to show the dead murderer, with
bare feet, lying stretched and stiff on the prison bed?

Disapproval ensued from certain very influential sections of the press,
including the \textit{Times},\(^5\) the \textit{Daily Telegraph}, and the \textit{Era}. The sketch
was likened to the blood-curdling productions of the Grand Guignol in
Paris, and the leading-circulation \textit{Daily Mail} called it "horribly
unpleasant." The \textit{Standard} said:

\begin{quote}
\textit{The Hooligan} is a mistake. It is ghastly and horrible, and
gives physical pain and sickness to the spectator. That is not
the province of art; it belongs to the photographic museum of
criminologists. To place before an audience consisting of
people of both sexes and all ages a picture of the last half-hour
of a condemned murderer is, surely, an error of judgment. The
more realistic it is, the more dreadful.\
\end{quote}

To many critics, the most striking aspect of the sketch was the
 inclusion

of "speech after speech of morbid realism" in "the unabashed and
unrestrained argot of the brutal hooligan."\(^7\) Some critics hailed this

\(^4\)Mrs. Alec [Ethel B.] Tweedie, \textit{My Table-Cloths} (London:
Hutchinson, 1911), p. 45.

\(^5\)The \textit{Times} review (March 1, 1911) is very short and hidden away
at the bottom of p. 10, as if the less known and said about the production
the better.

\(^6\)Review of \textit{The Hooligan}, \textit{The Pall Mall Gazette}, Feb. 28, 1911, p. 5.

COLISEUM.

From the gravity and the joy and the brightness of "The Mikado" to the gloom, the wrecked scenes, and—so he quite frank—the brutality of "The Hooligan," what a stride! The debt we all owe to Sir William Gilbert is not to be measured by words; he has made life brighter, merrier, and easier for us; he has brought us, as Lord Hertford declared Dickens last week, the gift of laughter and help us about with honest, wholesome north.

We have repaid him with gratitude that has restored him one of the most popular playwrights of the day—perhaps even the best-loved of them all.

In the circumstances how eagerly, how gladly everyone would have welcomed a new play in his chief, a work touched, if need be, with gentle irony or even with that sense of tears common to all things human. It was not to be, however. "The Hooligan" is a crew, grimy, gruesome phlegmatic, a story in realism that is none the less horrible because it is drawn from life. "Beauty is truth—truth beauty," yet there are truths which will not bear looking upon. Among them, surely, is the spectacle of a poor, half-dead, face-maimed youth, a thing of the gutter, a hopeless wasted, leaning upon a truckle bed in the condemned cell of one of his Majesty's prisons, and awakening to the knowledge that within a couple of hours he will be on his way to the scaffold. From such a picture the spectator roves with a feeling of sheer physical pain, the more faithful it is the greater the sense of unreality. And when he sees a scene certainly not less poignant, a scene in which the miserable creature lays bare his inmost thoughts, his人在 tears, his doubts, his disgusts. The terror of the day are even more awful than those of the sleeping hours, rendered hideously by dreams that make one think that brings them. Nothing so vivid has been heard from the stage for many a day as Nat Polly's description of the recurring nightmares in which he plays the principal part, a pitiful figure in a limitless court of justice, surrounded by hundreds of lawyers and spectators, and, afar off in the distance, one blood-red splash of crimson—the stern judge about to pronounce sentence on the trembling prisoner. Imagine the shuddering effect of the recital of such a tale.

And so Nat sees on, at one moment cringing and begging for mercy, at another defyng the wardens and proclaiming his innocence, lost sense of all, the arrival of the governor, accompanied by the chaplain, bringing with him the news of a reprieve just received. There is a sudden slackening of the tension, a wild outburst of relief—and then—then Nat throws up his hands and falls heavily to the floor. "Heart failure," remarks the chaplain.

"Dead!"

If anything could reconcile one to "The Hooligan" it is the masterly acting of Mr. James Welch. His performance is so reenactedly true, so amazingly finished in every detail, so perfectly rounded off, as to be absolutely fantastic. Above all, it is distinguished by an exquisite restraint; with every opportunity for crowing the boundary-line of sincerity and the corroboration, Mr. Welch never for an instant allows himself to be tempted beyond it. Granting the conditions, acting more artistic could hardly be found anywhere. As the kind-hearted warden Mr. Leslie Carter, also, is altogether excellent. But if "The Hooligan," which, by the way, is most cleverly mixed, is to succeed it must be by the intensity of its horrors. Among other features of the Coliseum programme this week are Miss Adrienne Augarde in the amusing true "Uncle Jack's Letter," Mr. Horace Goldin, the great illusionist; Sign. Elgar, and Eli Hudson in a charming musical entertainment; and, last but not least, "Summer."
dialogue as a powerful dramatic device, but others were outraged.

"No one will deny that picturesqueness of language is characteristic of the class which the author seeks to represent in Nat Selly," said the reviewer for the Stage, "but surely that does not justify its use in the theatre!"

Many favourable reviews expressed a belief in _Gilbert's dramatic piece_ as a valuable work of naturalistic social protest "penned from the noblest 'missionary' motives." The Sketch said that it would "certainly provoke discussions as to the present methods of dealing with capital cases," and E.A.B. in the Daily News agreed that "Sir W. S. Gilbert's idea is, no doubt, to show how cruel is a death punishment for a crime which is unpremeditated." Many years later Gilbert scholar Isaac Goldberg would continue this argument, stating that Gilbert's purpose was to attack "the social and psychic injustice of capital punishment . . . ." The concept of heredity and environment as the major determinants of the human condition was one that Gilbert had flirted with in many of his works, including the recently completed _Fallen Fairies_, and several critics expressed the view that this was the main

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8 Tristram, "The Variety Stage," The Referee, March 5, 1911, p. 4.


 motive force behind his drafting of *The Hooligan*. The * Examiner*, for instance, called the major character a "covering and helpless Ishmael of the gutter," and the * Pall Mall Gazette* said:

The only right effect of such a picture is a sense of shame at the conditions that can throw up such a creature as this wretched hooligan, with neither brains nor body, and therefore, with neither morals nor imagination, ... Sir William Gilbert's picture of one of them is a hideous piece of realism, at which the thoughtful spectator must shudder.

Indeed, in the sketch itself, Nat Solly, the hooligan to be executed, has been pronounced "feeble-minded" by the medical authorities (p. 480), and somewhere during his feverish utterances, Solly alludes to the concept of environmental determination:

Oh, my Gad, it's 'ard—it's 'ard, see—a my 'at was a 'igh toby cracksman; my murr was a prig and did tw stretches; my bruvvurs and sistors was all prigs, and every chap I ever known was a thief at sorts—cracksman, dillyfakers, and not not! An I to be judged like a bloke wots been brought up fair and strike, and taught a tride, and can look on a ticky viv 'is books safe in 'is trousers pockets? Oh, my Gad, it's 'ard, it's 'ard! (p. 481).

Yet the cutting edge of this speech seems at least partially dulled by the words of the warden, Mothers, immediately following:

Poor chap! all that's true enough, but your's isn't a case of doin' a stretch for pinchin' a watch. It's much more serious than that. Come now, have a wash (p. 481).

In fact, one of the most exasperating elements about *The Hooligan*, despite the excellence of its realism, is the abiguity of its moral purpose—if, indeed, it has one. "Sir W. S. Gilbert's object in writing such a sketch ... is very obscure," noted the *Stage*.

If he seeks to draw attention to the value of the environement in the moulding of character—his chief character appears to find some solace and considerable excuse in his own statement that "he never had a chance"—it does not seem as though much is
likely to be added to what is already known. Or, perhaps, Sir William, from his magisterial experience, recognizes a necessity for a line of demarcation between premeditated and unpresentated crimes.

It should also be noted that if social protest is involved in

The Hooligan, it is not made at the expense of the establishment.

Gilbert's depiction of the prison authorities is sympathetic, especially in regard to the "good-hearted and sympathetic" warder, Mathers, who tries to encourage Solly to face the ordeal of the execution manfully:

Of course it's a bad time for a man, the last few days; but you're through 'em now, and I'm sure—what's the use of flogging it? It's got to be. That's what you say—it's got to be, there's no possible means of escape. There's nothing to be got by showing the white feather. Funk or not funk, the end's the same. That's what you say. So stiffen your heart, my man. Try to think of it as something that's got to be and that it'll be over before you realize that it's taking place. That's the way to look on it, ain't it, Joe?

(To the other Warder, who nods (p. 482).

The very fact that Solly receives a reprieve, coupled with the kind attitude of the Prison Governor in delivering the news to Solly (p. 485), also generates respect for the authorities. The sketch entitled this response from socialist Edith Moscou in the nineteen thirties:

On one side, Gilbert hints ever so lightly at the sordidness and depravity of environment which makes for crime; at the opposite pole, he alludes to the humanitarianism of penal institutions as a solution for crime. 12

As far as the character of the hooligan is concerned, there is nothing to respect and little that draws one's overt sympathy. It is

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obvious that Gilbert did not like the man he had created. Unlike the male "villains" in Gilbert's other serious later works—The Fortune Hunter and Fallen Fairies—Nat Solly has no redeeming masculine features. Despite their otherwise selfish actions, at least Armand in The Fortune Hunter and the Humish knights in Fallen Fairies revealed a sense of honour or courage somewhere during the proceedings; but there is no sense of nobility of character anywhere in Nat Solly's speeches or manner. From his very first words when he awakens from his fitful slumber until the fall of the curtain when his dead body lies sprawled on the stage, he is a whining, uncontrolled mass of anxiety. One of the guards calls him

the weakest, cowardliest, softest-spined chap we've had here since Bill Shorter, who, when his time came, had to be carried on a chair. Like a wet hammock he was, and this chap's just such another. Take it they'll have to carry him. (p. 479),

and the later encouraging words of Mather have little effect on Solly. Although the Era called the work "a study in remorse, a nightmare of unavailing regret," Solly actually remains basically unrepentant over his former actions. When the warder asks the hooligan if his dreaded nightmare concerns the girl he has murdered in a rage of jealousy, Solly replies, "Abaat 'em? No fear?" (p. 481). Symbolic of Solly's unregenerate nature is his refusal to wash himself (p. 481). A clumsy hypocrisy is also obvious in the speeches of the condemned man:

(Furiously) Devil strike me blind! but if I 'sd that blared old hound of a judge 'ere, that cussed old turnip 'ed wear a wig on it. I'd--(Checking himself with an effort.)--I'd forgive 'im! S'elp me I'd forgive 'im! I'd forgive the 'old bilin! (p. 483).
At one point he actually admits his premeditated guilt in killing the girl when he feels the confession might give him a few more minutes of life (p. 485). All of this prompted one contemporary publication to state, "Sir William and Mr. Welch present us with a picture of the 'hooligan' as perhaps he most often is in reality—just a neurotic degenerate."\(^\text{13}\)

Adding to the argument that Gilbert's basic motivation in writing *The Hooligan* was not social protest is Gilbert's record as a J.P. during these years:

For offences against the person Gilbert had no sort of mercy. He pursued the offender with a sort of bitter zest. He would not allow that there could be any sort of defense, and he used his legal experience and knowledge to the utmost limit . . . . Old offenders learnt to dread Gilbert's lash, and cowards trembled when they were brought before him.\(^\text{14}\)

and in *His Excellency*, Gilbert had satirized the radical judicial reforms advocated by Henry Labouchere, the editor of *Truth*:

> When the case is quite completed, then the prisoner defeated with severity is treated as you're probably aware—
> For it's awfully provided that the jury shall be guided by my
> summary one-sided—which distresses Labouchere.
> It is rough on Labouchere—
> It is hard on Labouchere—
> Oh, the dickens, how it sickens tender-hearted Labouchere! (p. 140).

Gilbert's special severity toward the culprit in cases of homicide is attested by this memoir of an acquaintance:

\(^{13}\)"Around the Halls," *The Performer*, March 2, 1911, p. 11.

Gilbert came into the club on a day when he had spent the morning at the Old Bailey listening to the Grippen case. He was in a bad temper; he criticized the food adversely; he referred with contempt to the wine; of the cigars, brought to him in the smoking room, he could not trust himself to speak. At four o'clock an Under-Sheriff arrived with the news that Grippen was to hang. Gilbert brightened at once, and subsequently admitted that he had been seriously perturbed in mind because he feared Grippen might get off.

There is also the evidence of letters by Gilbert and articles about him in the London press during this last decade of his life that reveal his indignation and hard line toward law-breakers of all sorts. It is interesting to note that in 1906 Gilbert was attacked by a thief in Covent Garden's Undall Street and this particular area and street are given as the place where Solly had piled his sinister trade in The Foolian (p. 483).

"My creepy piece, The Foolian, is succeeding tremendously."

Gilbert wrote to a friend two weeks after the opening, "but it must come to the end (for the time being) in a fortnight, as Welch's engagement was only for four weeks."Ironically, Gilbert, like Solly, died of heart failure two months later, and The Foolian was never professionally revived. Most later criticism of Gilbert's work have either overlooked the sketch or accepted the 1927 view of Roger Dawson that "in it ... Gilbert is so strange, so preposterously lurid, a guise that is utterly impossible."17


17 Roger Dawson, "Some of the Non-Musical Plays," GAS Journal, Dec. 1927, p. 12. This article also evaluates other works discussed in the present study. See also William Freeman, "On a Certain Amateur Production (The Foolian)," GAS Journal, June 1928, p. 27.
The Times, June 29, 1908, p. 9

BAILIFF SHOOTING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—I read in The Times of to-day that a man of 70 was charged before Mr. Justice Ridley with shooting two bailiffs who entered his house to remove furniture under a bill of sale. The prisoner, although he was represented to have been in ill-health at the time, nevertheless shot so well that the first bullet was only prevented from entering the body of one of the bailiffs by the accidental presence of two penny pieces in his waistcoat pocket. The second bullet pierced the other bailiff's coat-sleeve. The amazing Mr. Justice Ridley decided to discharge the would-be assassin on the ground of his age and ill-health, binding him over in his own recognizances to be of good behaviour in the future. At the same time, and to prevent any general misconception on a really important point, the judge thoughtfully stated that if other persons (presumably younger persons in robust health) came before him charged with the offence of emptying revolvers into the bodies of officials engaged in executing the law, "they must not expect to be dealt with so leniently."

If a man of 70 may attempt with impunity the murder of officials who are following their lawful pursuits, it would seem to follow that he is also at liberty to commit crimes of lesser magnitude should it please him to do so. If this leniency were carefully formulated and embodied in the Old-Age Pensions Bill, it might tend to enhance the value of the meagre sums doled out to prospective recipients.

Your obedient servant,

W. S. GILBERT.

Grim's Dyke, Harrow Weald, July 18.

The Times, July 20, 1908, p. 13

OUR Hooligans and the Police.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—On leaving Covent-garden Theatre at 11.15 yesterday (Friday) night I walked up Endell-street in search of a cab. I found one at the corner of Castle-street, and as I was getting into it I received a blow on the mouth from a young man about 20 years of age, who at the same time made a violent grab at my watch chain. Fortunately the bow of the watch broke, and the swivel of the chain gave out, and so he got nothing for his trouble except a rather severe blow on the face, which I contrived to deliver during a momentary hold on his coat. He bolted down Castle-street, and I was prevented from pursuing him by the presence of four or five confederates, who blocked my way until he was out of sight.

My object in writing is to suggest that, if proper police precautions were taken, this kind of outrage ought to be impossible within 50 yards of the chief metropolitan police station, and at a time of night when the police must be aware that hundreds of well-to-do people are leaving the theatre.

Your obedient servant,

W. S. GILBERT.

Grim's Dyke, Harrow Weald, July 16.

The Times, April 13, 1910, p. 9

BURGLARY AT SIR W. S. GILBERT'S HOUSE.—At Wealdstone (Middlesex) Petty Sessions yesterday Frank Hursow was charged with burglary at the residence of Sir W. S. Gilbert, Grim's Dyke, on the borders of Harrow Weald. On April 6, when the prisoner was discovered in the house, Sir William went to the assistance of his servant and helped to secure the man. The police were summoned by telephone, and the prisoner, who had been bound with ropes, was taken in Sir William's motor-car to the police-station. Yesterday Sir William, who is a J.P. for Middlesex, was present on the Bench, but retired before the case came on. The prisoner, who was further charged with house-breaking at the residence of Sir William Crumpl, Glenthorne, Harrow Weald, was sent for trial to the Middlesex Quarter Sessions.
A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF FIRST-NIGHT NOTICES AND FORMAL REVIEWS OF
THE ORIGINAL LONDON PRODUCTION OF THE HOUND (LONDON COLISEUM,
FEB. 27, 1911) IN LONDON NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS DEPOSITED IN
THE BRITISH MUSEUM

(For explanation of symbols in the following list see p. 1b3, above)

CAST: Nat Solly (Mr. James Walsh); Prison Governor (Mr. Wyn Weaver); Mather (Mr. Leslie Carter); Chief Warden (Mr. Leopold Profeit); Second Warden (Mr. Gordon Tonkings).

Publications of Feb. 26, 1911

Publications of March 1

Publications of March 2

Publications of March 4

Publications of March 5

Publications of March 8
The Sketch, p.15. The Tatler, p.252 (Photographs only). Truth, p.610.

Publications of March 9

Publications of March 11

Publications of March 12
The People, p.34 (Photograph only). Reynolds's Newsman, p.4.
Despite the defects that contributed to their popular failure, the ten years of W. S. Gilbert that were first produced after 1890 are not without obvious merit and value. The very fact that Gilbert allowed himself to engage in very self-indulgent themes and subject matter in these works makes them important in understanding his interests, projects, and philosophy of life. This is especially

**Chapter III**

**GILBERT'S LATER WORKS:**

**POSITIVE ASPECTS AND UNDERLYING VALUE**

"I venture to say that no writer of our generation has the gift of personality in a higher degree than Sir W. S. Gilbert. It is in this respect that he stands head and shoulders above even Sir Arthur Pinero and all our other dramatists. You can imagine a person of a slovenly habit of thought being doubtful about the authorship of *His House in Order* by Pinero, or Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's best comedy, *The Mary*. But you cannot imagine anyone attributing *The Merry Widow* to Gilbert, or Iolanthe to Captain Basil Hood. That is the real charm of Fallen Fairies. It is Gilbert's, therefore it is unique."


objects of satire that might be the result of personal grudge. His basically conservative political philosophy is also re-organized despite his continued threats at the bowing of patriotic altruism. Over it all are large doses of black humor and an affirmation of his cynical outlook on life, including a melancholy belief in the ultimate disillusionment of purely romantic relationships (although a fairly constant conservative belief in the value and sanctity of marriage is retained).
Despite the defects that contributed to their popular failure, the ten works of W. S. Gilbert that were first produced after 1890 are not without obvious merit and value. The very fact that Gilbert allowed himself to engage in very self-indulgent themes and subject matter in these works makes them important in understanding his interests, prejudices, and philosophy of life. This is especially true, as we have already noted, in the realm of the theatre. Gilbert's personal views about star players, dramatic critics, musical comedy, Shakespeare, and a myriad of other professional topics are revealed more clearly in these works than in any of his more famous earlier ones. His basically legalistic interests are reiterated, and Victorian matrons, leaders of state, and the clergy are made pointed objects of satire that might be the result of personal grudge. His basically conservative political philosophy is also re-emphasized despite his continued thrusts at the humbug of patriotic chauvinism. Over it all are large doses of black humour and an affirmation of his cynical outlook on life, including a melancholy belief in the ultimate disillusionment of purely romantic relationships (although a fairly constant conservative belief in the value and sanctity of marriage is retained).
As far as the works themselves are concerned, Gilbert put a great deal of effort into most of them, and their original productions were all under his control. He strongly believed in the value of at least three of these works—Itoria Limited, The Fortune Hunter, and Fallen Fairies—even after they had proven popular failures. The artistic value of all of Gilbert's later works, despite their defects, was considerable. As the Fall Hall Gazette said in reviewing His Excellency,

His invention can hardly be called abundant by his warmest admirers. In construction he is, despite admirable eye for stage effects, very much to seek. But he differs from most or all other contemporary writers of comic libretti in that he possesses—or is not ashamed of confessing—an intellect. The crass imbecillity and fatuousness of the ordinary comic opera are impossible to him; his humour is a little sledge-hammer always; but it is humour; his jokes have not always an agreeable savour, but they are jokes. If you are not always pleased with his fun, at least you can listen to it alertly and are free from the unutterable melancholy which comic opera most often induces.

Gilbert's art of lyrical versification only seriously failed him in one work—The Grand Duke—and his humorous dialogue always remained crisp even if his attempts at serious language often verged upon melodramatic bombast. In a work on Sullivan in 1928, Thomas F. Dunhill expressed the belief that The Mountebanks and His Excellency "contain some of Gilbert's most brilliant work," and the lyrics in

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five of Gilbert's unheralded later libretti were good enough to be adapted by George Rowell and Kenneth Hobbs into a 1962 musical production of Engaged, Gilbert's farce from the seventies. Gilbert's ability in creating accents and verbal eccentricities was excellently demonstrated in many of his later works. The American colloquialisms of Euphrosa in The Fortune Hunter and the cockney dialect of Solly in The Hooligan are expertly captured, and Frederick Wedmore in the Academy noted that in Haste to the Wedding Gilbert employed the "ordinary talk of the period, which so few dramatists have at their command."

Despite the often dated aspect of his subject matter and his reliance on the techniques of mid-Victorian melodrama, Gilbert sometimes toyed with dramatic structures in his later works that were ahead of their time. In several of these works Gilbert vaguely anticipates the modern "theatre of the absurd" with its ambiguity of setting and meaning. One observant early reviewer of The Mountebanks noted, "It is curious that Mr. Gilbert vigorously burlesques Shakespeare's Ophelia ... and then uses the idea for his leading character." In Utopia Limited, Utopia is both a tropical island far...
removed from England and a caricature of England itself. At times the satire is based on the fact that the Utopian way of life is exactly like that in England and at other times because it is just the opposite. The repeatedly used phrase, "the way it is in England" ridicules its subject matter both because of its close proximity to the truth and because of its complete distortion of it. Jane Stedman notes that in *Utopia Limited* Gilbert "... created a setting which is England by fits and starts: real England, ideal England, burlesque England, satiric England. He has set up characters who are by turns sincere improvers and consciously comic pranksters." Likewise, the characters in *The Fairie's Dilemma* are at the same time real people, characters in a society play, and characters in a pantomime burlesque.

Similar interplay can be found in the characters and plot of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, a work that flirts with Shakespeareans on a number of different levels without completely falling into a perfect pattern of travesty or parody. After watching a recent London revival of Gilbert's Shakespeare sketch, Carl Wildman of the Observer called it "a histrionic fun-fair, wheels within wheels, halls of mirrors." In its relationship to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* not only explores "the incongruities of the play" but also attacks the multitude of dramatic interpreters and critical

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*The Gridiron*, May 7, 1892, p. 104.
interpretations of the main character. Gilbert’s ridicule of the “one man show” aspect of Shakespeare’s original play can also be seen as an attack on the vanity of star players who took the role. At one point Gilbert delivers, in the words of a 1904 review in the Era, “satirical sidelong hits at the different exteriors of the actors who have depicted Hamlet,” and the Daily News noted allusions to even early Victorian actors Fechter and Phelps in the dialogue. Rosencrantz asks Ophelia what his rival, Hamlet, “is like,” and she replies,

Alike for no two seasons at a time.
Sometimes he’s tall—sometimes he’s very short—
Now with black hair—now with a flaxen wig—
Sometimes an English accent—then a French—
Then English with a strong provincial ‘burr’.
Once an American, and once a Jew—
But Danish never, taken him how you will!
And strange to say, whate’er his tongue may be,
Whether he’s dark or flaxen—English—French—
Though we’re in Denmark, A.D., ten—six—ten—
He always dresses as King James the First! (pp. 79-30)

Guildenstern cries, “Oh, he is surely mad!,” allowing Gilbert to then satirize pedantic Shakespearean criticisms:

Well, there again
Opinion is divided, Some men hold
That he’s the sanest, far, of all sane men—

These lines also give some support to the theory of Dean B. Parnsworth (“Satire in the Works of W. S. Gilbert,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1950, p. 175) that Gilbert’s main motive in writing the work was to ridicule “diluted tragedy and the staging of Shakespeare as a museum show piece rather than living drama.”
Sam that he's really sane, but shamming mad—
Some that he's really mad, but shamming sane—
Some that he will be mad, some that he was—
Some that he couldn't be. But on the whole
(As far as I can make out what they mean)
The favourite theory's somewhat like this:
Hamlet is idiotically sane
With lucid intervals of lunacy (p. 80).

After witnessing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in 1904, the erudite critic for the Times enthusiastically exclaimed,

Time after time in the deftest way Mr. Gilbert throws the daylight of his wit on to the great play and the actors and the commentators—a daylight which seems to have the power of clearing the atmosphere of much wordy fog and misty enthusiasm, a good light in which to go back to the study of Shakespeare's play. Parody of this kind, which is worlds apart from burlesque, is a form of criticism to which no one could possibly deny the title of creative, and it would be well if we had more of it.

The Times critic also felt that "there is more brilliancy of merely verbal wit in this little play than in anything else of Mr. Gilbert's," and years later, Isaac Goldberg commented, "The parody is more than usually brilliant, full of temptations for punning and satirical gibes. Lines from Shakespeare are twisted into the most whimsical of shapes." However, in the scene in which Gilbert incorporates Shakespeare's "advice to the players," Gilbert provides a fairly orthodox reconstruction of Shakespeare's theory of comic acting which, of course, condemns the use of non-integral or

superfluous stage business to provoke laughter from the audience. At least in this area Gilbert agreed with Shakespeare. Contemporary comments on Gilbert's own performance in the part of Claudius in a 1904 charity performance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern support this theory of comic acting. "Mr. Gilbert was especially good as the King," reported the Morning Post. "He acted the part with the utmost gravity, never betraying the least consciousness of its absurdity. It is too often forgotten that this is the right way to act Mr. Gilbert's pieces." The Era concurred:

The performance might have been an object lesson in the delivery of Gilbertian verse. The 'retired humourist,' as he has called himself, made every point, and made it in the most artistic and judicious manner, never over-emphasizing the jest, but, on the other hand, being so crisp and distinct, so lovingly careful of inflexion and emphasis, that it was delightful to listen to such finished delivery of mock poetic verse.

Unfortunately, the actors in Haste to the Wedding failed to follow this dictum, and this undoubtedly was a factor in its closing less than a month after its opening. "The libretto was not in the author's happiest vein," said Cecil Howard sometime later. "... though perhaps some of W. S. Gilbert's happiest lines were marred by their

9 An 1892 review of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Punch presented a rather unorthodox argument concerning Shakespeare's original purpose in putting the lines in his play: "My theory is, that he did not want Burbage to play the part, but couldn't help himself, and so, out of pure revenge, he introduced this speech in which he makes Burbage himself condemn all his own faults. Later on the Queen describes Hamlet as 'fat and scant of breath,' which certainly was not the author's ideal Prince of Denmark; and this is evidently interpolated as a 'nasty one' for Burbage."

10 "The author himself directed the Savoy opera's production in London, and insisted that the scenery should be realistic and serious, and that the actors should abstain from all jokes and stage tricks of the old repertory. The most absurd, paradoxical and ironical songs had
This performance was probably the most notable of a number of charity revivals of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern during the last twenty years of Gilbert's life in which he took the role of Claudius. Archer wrote a mock serious criticism in the World, stating that the performance "was notable by reason of the promising new actors whom it introduced to us. . . . Altogether, the performance was full of the happiest auguries for the future of the British Drama," and the Westminster Gazette said, "This was not an ordinary matinee; it was a historic occasion to be treated with reverence and remembered in old age." The Observer reported that " . . . Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, Mr. Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Anthony Hope exercised the better part of valor and kept discreetly off the stage . . . " (although their names appear with other notables on the official cast list given on p.164, below). Marion Terry appeared with Gilbert in a 1908 performance.
Gilbert with Lady Colin Campbell in the July 19, 1904 Charity Production of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at the Garrick Theatre (The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, July 30, 1904, p. 843):
William Archer and other critics made similar comments about some of the acting performances in *The Fairy’s Dilemma* in 1904.

Ophelia’s lines that give Hamlet his reprieve in the closing scene of *Rosengrants and Guildenstern* are of obvious significance in any study of Gilbert’s work and philosophy:

There is a certain isle beyond the seas,
Where dwell a cultured race—compared with whom
We are but poor brain-blind barbarians;
"His known as Engle-land. Oh, send him there!
If but the half I’ve heard of them be true,
They will enshrine him on their great good hearts,
And men will rise or sink in good esteem
According as they worship him, or slight him! (p. 88).

The mock glorification of England in these lines foreshadow the philosophy Gilbert will use to build the entire plot of *Utopia Limited*.

The other aspect of the lines—Gilbert’s attack on blind and affected love of Shakespeare’s work—was reiterated by Gilbert in 1903 when he stated that the British public

...go to see Shakespeare’s tragedies because a certain knowledge of his work is properly held to be essential to people of education. People like to be on a sort of nodding acquaintance with his plays; and so they go to see them, because

...to be sung with extreme reserve, correctness and seriousness; the most fantastic situations had to develop with the simplicity of real, everyday things." Camillo Pellissi, *English Drama: The Last Great Phase*, translated by Rowan Williams (London: Macmillan, 1935), pp. 59-60.


to witness a performance of his plays is the easiest and the pleasantest way of acquiring a superficial knowledge of them.  

In 1892 the Daily Telegraph called Rosencrantz and Guildenstern "the best travestie of Hamlet extant," and in studies of burlesques and travesties of Shakespeare performed on the London stage down through the centuries, both R. Farquharson Sharp in 1920\(^1\) and Stanley Wells in 1965\(^2\) were of the opinion that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was, from a literary point of view, the best that they had discovered in the genre. Influential American critics H. T. Graven\(^3\) and Edmund Wilson\(^4\) both complained when it was omitted from a 1947 edition of Gilbert's works, and in 1957 Hesketh Pearson called Gilbert's sketch "one of the best parodies in the language . . . which ought to be in the permanent repertory of the British theatre.\(^5\)

When it was resurrected for lunch-time presentation by a professional troupe at the Open Space Theatre in London in the spring of 1973,

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favourable reviews of the text appeared in the Observer\textsuperscript{18}, the Daily Telegraph\textsuperscript{19}, and the Sunday Times\textsuperscript{20}. The attack on the "impropriety" of the work by Arthur Quiller-Couch and others is hardly a question worth considering in these years of theatrical licence when even serious legitimate productions of Shakespeare are so revolutionary in concept that they undoubtedly would be regarded as insincere parodies by earlier generations. But perhaps the best answer to the charge of impropriety in Gilbert's sketch came from St. J. H. in the Outlook in 1904:

Some people, I know, consider travesties of Shakespeare almost blasphemous. Having myself perpetrated a dramatic sequel to 'Hamlet' in which a new wing is added to Elsinore, because the older apartments are monopolised by ghosts, I cannot take so high a tone, and I found 'Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern' sufficiently amusing.

The same humorous defense can undoubtedly be given to the Hamlet and Ophelia satire in The Mountebanks. Of course, even if one omitted the Shakespeare material from this libretto, the work could still stand on its own because of other valuable assets. In fact, Pearson has reckoned The Mountebanks "quite as good as any except the best of [Gilbert's] Savoy pieces" and has noted that "it was more successful than any opera composed by Sullivan apart from Gilbert..."\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18} Carl Wildman, "The Rings of Truth," The Observer, March 11, 1973, p. 34.
Although not a success in the best tradition of the Savoy, its 229 performances in London in 1892 was, indeed, a far greater number than that achieved by Gilbert and Sullivan works, The Mikado (64), Trial by Jury (175), The Sorcerer (175), and The Grand Duke (123), and the run was comparable to that of Princess Ida (246) and Utopia Limited (245). In fact, many later critics have looked to The Mountebanks as proof that Gilbert did not need Sullivan’s music to produce a successful libretto.22

It is also informative to look briefly again at the impact the original production had on the opening-night reviewers. The Pall Mall Gazette called it "one of the most brilliant comic operas ever set before the public," and the dramatic critics of the Morning Post, Globe and Traveller, Evening News and Post, and the St. James’s Gazette all expressed a belief that it was as good as any libretto Gilbert had ever written. The Era was so enthralled that it proclaimed that The Mountebanks promised to be "one of the greatest triumphs of modern comic opera," an opinion shared by sister theatrical journals, the Entr’acte and the Stage. The society paper, Vanity Fair, stated, "... we shall be genuinely surprised if it does not rival in popularity anything of Mr. Gilbert’s that has gone before it," and women’s journals, the Gentlewoman and the Lady agreed with the Queen

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that it would "bear favourable comparison" with any of the Savoy operas. Even Bernard Shaw, who we have already noted expressed some disappointment with it, admitted that the work "would come out ahead of many of its rivals in point of fun." Looking back over the 1891-92 theatrical season, John Huntly McCarthy in the Players felt that it had been "one of the very few things that it is pleasant to remember in the year's work," an opinion echoed by the critic of the Saturday Review in his end of season comments. Although it failed in New York in 1893, George O'Dell in his Annals of the New York Stage remembered it as "a delightful entertainment."

Even if the structure of the work was top-heavy with characters and too involved in its plot mechanisms, the early reviews were quick to acknowledge that Gilbert's verbal wit had lost little of its dexterity despite the absence of the inspiration of Sullivan's music.


24 "The Theatrical Year," The Saturday Review, August 6, 1892, p. 167.


26 Though the plot may not be original, . . . no one can find fault . . . with the polished verse and brilliant wit with which he tells it" (the Stage); " . . . the dialogue is . . . crammed with quips of the true Gilbertian ring . . . " (the Times); " . . . the brain almost reels before the extravagant way in which paradox after paradox is propounded in that quasi-philosophical spirit which is Mr. Gilbert's own" (the Lady); " . . . the libretto literally sparkles with odd expressions, quaint epigrams, and droll perversion of ordinary ideas, and the lyrics display the author's wanted facility in the invention of extraordinary rhymes. Some of them are literally startling in their eccentric unexpectedness . . . " (the Era).
The Daily Telegraph remarked of the printed libretto issued to the first-night critics:

The task of picking out plums from such a Gilbertian pudding as 'The Mountebanks' is not an easy one. There are more undeniable claimants than a reasonable exercise of choice can embrace, and the only way of obtaining a fair idea of the book is to read it from cover to cover. Every page is crowded with striking examples of the author.

Among the lyrics, the early critics especially enjoyed the rollicking "High Jerry Ho!" anthem of the bandits, although the obviously stirring music probably influenced their praise more than Gilbert's words (pp. 351-362). The bandits, themselves, are a valuable asset to the engaging humour of the libretto—both in their cowardice as outlaws and their later discomfort as celibate monks:

We know no song / That fits a throng
Of friars sung and greasy;
Our worldly lays / Of bygone days
Are much too free and easy;
Though suited to / A bandit crew
They're not at all monastic,
And can't be sung / By sober tongue
Of mild ecclesiastic (p. 395).

As might be expected of Gilbert's bandits, they (like Hamlet in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) are not taken very seriously by those whom they wish to impress, and their lack of ferocity presents Gilbert with a number of opportunities for witty comment. For instance, the Tamorras are such wretchedly inept bandits that even "an old market woman on a mule" passes them with "silent contempt" when they attempt to rob her, forcing Arrostino, their leader, to admit, "This growing habit of passing us in silent contempt strikes at the very root of our little earnings" (p. 360).
the monastery where they hope to trap the Duke and Duchess only after the monks are fast asleep (p. 361). Certain lines of the bandit troop are amusing as examples of Gilbert’s topsy-turvy use of formal legal rhetoric for outlaw characters, including bandit Risotto’s courteous lines of resolution to keep Minestra as his wife even though she has been transformed into an old woman:

I---I trust that, notwithstanding this—this modification of the implied terms of our agreement—there are many years of—of—yes, bliss—in store for us.... I shall have much pleasure in—in showing you every attention compatible with the—the respect due to a lady of your advanced years, my—my pet! (p. 384).

It is also true that the Tamorras may have a covert significance that is not actually stated in the libretto. Their very name does not suggest Sicily as much as it does Ireland, and when they sing,

Five hundred years ago,
Our ancestor’s next door neighbour
Had a mother whose brother,
By some means or other,
Incurrd three months’ hard labour.

This wrongful sentence, though,
On his head he contrived to do it,
As it tarnished our scutcheon,
Which ne’er had a touch on,
We swore mankind should rue it! (p. 356),

one is reminded of the secret societies of Ireland with their assertions of unjust English treatment down through the centuries. Gilbert’s basically conservative nature would impel him to ridicule the political philosophy of such Irish secret societies and the rationale for their actions. One is also reminded that seven years later Shaw based his comedy, Captain Brassbound’s Conversion, on a
similar bandits-seeking-revenge situation that included the kidnapping of an important official.

Among the other characters in *The Mountebanks*, ugly Ultrice and vain Teresa make perfect feminine foils, and their stinging, cattish repartee throughout the first act constitutes one of the verbal highlights of the work and gives a striking example of Gilbert's cynically appreciative attitude toward the cutting wit of the female of the species. When Ultrice begins her imaginary reign as duchess, Teresa is on hand with typically sarcastic commentary on Ultrice's bearing:

\begin{quote}
I always thought / A lady ought
To walk with grace / And not grimace;
But that, it's very evident, is not the case...
It would appear / They flout and fleer,
Stick up their nose, / Turn in their toes—
You're teaching me gratuitously, I suppose? ...
If that is what is called Court etiquette, it's very plain
The ways of high society I never shall attain;
It seems you must be ill-bred, and as awkward as can be,
Which is A B C to you, my love, but difficult for me
(pp. 368-369).
\end{quote}

As far as the sentimentality and tragic aspect of the second act rivalry between these two characters are concerned, an argument could be made that Gilbert was only satirizing melodramatic heroines here (as he does in *The Grand Duke*); indeed, many of Teresa's more rational comments humorously indicate her realization of the trite, idiotic aspect of her forlorn utterings, and a parody of Ophelia's fate in *Hamlet* is at least partly intended. It is also true that Teresa is one of the few characters in Gilbert's works who undergoes a permanent change of character.
Bartolo, the philosophic clown, was called "one of the funniest personages to be found in comic opera," by the critic for the Graphic, and his partner, Nita, was described by the Standard as "the gayest and brightest of girls," and J.J. McC. in the Sunday Sun devoted almost his entire review to unbridled praise of Miss Aida Jenore who played Nita. The antics and dialogue of this couple as the clockwork dolls were considered "the central attraction of the piece" by the Times, and A. B. Walkley in the Speaker proclaimed, "Even the Savoy, in its best days, has shown us nothing so mirth-provoking as this droll pair at the Lyric." The social value of their cynical ditty, "Put a Penny in the Slot" (p. 387), has already been mentioned in this study, and their dialogue on their predicament as automata is delicious:

Bart. This is a very uncomfortable state of things.

Nita. Very. How do you find your clockwork this evening?


Bart. Nita, you surprise and shock me. Nita. Mechanically speaking, I mean. Bart. Oh, I take you. This condition of existence is rather degrading. We are common clockwork, I believe? Nita. Mere Geneva. The cheapest thing in the trade. Bart. So I was given to understand. Nita. It might have been worse. We might have been Waterbury, with interchangeable insides. Bart. That's true. But when I remember the delicately-beautiful apparatus with which I was filled from head to foot—and which never, never ticked—when I contemplate the exquisite adjustment of means to end—which never, never wanted oiling—I am shocked to think that I am reduced to a mere mechanical complication of arbors, pallets, wheels, mainsprings, and escapements!" (pp. 387-388).

This speech and similar comments by Bartolo on the same subject at
other points in the libretto reflect Gilbert's own feeling about the physiological perfection of natural life. In an interview with William Archer at the turn of the century, Gilbert confided,

I don't think I ever willingly killed a black-beetle. It is not humanity on my part... But the mechanism of life is so wonderful that I shrink from stopping its action. To tread on a black-beetle would be to me like crushing a watch of complex and exquisite workmanship.

and his friend, George Fneydell Bancroft, once revealed that "... to Gilbert the shooting or killing of anything in any form of sport was anathema." During the last twenty years of his life, Gilbert had a wild assortment of pets—everything from dogs and cats to donkeys and lemur— and their life was apparently quite Utopian on Gilbert's Grim Dyke estate. He also had a great fondness for children, and although neither animals nor children play an obvious part in any of his later works, many of his adult characters seem to be nothing more than "enlarged children" in their language, naiveté, and desires, and his observations of animals is apparent in such lyrics as Dame Cortlandt's song of rage in His Excellency (reproduced above, p. 81).

27 "What! I become a doll—a damned doll? A mere conglomerate of whizzing wheels, salad of springs and botch-potch of escapements? Exchange all the beautiful things I've got inside here for a handful of common clockwork? It's a large order. Perish the thought and be who uttered it!" (p. 374).


29 George Fneydell Bancroft, Stage and Bar (London: Faber, 1939), p. 103.

The basic concern of the libretto of The Mountebanks is impersonation. This is a recurring theme in Gilbert's later work. Similar situations of characters impersonating types of people quite foreign to themselves occur in The Grand Duke, and impersonation is an important factor in Haste to the Wedding and His Excellency. Gilbert's concern with this problem reveals his inner feelings about the artificiality of most human situations and the basic hypocrisy of man. Alfredo in The Mountebanks says,

To prevent Teresa joining the Tamorras with the other girls, I was mean enough to bribe a farm girl to lock her in her room! I'm disgusted with myself for having stooped to such a contemptible act. Still, I'm very glad I did it. (p. 363).

Arrestino, the leader of the Tamorras, tells his bandits concerning their transformation into sinless monks,

It is true that, having regard to our present condition, we are bound to receive our distinguished guests with scrupulous hospitality, but an hour will soon pass, and we shall then, unhappily, lapse once more into the deplorable condition of being able to avail ourselves of any small change their Highnesses may happen to have about them. It is dreadful to think of, but that's what we shall be in about an hour. (p. 393).

Later he tells "Duke" Alfredo,

It's altogether a curious state of things. I'm such a creature of habit that I find it difficult to remember that I am no longer a rasclepole. For instance, I see you have a watch. Perhaps it is a valuable watch. Don't tell me it is; I would rather not know. How, you can't imagine how difficult I find it not to take that watch. Oh, I know it's wrong; but then I always knew that. (p. 394).

Gilbert's themes of impersonation also allude to man's tendency to daydream and constantly yearn (usually in vain) to change his particular role in life. Other instances of miraculous transformation in
Gilbert's later work occurs in *The Fairy's Dilemma* and, to some extent, in *Fallen Fairies*. Drastic changes in the situation of the characters also occur in *His Excellency* and *The Grand Duke*, and a whole society undergoes reformation in *Storia Limited*. Gilbert's basic conservative belief in the status quo is revealed in the fact that almost none of the changes in these works bring lasting happiness to the characters involved.

A revival of *The Mountebanks* was enthusiastically (but vainly) suggested in Edwardian days by William Archer and Luther Munday, who was the director of the Lyric Theatre in 1892 when it was originally produced. In more recent times, *The Mountebanks* was called "an admirable libretto" in the 1954 edition of the revered *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and "vintage Gilbert" by Gervase Hughes in his *Composers of Operetta* in 1962. It had the distinction of becoming the first non-Sullivan libretto by Gilbert.

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ever produced on gramophone records by a professional company after a successful revival in Washington, D.C., in 1966.  

There have not been so many later critical advocates for Gilbert’s other libretto of 1892, Haste to the Wedding. However, most early and later critics have agreed that the dialogue and lyrics for Haste to the Wedding are very well done even if the work had no moral purpose and the farcical aspects of the story did not lend themselves well to Gilbertian musical treatment. Such early critical luminaries as J. T. Grein in Life, A. B. Walkley in The Speaker, and Frederick Wedmore in the Academy wrote favourably of the work as did the critics for the popular Daily Telegraph, Sunday Times, and the Observer. The critic for the London said,

... I am afraid that Haste to the Wedding will never achieve popularity. This is all the more to be regretted as it contains some of Mr. Gilbert’s most grotesque characterizations, and one of two good examples of his facile and indimitable verse.

Among these “grotesque characterizations” are undoubtedly the jealous cuckold, Major-General Bunthunder with his song on the Order of the Bath (p. 173) and the “highly-strung sensitive” Duke of Turniptopshire. “The Duke, although borrowed from the French, is yet essentially

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THE SPEAKER.

[August 6, 1852.]

THE DRAMA.
"HARVEY: TO THE WEDDING" — "THE BRONZE MELLOE"—"THE LIGHTS OF ITHO." 

It is well to confess such own faults, and to anticipate the storms of good-natured friends. I have always been proud to inopportunness. At a very tender age what struck me as the biggest joke of the name Was and Was caused an explosion of laughter at morning prayers, and a part of my frame to be for days almost quite tender than my age. Since then I have been laughed at the New Humour. But my worst indulgence of this kind, it seems was on the last night of HARVEY TO THE WEDDING. Though I was amused by the piece, the pit and gallery gave unaccountable tokens that they were not, and next morning I read in a newspaper that their displeasure was provoked by the unseemly laughter of some of the occupants of the stalls. Then I knew that men more my age failing had got the better of me. I gathered that the musical version by Moses, W. Gilbert and George Grossmith of Labiche's "Champagne de Jule's" ought to have been received, like the music of orchestra persons, in solemn silence. Consequently I promised to amend my ways. I will be in no need of Stolnic's advice to his sister Pauline.  "Interregnum" I promise to amend my ways. I will be in no need of Stolnic's advice to his sister Pauline.  "Interregnum" I promise to amend my ways. I will be in no need of Stolnic's advice to his sister Pauline.

On the other hand, there is another French master, and Stolnic's, which says, "I'll not give you a piece of advice, and reminding that, I think, I will diminish my apology for having been amused by HARVEY TO THE WEDDING. I read about all the objections that have been urged against the piece. It is too long by an act. Some of the players do not know their best to conceal the terrors of their parts. Mr. Grossmith's music might be better. But what of that? If there is not some humdrum farcical fan fair, when all the audience have been made to titter, in any scene of modern farces you like to name, I will cut out the "Mr. Woodhouse Tapping Home to Mrs. Louisa Bentonshor." Nothing but this is, of course, right Louis and the one who cannot enjoy Labiche ought to see his doctrine fulfilled, and take a long break. But I am a poet, and I am a poet. The fun is at right Gilbert and there are, I know, many excellent citizens and actresses, excellent people, who sit at gun's mouth and squander the trousers of the music, and they are always impious to Gilbertian humour. They think it childish, and, in a sense, they are quite right. Here, for instance, is the opening of the second Act of HARVEY TO THE WEDDING:

Duke or Tyrannous Duke? Abolished! Magnificent! What gorgeous decorations! What red cloth screen! What red velvet! What have we here? (Looks through ceiling.) A most luxurious red solution! Seventeen-screen a head, if I ever get a penny! I should throw myself (looking around) there's no one coming—what wonder if I might venture to take just one bit? I will. (Take a bit from table and eat it.)

Harrington (aside): Well, Duke.  

Duke: (Aside): Mayhem is in accordance, with his moral fall; I'm delirious to see you. 

Harrington: (aside): You've been pistling the house again! Now that, too bad!
a Gilbertian creation," noted "Cherubino" in the London Figaro.

He steals tartlets on the sly, and regrets that he was not born amongst the middle classes... The best laugh of the evening was, however, gained by the elderly retainer, who being bullied by the Duke, cheerfully exclaims: 'I have known your Grace, man and boy, these eighteen months, and I have never told you a lie yet.'

Indeed, if the first and last acts had been up to the standard of the second act in which the Duke appears and Woodpecker Tapping is forced to rub elbows with the aristocracy and impersonate an eccentric Italian falsetto in his attempt to gain the infamous hat, Hasfe to the Wedding would be a brilliant example of Gilbert's particular art. The confusion of Tapping's identity in this scene presents a very amusing situation and some delightfully comic dialogue:

Wool. I—I did myself the honour of writing a note to your ladyship—March. A most delightful note, and one that I shall always carry about me as long as I live. Wool. Thank you. (Aside.) She's very polite. (Loud.) In that note I ventured to ask you to grant me a slight favour. March. Oh, of course—how extremely dull of me! Well, you shall have what you want. Wool. Really? March. Really—though you're a bold bad man! (Turns to bouquet.) Wool. At last, at last the hat is mine! I wonder how much she wants for it. Shall I beat her down? No, no, you can't beat down a marchioness! She shall have her price. March. (Giving him a flower.) There is the flower you asked for—bold bad man! Wool. A flower? There's some mistake—I want an article of attire. March. An article of attire? Wool. Yes; didn't you get my note? March. Yes, here it is. (Taking note from her bosom.) 'My terms are—a flower from your bouquet—Mismani.' Wool. Mismani? What's that? March. Rush, eccentric creature—my guests are arriving... (pp. 167-168).

The act ends on a note of wild hilarity as the wedding party is found devouring a fancy luncheon the Marchioness had prepared for her aristocratic concert guests. Later Tapping recounts,
From the Marchioness's, / Whom nobody guesses
    To be of the rank of a peeress or peer—
In courtesy lacking / They sent us all packing,
    And each with a very fine flea in his ear.
Those Johnnies and Jackies / The overfed laddies
They 'went for' the bride and her guests with a rush—
The combat was heated / But we were defeated
By insolent armies of powder and plush (p. 174).

However, the most important concept in the libretto as far
as study of Gilbert's general work is concerned is found in the
"kissing cousins" relationship between Maria and Foodle. The kisses
exchanged between these two are deeply resented by Maria's fiancé,
Tapping, who queries, "But why withhold kisses from me / Which are
freely accorded to Foodle?" (p. 152). Later dialogue between
Tapping, Captain Bapp, and Leonora is amusingly illuminating on this
subject:

      Mood, . . . The moral of this is—if you will walk out in
Hyde Park with surreptitious captains in the Army—Lee.
Sir, you are in error. This gentleman is my cousin. We
were brought up together. Mood. Oh, I see; he's your Foodle.
Bapp. This lady's what, sir? Mood. Her Foodle. I say you're
her Foodle. You don't know what I mean; but you may depend
on it you are" (p. 153).

The "Foodle" concept in Haste to the Wedding is repeated in a number
of Gilbert's later works (see discussion, p. 153 below) and may have
been the inspiration for Oscar Wilde's concept of "Bunburyism" in
The Importance of Being Earnest three years later.

Despite the obvious plot inadequacies in Haste to the Wedding,
Gilbert's attempt to turn a successful farce into a play with music
foreshadows Where's Charley, Frank Loesser's highly successful 1943
American musical version of the Brandon Thomas farce, Callboy's Aunt
(which, prophetically, appeared in the same year as Haste to the Wedding).
The "Foodle" song from 
Haste to the Wedding (p. 152): 

SOLO.

Maria is simple and chaste—
She's pretty and tender and modest—
But on one or two matters of taste
Her views are distinctly the oddest.
Her virtue is something sublime—
No kissing—on that there's a stopper—
When I try, she says, "All in good time—"
At present it's highly improper."

Such virtue harnessed I call,
To complain were the act of a fool—
She's allowed to kiss no one at all.
But her cousin—her cousin—young Foodle—

Now a maiden could never offend:
By embracing her father or brother;
But I never could quite comprehend
Why cousins should kiss one another.
Of course it's an innocent whim—
Beneath is no mischief lies hidden.
But why is that given to him
Which to me is so strictly forbidden?

It's as innocent as it can be;
He's a kind of performing French poodle.
But why withhold kisses from me
Which are freely accorded to Foodle?
In its mistaken identities, wild chases, scenes in milliner's shops, and last act episode with everyone being carted off to jail, \textit{Haste to the Wedding} bears comparison with another of the most popular big American musicals, \textit{Hello, Dolly}. Consequently, it is interesting to note the reaction of a writer in the little-known journal, \textit{Dramatic Opinions}, when \textit{Haste to the Wedding} first appeared:

The vaudeville\textsuperscript{37} (as distinguished from the American variety play) is—\textit{at any rate as a three-act production}—quite new on the English stage; and \textit{Haste to the Wedding} is an excellent model from which to start.

At any rate, two influential twentieth century American critics, Edmund Wilson\textsuperscript{38} and Laurence Ludwig\textsuperscript{39}, have spoken favourably of it, and Gilbert biographer Pearson has called it

\ldots an amusing trifle, which makes the reader wish that Gilbert had tapped more French farces for his plots. No longer having to supply Sullivan with sentimental songs, he abandoned himself to the mood of 'Ele,' and there is an engaging air of imbecility about the whole piece.\textsuperscript{40}

Some writers have also looked at \textit{Utopia Limited} as being out of the usual pattern of Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera—for several reasons. In an article on \textit{Utopia Limited} in 1932, Stamford Brooke suggested that it was not "light opera at all," but "a very high class and first rate musical comedy.\textsuperscript{41}"

Concerning the splendor and

\textsuperscript{37}According to John Russell Taylor in \textit{The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre} (1966), "vaudeville" in the nineteenth century meant "a very lightweight type of play with musical interludes."

\textsuperscript{38}Wilson, p. 359.


\textsuperscript{40}Pearson, \textit{Gilbert: His Life . . . .}, p. 159.

apparent seriousness of the entry of the Court in the Royal drawing-room sequence in Utopia Limited (pp. 441–442), Reginald Allen has written that "herein Gilbert unwittingly foreshadowed a device that has since become a staple of musical comedy and revue technique—the costume spectacle, in which humor, romance, and even plot (if any) temporarily give way to an eye-filling pageant against a background of music."42 Said Bernard Shaw in his opening-night review in the World:

As to the 'Drawing Room,' with debutantes, cards, trains, and presentations all complete, and the little innovation of a cup of tea and a plate of cheap biscuits, I cannot vouch for its verisimilitude, as I have never, strange as it may appear, been present at a Drawing Room; but that is exactly why I enjoyed it, and why the majority of the Savoyards will share my appreciation of it.

Appropriately, then, a classic twentieth-century example of this type of staging is the Ascot and Grand Ball scenes in My Fair Lady, the musical version of Shaw's Pygmalion. Certainly, the lavish costuming and scenery of the Utopia Limited production—much of it dictated by the plot of the libretto itself—was far beyond the simplicities of the court in Trial by Jury or the ship's deck in H.M.S. Pinafore, the two works that had given the most impetus to the success of Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera in the seventies.

On the other hand, Jane Stedman, commenting on the very loose plot element in the libretto, said that Utopia Limited "may be

considered as the first large-scale revue, based on political skits, a theory that is somewhat corroborated by a review that appeared in the Sun two days after Utopia Limited opened in 1893:

It is the moment of triumph for the variety stage, and the Savoy authorities have taken advantage of this moment, and will demonstrate to the 'varieties' that a high-class theatre can be a very dangerous rival if worked in the proper way. We are asked to look for skits and satires and hits at current events in a Gilbertian opera, but hitherto these sly digs, these skits and parodies, have been confined to the action of the play itself. . . . Audiences will cheer the political satirical element of Mr. Gilbert's latest book, sandwiched in so cleverly between a song and a dance in the most approved music-hall fashion.

Allardyce Nicoll has written that such American political musical comedies of the nineteen-thirties as Of Thee I Sing, As Thousands Cheer, and Let 'Em Eat Cake were "a revival of musical satire which owed not a trifle to Gilbert's example," and one could add Morrello, the nineteen-fifties musical biography of a former mayor of New York to this list, as well as How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying, a musical that takes a playfully cynical look at the world of big business.

With this last example in mind, it is interesting to note that David Cecil has called Utopia Limited Gilbert's attack on "the new capitalism," and it is true without doubt that the most heralded

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43 Stedman, p. 388, footnote.
Goldbury's description of the workings of a limited company

from Utopia Limited (pp. 434-435):

Some seven men form an Association
(If possible, all Peers and Baronesse)
They start off with a public declaration
To what extent they mean to pay their debts
That's called their Capital. If they are wary
They will not quote it at a sum immense.
The figure's immaterial—it may vary
From eighteen million down to eighteenpence.
I should put it rather low:
The good sense of doing so
Will be evident at once to any debtor
What it's left to you to say
What amount you mean to pay.
Why, the lower you can put it at, the better.
Chorus.
When it's left to you to say, etc.
They then proceed to trade with all who'll trust 'em,
Quite irrespective of their capital.
(It's shady, but it's sanctified by custom);
Bank, Railway, Loan, or Panama Canal.
You can't embark on trading too tremendously
It's strictly fair and based on common sense.
If you succeed, your profits are stupendous
And if you fail, you go to your eighteenthpence.
Make the money, Jones spin!
For you only stand to win.
And you'll never with dishonour be visited
For nobody can know;
To a million or so.
To what extent your capital's committed?
No, nobody can know, etc.
Chorus.
If you come to grief, and creditors are craving;
(For nothing that is planned by mortal head
Is certain in this Vale of Sorrow—saving)
That one's Liability is Limited.
Do you suppose that signifies perilous?
If so you're but a momentary dunce.
You merely file a Winding-up Petition,
And start another Company at once,
Though a Rothschild you may be
In your own capacity,
So you start another company to-morrow!
The Westminster Gazette in its opening-night review noted, "... all the bitter sarcastic jokes concerning the state of England and our company law have point as well as painful truth," and "Scrupator" in the radical Truth said.

Time was when, like the Utopians of his present story, [Gilbert] wasted his great talents on 'dreams of nothingness.' Satirising Mr. Oscar Wilde, for instance, was pure waste of time, particularly as the barb had little chance of penetrating the hide. The Japs and the Beefeaters, the police and the pirates, were likewise poor quarry for such a huntsman, while, even in so popular a piece as 'Pinafore,' there was something of the breaking of a butterfly on the wheel about the satire lavished upon the 'First Lord.' But in 'Utopia (Limited),' whatever its defects may be, Mr. Gilbert, at any rate, deals with matters interesting to people of the present day.

In some ways, in fact, the satire on modern business methods in Utopia Limited is remarkably fresh even today. For instance, when Scaphio and Phantis approach Paramount to complain about certain excesses of the reformers, the King employs the bureaucratic rhetoric of delay that is still quite current:

Really, gentlemen, this is very irregular. If you will be so good as to formulate a detailed list of your grievances in writing, addressed to the Secretary of Utopia (Limited), they will be laid before the Board, in due course, at their next monthly meeting (p. 443).

When the two young Princesses boast,

To diagnose / Our modest pose
The Kodaks do their best;
If evidence you would possess
Of what is maiden bashfulness,
You only need a button press—
And we do all the rest (p. 415),

the allusion is to the Kodak company's early slogan for their product, "You press the button, we do the rest." In The Fairy's

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Dilemma: modern business style is satirized by Gilbert when Fairy Rosebud asks Demon Alcohol, "Did you ever see the Revolving Realms of Radiant Rehabilitation—telegraphic address: 'Realms'?") At the end of that play, Rosebud announces that she is giving up her pantomime fairyhood and "going into the typewriting" (p. 42). In The Mountebanks, bandit Risotto goes into a village "disguised as a stockbroker" (p. 356).

However, the satire in Utopia Limited is not confined to an attack on modern business methods. It truly attempts to embrace the whole structure of Victorian society as the long first act finale (pp. 430-436) with its introduction of the seven Flowers of Progress indicates. Despite the scenic fireworks Gilbert wrote into the libretto of Utopia Limited to add to its production value, it is still the literary fireworks that cause the greatest explosion. The fact that Gilbert's pungent satire overpowered everything else about the original production and that Utopia Limited was essentially an achievement (or failure) of Gilbert rather than of Sullivan is evidenced by the confession of E.A.B. in the Musical Standard:

This being a musical paper it were my bounden duty, doubtless, to consider the music of Sir Arthur Sullivan in 'Utopia (Limited)' as of paramount interest, but, for some reason or other, although I had tried to do so I have failed ignominously. The music, in fact, of the whole play, in reality takes such a subordinate position that it is impossible to look back upon one's impressions and distinctly state whether it is melodious and original or not.47

47 There has been disagreement among critics about the quality of Sullivan's music for Utopia Limited. Shaw expressed admiration for it in the World (see also Gervase Hughes, "Bernard Shaw and 'Utopia Limited,'" GBS Journal, Sept. 1965, pp. 300-301), but Shaw's delight in Gilbert's social and political satire might have influenced a positive attitude toward the music as well. On the subject of
Gilbert considered it third among his favourite Savoy operas (he ranked only The Yeomen of the Guard and Ruddigore above it), and Allardyce Nicoll has repeatedly expressed his belief that Utopia Limited is the *opus magnum*—the final, culminating achievement—of Gilbert’s satire and general philosophy of life:

... the spirit animating the whole series of [Gilbert and Sullivan] extravaganzas finds its symbol in ... *Utopia Limited*, in which, like Aristophanes, [Gilbert] looked upon humanity as a whole and let loose upon it his lyric barbs and the sparkle of his wit.49

Certainly, *Utopia Limited* is easily the work most discussed by later critics of all of Gilbert’s works under study here, and it has been called the most Shawian of all of Gilbert’s works by many later writers. The affinity between *Utopia Limited* and Shaw’s later works is seen not only in the general treatment of subject matter but also in specific ideas, such as the incorporation of the bandits into "Mendota Limited" in *Man and Superman* and the quips about the puritanical

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Sullivan’s music for *Utopia Limited* are these articles from *G&S Journal*:


propriety of Eliza Doolittle’s lower class morality in Pygmalion
which strikingly resemble King Paramount’s beast in Utopia Limited.

No peccress at our Drawing-Room before the Presence passes
Who wouldn’t be accepted by the lower-middle classes.
Each shady dame, whatever be her rank, is bowed out neatly
(p. 440).

Shaw, himself, said in his review of Utopia Limited that the libretto
exhibited Gilbert’s “qualities without his faults” and that “it’s
main idea, the Anglicisation of Utopia by a people boundlessly
credulous as to the superiority of the English race, is as certain
of popularity as that reference to England by the Gravedigger in
Hamlet, which never yet failed to make the house laugh.” The criticism
that Utopia Limited lacked a strong plot structure did not bother
Shaw. “There is, happily, no plot . . . ” he chirped, and the
“unification of character in the Imported Flowers of Progress” with their resulting expository speeches was certainly a device Shaw
would employ in many of his didactic stage works. “What need is
there for a plot in such a work?” queried E.A.B. in the Musical Standard.

There is the man who bothers himself about the narrative
thread in Swift’s ‘Gulliver’s Travels’ or Sterne’s ‘Tristram
Shandy’ and ‘Sentimental Journey’? In these satires, in
fact, one resents the intrusion of a plot as an impertinence,
and Mr. Gilbert’s is really based on the same lines.

Of course, charges from earlier critics that Utopia Limited is “plotless”

50 Ernest Short, Sixty Years of Theatre (London: Eyre and
MUSIC.

Pleasant it is to see Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan working together again full brotherly. They should be on the best of terms; for henceforth Sir Arthur can always say, "Any other librettist would do just as well: look at Haddon Hall"; whilst Mr. Gilbert can retort, "Any other musician would do just as well: look at The Mountebanks." Thus have the years of divorce cemented the happy reunion at which we all assisted last Saturday. The twain still excite the expectations of the public as much as ever. How Trial by Jury and The Sorcerer surprised the public, and how Pinafore, The Pirates, and Patience kept the sensation fresh, can be guessed by the youngest man from the fact that the announcement of a new Savoy opera always throws the middle-aged playgoer into the attitude of expecting a surprise. As for me, I avoid this attitude, if only because it is a middle-aged one. Still, I expect a good deal that I could not have hoped for when I first made the acquaintance of comic opera.

Those who are old enough to compare the Savoy performances with those of the dark ages, taking into account the pictorial treatment of the fabrics and colours on the stage, the cultivation and intelligence of the choristers, the quality of the orchestra, and the degree of artistic good breeding, so to speak, expected from the principals, best know how great an advance has been made by Mr. D'Oyly Carte in organizing and harmonizing that complex co-operation of artists of all kinds which goes to make up a satisfactory operatic performance. Long before the run of a successful Savoy opera is over Sir Arthur's melodies are dinned into our ears by every promenade band and street piano, and Mr. Gilbert's allusions are quoted threadbare by conversationalists and journalists; but the whole work as presented to eye and ear on the Savoy stage remains unhackneyed. Further, no theatre in London is more independent of its executives whose personal popularity enables them to demand ruinous salaries; and this is not the least advantageous of the differences between opera as the work of a combination of manager, poet, and musician, all three making the most of one another in their concerted striving for the common object of a completely successful representation, and opera as the result of a speculator picking up a libretto, getting somebody with a name to set it to music, ordering a few tradesmen to "mount" it, and then, with a stage manager hired here, an acting manager hired there, and a popular prima donna, comedian and serpentine dancer stuck in at reckless salaries like almonds into an underdone dumpling, engaging some empty theatre on the chance of the affair "catching on." If any capitalist wants to succeed with comic opera, I can assure him that he can do so with tolerable security if he only possesses the requisite managerial ability. There is no lack of artistic material for him to set to work on; London is overstocked with artistic talent ready to the hand of any one who can re-
PLANTAIN, Oct. 11, 1889.

THE WORLD.

THE SONG OF THE SLEIGH.

I have just heard a song of the sleigh which I think is worth repeating. It is sung by the Rev. Mr. Smith, a clergyman of the Church of England, and is said to have been written by himself. It is a simple, sweet, and touching melody, and is very well adapted for the winter season, when the snow is falling and the nights are long.

THE SONG OF THE SLEIGH

Sleigh bells jingling, sleigh bells ringing, sleigh bells all through the morning.

Sleigh bells jingling, sleigh bells swinging, sleigh bells all through the evening.

Sleigh bells jingling, sleigh bells swinging, sleigh bells all through the night.

Sleigh bells jingling, sleigh bells swinging, sleigh bells all through the day.

Sleigh bells jingling, sleigh bells swinging, sleigh bells all through the year.

The song is accompanied by a simple instrumental arrangement, played by Mr. Smith on the organ, and is very effective.

THE MUSIC

The music is very pleasant and harmonic, and is well adapted to the words. It is written in the key of G major, and is in four parts—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.

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Sleigh bells jingling, sleigh bells swingi...
are hopelessly dated and almost amusing when one compares *Utopia Limited* to some recent popular hard rock, Anthony Newley, and even "conventional" Broadway musicals, not to mention the seemingly structureless straight plays of format innovators such as Harold Pinter and John Osborne. It is also true that although many critics have attacked *Utopia Limited* for being a cumbersome mass of comic antics and unrelated satiric hits at Victorian England, at least two writers have taken a *decidedly* different view. In 1928, H. T. E. Perry, who looked upon Gilbert as anti-radical and strongly Victorian, felt that *Utopia Limited* was the work wherein "his creed is not obscured by unessentials." This concept has recently been more fully explored in an important essay by Thomas Head in which the writer attempts to show that all the events in the libretto—no matter how isolated they may seem from the general satire on the Flowers of Progress—support an underlying anti-Utopian philosophy that basically can be expressed in these terms:

... man's life, since it is bounded by time, lacks any ultimate significance. ... Man in such a world cannot afford to have pretensions and delusions about his own nature. If his life is to have any meaning beyond the joke, he must realize his limitations and live as best he can within them.

If there is fault to be found in the plot elements of *Utopia Limited*, a good argument can be made that the linguistic aspect of

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Gilbert's libretto makes up for it. "The plot of 'Utopia' is of a very slender character," said the opening-night review in the Queen, "but the dialogue is written with so much point and humour, that the interest of the listener is steadily maintained." Few early critics disagreed with this statement, and in reviewing a 1957 professional New York revival of Utopia Limited, Brooks Atkinson of the New York Times commented on "the meticulous, staccato perfection of Gilbert's lyrics" and said that in this respect 'Utopia Limited' is as expert as its predecessors. Certainly, the wit and execution of the lyrics for Utopia Limited's long first act finale are excellent, and there are other passages that rival not only the biting sarcasm of Shaw but also the verbal dexterity of Wilde:

England has made herself what she is because, in that favoured land, everyone has to think for himself. Here we have no need to think, because our monarch anticipates all our wants, and our political opinions are formed for us by the journals to which we subscribe. Oh, think how much more brilliant this dialogue would have been, if we had been accustomed to exercise our reflective powers! They say that in England the conversation of the very meanest is a confection of impromptu epigram! (p. 408).

Then there are the intricate vocabulary and rhyming pattern of such lines as these:

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and the pleasant harmony of these:

Eagle high in cloudland soaring—
   Sparrow twittering on a reed—
Tiger in the jungle rearing—
   Frightened fawn in grassy mead—
Let the eagle, not the sparrow;
Be the object of your arrow—
   Fix the tiger with your eye—
Pass the fawn in pity by,
   Glory then will crown the day—
   Glory, glory, anyway! (p. 442).

These last lines, incidentally, are projected by Collier and Bridgesman into the main theme of the satire against the Flowers of Progress: "Was it not against the eagles and tigers of society who prey upon poor humanity, these base beings and the evils they beget, that Gilbert aimed the arrows of his satire?"55

It also seems to the present writer that charges by many critics that Gilbert sacrificed characterization to satiric pronouncements in Ustiasia Limited are not completely justified. Although all the characters bear resemblance to personalities presented in earlier works,

Enter every joy, except the Flowers of Progress.

**Chorus.**

Although your Royal summons to appear From court's is singularly true, Obedient to that summons we are here. What would your Majesty do? 

**Recitative.**

My worthy people, my beloved daughter, Most thoughtfully she brought me from England. There is no sign of all the consequences that have made That great and glorious country what it is.

Soo, Ter., and Pham, (aside). Why, what does this mean?

**Recitative.**

Attend me, Utopian populace. Ye South Pacific Island visiters; They all, in the abstract, types of courtly grace. To be here with Britain's glorious race, But little better than half-clothed barbarians! 

**Chorus.**

That's true. Ye South Pacific visiters, Contrasted, and we ask you. With Englishmen, Are little better than half-clothed barbarians.

Enter all the Flowers of Progress, led by Fitzwilliam Bax.

**Solo.**

When Britain sounds the trumpet of war (And Europe trembles), The army of that conqueror In swelled ranks assembled; To awe this warrior's eyes and solve them. For our protection.

**Fitzwilliam Bax.**

I represent a military scheme— In all its proud perfection.

**Chorus.**

Utopia! Utopia! Utopia!

**Solo.**

Mr. Gold. Stupendous loans to foreign princes; In ginger-pops and peppermint-drops; I've freely speculated; Their talents have employed me; Successfully I've floated, And soon or late I always call for Stock Exchange quotations.

**Sir Bosley.**

Yes—yes—yes. Oh "yes" is but another and a master form of "no." All preconceived ideas in any subject can sound And demonstrate beyond all possibility of doubt. Whether you're an honest man or whether you're a thief. Depends on whether solliot has given me my bribe.

**Lord Drumm.**

Purify your Court! Get up your steers and cut your canvas short! Speak on both sides and teach your loyal clansmen. When all your horses are, and your steers are on the move. Utopia's too big for one small head. I'll fill it up as a Company Limited.

**Solo.**

And lastly I present—

Great Britain's proud boast; Who from the bow Of foreign foes Protects her sea-girl coast— And if you ask me in return, you'll know how you may protect your own.

**Solo.**

I'll teach you what a ship sahore is. And terrify the simple sailor. And how the Saxons and the Celt Their Europe-making blows have dealt With Maxim gun and Nordenfelt (Or will, when this occasion calls). It is a Leeuwarden play you're cards. Unbend your sails, and lower your yards, Unstop your masts—you'll never want 'em more. Though we're no longer hearts of oak. Yet we can steer and we can sink. And, thank you coal, and thanks to coke. We never run a ship sahore! What never? 

**Solo.**

No, never. 

**Recitative.**

Hardly ever run a ship sahore! Then give three cheers, and three cheers more; For the boy who never runs his ship sahore. They give three cheers, and three cheers more, For he never runs his ship sahore.

**Chorus.**

All hail, ye types of England's power— Ye heaven-illuminated band!

We bless the day, and bless the hour That brought you to our land.

**Quartermaster.**

Ye wanderers from a mighty State. Oh, teach us how to legislate— Your slightest word will carry weight In our attentive ears. Oh, teach the natives of this land (Who are not quick to understand) How to work off their social and economic vexations.

**Solo.**

Increase your army! Get up your steers and cut your canvas short! Speak on both sides and teach your loyal clansmen. When all your horses are, and your steers are on the move. Utopia's too big for one small head. I'll fill it up as a Company Limited.
the characters seen as strong and as well chosen as any he ever created. King Paramount, for instance, is a decile, frolicsome, lovable ruler with hardly a cruel line in the entire libretto:

But though the awe that I inspire
Must shrivel with imperial fire
All foes whom it may chance to touch,
To judge by what I see and hear;
It does not seem to interfere
With popular enjoyment, much (p. 413).

The *Daily Chronicle* called Paramount "as perfect 'a Rutland Barrington' part' as the comedian has ever played." Paramount accepts his servitude to the threatening, unscrupulous judges of the Utopian Supreme Court, Phantis and Scaphio, with good-natured resignation (until the country becomes a limited corporation), and one of the most amusing concepts in Gilbertian lore concerns Paramount's topsy-turvy clandestine contributions against his own character to the scandalous society paper, *The Palace Peeper*, which he edits and publishes at the instigation of this pair. As Paramount himself says, "When I reflect that all these outrageous attacks on my morality are written by me, at your command—well, it's one of the funniest things that have come within the scope of my experience" (p. 417). His boyish pride in producing these ironic slanders is delightfully exhibited:

Hit him, trenchant sarcasm—the rapier, not the bludgeon—that's my line. But then it's so easy—I'm such a good

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King Paramount being badgered by Scaphio and Phantis in Utopia Limited:

(The Lady's Pictorial, October 14, 1893, p. 559)
subject—a bad King but a good Subject—hal! hal!—a capital heading for next week's leading article! (Jakes a note). And then the stinging little paragraphs delicately sub-acid, are they not? (p. 41?).

Later when his incensed daughter, Princess Zara, attacks the lack of even literary merit in the slanderous articles, Paramount exclaims, to her dismay since she does not know that he is the author,

"Oh, it's not ungrammatical. I can't allow that. Unpleasantly personal, perhaps, but written with an epigrammatic point that is very rare nowadays—very rare indeed (p. 429).

Audrey Williamson has listed Paramount as "a splendid comedy part, ranking with Ko-Ko [in The Mikado] in unaffected humour and the Lord Chancellor [in Iolanthe] in whimsicality." 57

Although Princess Zara is an emancipated, educated young lady, "she is not a mere blue-stocking," 58 and in the words of the opening-night critic of the Times, "... the figure of Princess Zara is one of great charm and distinction..." Lacking the feminist zeal of Princess Ida, she is not at all disposed to look upon the male sex with aversion as her romance with Fitsbattleaxe reveals. Despite the fact that some critics complained about the minor part the romantic element plays in the libretto, Zara and Fitsbattleaxe have two sprightly duets (pp. 428-429, 438-439), and there is at least a mild, if humorous, threat to their romance from Scapio and Phantis. It should also be noted that it is Zara who wisely resolves the dilemma at the conclusion of the libretto.


Gilbert also tried to lift Lady Sophy above the usual run of his over-bearing Victorian spinster stereotypes. He knew that Sullivan would not accept another of these completely negative characters, and he wrote to the composer that Sophy would be presented as "a grave and dignified lady to be taken seriously and apart from any grotesque situation." 59 Gilbert scholar John Bush Jones has added that Lady Sophy is not a good example of one of Gilbert's "man trapping spinsters" because it is King Paramount who chases her rather than the other way around. 60 Gilbert also gives Lady Sophy a sympathetic song in the second act (pp. 449-450) to explain her situation, and by the time she accepts Paramount's offer of marriage at the libretto's conclusion, her reformation seems complete.

The twin Princesses are also salvaged when two of the Flowers of Progress, Goldbury and Dramaleigh, give them a different picture of the typical English girl from that which Lady Sophy has forced upon them. Many of the early critics praised this hymn to the modern, outdoor English girl (pp. 447-448) as the best in the libretto, and many years later A. H. Godwin listed the song as the third best lyric in all the Savoy operas. 61 However, there has been great debate among Gilbert critics concerning the seriousness of the sentiments

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59 Quoted in Hesketh Pearson, Gilbert: His Life . . . , p. 173.
61 A. H. Godwin, p. 234.
Mr. Goldbury, the two young Princesses, and
Lord Dramaleigh illustrated in Theatricals,
Oct. 13, 1893, and Goldbury's song on the
Outdoors English Girl from Utopia Limited
(pp. 447-448):
expressed in this song as far as Gilbert, himself, was concerned.

In *His Excellency*, produced a year later, when the Prince Regent
meets Christina, the rustic village maid, and exclaims, "What a
refreshing experience! It's like the breath of the hay-field after
a season of hot ball-rooms" (p. 112). In *The Mountebanks* a year
before *Utopia Limited*, however, Gilbert had seemingly indicated that
the allure of a lively lass and the charm of the "demurely prude"
were equally great:

Bedecked in fashion trim, / With every curl a-quiver;
Or leaping, light of limb, / O'er rivulet and river;
Or skipping o'er the lea / On daffodil and daisy
Or stretched beneath a tree, / All languishing and lazy--
Whatever be her mood; / Be she demurely prude,
Or languishingly lazy; / My lady drives me crazy . . .

(p. 362).

It should also be noted that in the context of the *Utopia Limited*
libretto, Goldbury, the cunning promoter of the Utopian corporation
scheme, sings the song not out of completely altruistic concern: he and
Dramaleigh have previously expressed a romantic interest in the girls
and harbour a definite disapproval of the teachings of "the dragon,"
Lady Sophy (p. 446). In fact, Goldbury's lines that introduce the
song are so high-blown that it would be too far out of Gilbert's
literary character for there not to be at least a hint of satire
intended. It is also worth noting that Gilbert's semi-serious,
semi-satiric hymn to the British sailor in *H.M.S. Pinafore* begins
with lines similar to this song of the English girl in *Utopia Limited*
("A British tar is a soaring soul . . ."). Unless someone finds an
actual statement from Gilbert on the subject, the major "raison d'être" of the lilting lyric must remain hidden in the mists between satiric portraiture and serious sentiment. 62

After singing the song of the Outdoors English Girl, Goldbury gives the Princesses a bit of candid advice which Gilbert, in an untypical manner, expresses in rather frank terms, and it is one of the most positive statements in any of his works:

Whatever you are—be that:
Whatever you say—be true:
Straightforwardly act—Be honest—in fact,
Be nobody else but you (p. 448).

Gilbert follows this with a shaft of insight on the part of the Princesses aimed, paradoxically, at both the stringent rules of Victorian propriety and the aesthetic dictums of Oscar Wilde:

Oh, sweet surprise and dear delight
To find it undisputed quite—
All misty, dusty rules despite—
That Art is wrong and Nature right! (p. 449).

Concerning this episode, John Bush Jones has recently written,

Like many satirists, Gilbert did not have a particular program, except perhaps for a basic belief in an underlying goodness and decency in the free play of real human thought and emotion, to be discovered once the pretensions, folly, and hypocrisy were stripped away... Gilbert expresses a fundamental belief in, and respect for, sincerity and naturalness... 63

62 A well-written article by Mark Buxton entitled, "Goldbury's Girl," recently appeared in the G&S Journal (Sept. 1972, p. 440), and it took the position that Gilbert actually did not approve of the outdoors English girl at all.

63 Jones, "Gilbert and Sullivan's..." p. 222.
Although there is undoubted merit in criticism that the satire in *Utopia Limited* was basically the idle shavings of a witty man seeking to amuse his audiences rather than the work of a concerned satirist calling for the rectification of the follies of his time, there is also proof from letters, interviews, and reminiscences of Gilbert's acquaintances that the things he satirized were at least things of which he personally disapproved. A popular American publication once characterized him as "a die-hard conservative by conviction, a palace-revolutionary by temperament," and Leslie Baily concluded, "Gilbert was not a rebel or a republican like Shaw or Wells, but he loved to play the gay Guy Fawkes." A generous assessment of the inadvertent social impact of Gilbert's satire was presented in the radical publication, *Looking Forward*, in 1921:

Few have thought that the gray gentleman with side whiskers and 'a little place at Harrow,' the barrister J. F. and property owner, was anything but a supporter of things as they be. Quite possibly he thought he was that. His life may have appeared to himself as it appeared to others, to be the embodiment of comfortable conservatism. Yet he did more to cut away the props of the old world, to prepare the minds of the unthinking mass for change, than any who deliberately preached against the established order. . . . Just because he seemed so safe and so ordinary, his shafts of ridicule knocked over the conventions at which they were aimed. Had he set out to break idols, he would have been laughed at. Because people laughed with him, they fancied he was one of themselves and let him undermine their faith in much that they held sacred.

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64 A recent article than Gilbert was serious in his satire in Jones, "Gilbert and Sullivan's . . . .", pp. 211-224.


Utopia Limited has had a number of defenders in the years since its original production. Savoyards Rutland Barrington and Henry Lytton have written warmly of it. Henry Saxe Wyndham, Francis Toye and Gervase Hughes in separate discussions of the work of Sullivan have expressed the opinion that Gilbert's libretto for Utopia Limited was a sound one, as did Sterling MacKinlay in his Origins and Development of Light Opera. It has also been highly praised by Gilbert and Sullivan authorities, A. H. Godwin ("Gilbert's cleverest satire and his most complete essay into paradox"), Cellier and Bridgeman ("one of the brightest and wittiest of Gilbert's books"), and Hesketh Pearson ("the cleverest of his librettos").

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68 Rutland Barrington, Rutland Barrington (London: Richards, 1908), p. 95.
70 For an opposing view from another of the original Savoyards, see Jessie Bond and Ethel Macgeorge, The Life and Reminiscences of Jessie Bond, the Old Savoyard (London: Lane, 1930), p. 150.
73 Hughes, pp. 196-197.
74 Godwin, p. 79.
76 Pearson, Gilbert: His . . . , p. 159.
In America, Edmund Wilson has praised it, ranking the libretto at least ahead of Princess Ida and The Gondoliers among Gilbert and Sullivan works, and John Ardonin of the Saturday Review said in 1966, "... I cannot understand its long absence from the professional musical scene." In 1962 Frank Ledlie Moore recorded that

... Utopia ... was not professionally revived until 1956. At that time the American Savoyards presented the opera so successfully in New York that it was kept as part of their permanent repertoire and is now played as frequently as any of the other operas with the exception of The Mikado, The Pirates of Penzance, and H.M.S. Pinafore.

If the value of Utopia Limited must rest in large measure with the abundance of its topical satire, a different measuring stick must be put to His Excellency. In this sense and some others, this 1894 work is one of the least "Gilbertian" of Gilbert's libretti, and a number of early critics counted this as one of the main points in its favour. "The author has accomplished a wonderful feat."

78 Wilson, pp. 364-365.

79 See Ardonin, p. 72.

80 Frank Ledlie Moore, The Handbook of Gilbert and Sullivan (London: Barker, 1962), p. 117. In his monumental Amals of the York Stage, XX: 1891-1894 (p. 596), George O'Dell said of the 1894 New York D'Oyly Carte production of Utopia Limited, "... it kept afloat at the Broadway, from March 25 to May 12, though the cast to us by D'Oyly Carte was in no way comparable to those he had sent for The Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado ... I venture to guess that, except for Clinton Elder and Kate Talby, my reader never before met the names of any of these performers, yet they kept Utopia Limited on the stage of the Broadway Theatre for nearly two months." Successful productions of Utopia Limited (and The Grand Duke) by the highly successful American amateur group, the Philadelphia Savoyards, appears in William Camp Ferguson's excellent A History of the Savoy Company, 1907-1940 (Philadelphia: Savoy Company, 1940), copy available in the Wilson collection, Lilly Library, Indiana University.
William Archer's favourable review of His Excellency from
The Pall Mall Budget, Nov. 1, 1894, pp. 14-15
exclaimed the Westminster Gazette,

... he has taken a subject which touches no burning question of the day, which parodies nothing, which has no connexion with love, hate, jealousy, or revenge, which attacks nothing, defends nothing, and yet, without stooping to the trick of introducing variety turns, has made an interesting, even fascinating book out of it.

In fact, William Archer in the Pall Mall Budget felt that His Excellency was a "nearer approach to true comic opera, as opposed to extravaganza" than anything Gilbert had written with the possible exception of The Yeomen of the Guard. Although Griffenfeld's practical jokes are saturated throughout the piece and Dame Cortlandt fills the bill as Gilbert's man-chasing spinster, there is an air of seriousness in the dialogue, lyrics, and within the characters that differentiates the work from Gilbert's usual libretti. This does not mean to imply that the work is in the melodramatic vein of The Fortune Hunter or overtly moralistic like Fallen Fairies, but compared to the usual Gilbert characters, those in His Excellency are less childlike in their reactions to the injustices framed against them and the situations are more realistically portrayed. The lyrics also differ from Gilbert's usual work in that they often attempt to carry the story rather than provoke laughter. This style is apparent in the first two and a half pages of the libretto (pp. 93-95) in which, entirely in lyrical form and with no overt comicities, most of the characters and the main plot elements are introduced. The lyrics here and throughout the work were of such a high order that the critic for the Man of the World expressed the opinion that "... they can afford to dispense with a tune." In fact, George Grossmith, a leading
Opening scene of His Excellency (pp. 93-95), illustrating relatively subdued, non-satirical aspect of lyrics:

**HIS EXCELLENCY.**

**ACT I.**

**SCENE.—Market place of Elsinore.** The townspeople (led by Mats Munch, the Syndic) are assembled to congratulate Enling Sykke on the completion of the statue of the Prince Regent of Denmark, which occupies the centre of the stage.

Colours flying, bells-ringing, cannon firing, and general symptoms of rejoicing.

**The Opening Chorus.**

- Set the merry bonnet flying.
- Fire the cannon—ring the bells.
- With sculptures' skill adorning,
- All contents excel.
- So the stubborn marble quells.
- That, to all intents plastic.
- Shapes heroic—shapes fantastic,
- As his mighty will compels!

- Chosen from his fellow creatures
- By our King—towards wise ones.
- To perpetuate the features
- Of the Regent Prince, his son—
- Then created, by a penmark,
- Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
- And the Royal Families!

- Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
- And the Royal Families!

- Leisure take—fatigue sent—
- You have time before you, plenty,
- When at only two-and-twenty,
- (Reminiscent sediment)
- You're created with a penmark.
- Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
- Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
- And the Royal Families!

- Sculptor to the Court of Denmark
- And the Royal Families!

- I see with a silent awe,
- In this faultless form allied,
- And the glory of knightly pride,
- No blemish, of fault, of flaw,
- But perfect in all is he,
- For he is a god divine,
- A chivalrous knight may be,
- Or the dawn of a bright May-day,
- Yet cast in the knightly mould,
- Of the glorious days of old—
- What be he, who would win my heart?
- Their mouths will open and close,
- They've ears likewise,
- And a couple of eyes,
- And the usual nubbly nose,
- Each has a head of his own,
- They've sides, and legs, and feet,
- Their bound to admit
- That in every whist,
- The catalogue's quite complete.
- But where is the godlike grace?
- Where is the brow serene?
- Where is the lordly mien?
- Ah, dullards and dolt's are all I've known,
- Compared with that marvellous matchless stone!
player in the original production, said, "The Lines of one song, 'Then we fall out, the world and I,' are so exquisite that, with all admiration for Dr. Osmond Carr's melody, I think they ought to be spoken!"

Archer noted that "its plot is simple and ingenious, with no supernatural element," but His Excellency is not without some humorous topsy-turvy aspects. This is evident in the Prince Regent's impersonation of his own person and in Griffenfeld's debasement of his high office as Governor by engaging in practical jokes. The most Gilbertian device in the actual staging of the libretto in this context concerns Corporal Harold and his hussars who are ordered by Griffenfeld to daily dance down the street of the town in elegant ballet style rather than march in normal-military fashion. They protest, "It is rough on brave Hussars!" and "... it wounds our proper pride..." (p. 129), but their wives and girlfriends are quite amused:

Never was seen such tawdry trickery,
Soldiers, tough as oak or hickory,
Turned to votaries of Terra-cotta,
Minding marionettes, hai hai (p. 101).

"Spectator" (A. E. Walkley) in the Star congratulated Gilbert on abandoning the completely verbal wit of Utopia Limited and presenting some of his humour in a "scenic" vein: "humor expressed in action; humor that appeals to the mind through the eye," and these dancing soldiers were considered by the critic of the Times to be "one of the most whimsical ideas Mr. Gilbert ever conceived." The Graphic reported that "... no heartier has occurred in any of Mr. Gilbert's
operas than that which greeted on Saturday the scene of the ballet danced by these soldiers, who form themselves into groups, while their corporal pirouettes round them on his toes." Like the theatrical and legal satire in Gilbert's work, this military satire also had certain biographical overtones. At the age of eighteen, Gilbert had studied for the examination for a direct commission into the Royal Artillery at the time of the Crimean War. The war ended before Gilbert could take the examination, but he later joined the militia and served as an officer for many years. Gilbert's satire on the military goes back at least as far as the "Model of a Modern Major General" in The Pirates of Penzance, and the light dragoons affecting artistic stances and wearing aesthetic clothing in Patience.

In Gilbert's later work, the dancing Hussars are undoubtedly the most striking of several humorous episodes involving the military. Other incidents involve Captain Bagg, the amorous friend of Leonora in Haste to the Wedding, and Major-General Bunthunder and his song on the Order of the Bath (p. 173) in the same work. There is also the humorously misunderstood Col. Sir Trevor Maulenverer in The Fairy's Dilemma and Captain Fitzbattleaxe and his men of Her Majesty's First Life Guards in Utopia Limited, who boast,

On the royal yacht, / When the waves were white,
In helmet hot / And a tunic tight,
And our great big boots, / We defied the storm:
For we're not recruits, / And his uniform
A well-drilled trooper ne'er discards—
And we are her escort—First Life Guards! (p. 423).
Major-General Bunthunder's Song on the Order of the Bath from Haste to the Wedding (p. 173):

**Scene I.—Dressing-room in Major-General Bunthunder's House. Door N. and E. Large screen R., with double hinges to fold both ways. The Major-General is discovered within the screen in full uniform, taking a footbath; a blanket conceals his legs. His boots are on the floor E. of screen. A hot-water can stands near them. His trousers hang on the screen.**

**Song—Bunthunder:**

Though called upon I've never been
To court a warrior's tomb;
Or to defend my Sovereign Queen
In battle's dread boom—boom!

Rainless I, when I am stirred
To doughty deeds of wrath,
So on myself I have conferred
The Order of the Bath!

*You trace my humour's devious path?
You see my meaning through?*

**(Impressively.)**

The knightly Order the Bath—

**(disappointed.)**

I don't believe you do!

Let me explain—you're in the dark—

The "Bath" a high degree

Conferr'd no warriors of mark,

But not confer'd on me. Nobody

From "Bath" we easily derive

This footbath—common delf—

And that's the compliment that I've—

Conferr'd upon myself—

**(Explaning.)**

This bath—of crockery or delf—

A play on meanings twain—

**(Mortified.)**

I'm sorry! I forgot myself—

**(implying.)**

Dear me! It shan't occur again.
However, the dancing hussars of *His Excellency* are unique in that they are definitely not British, and at least one contemporary witness later stated that the episode was directed at the rising militarism of Germany under the Kaiser during the nineties.

It should also be noted that the hussars are not the usual naive comic characters of Gilbert. They know they are being made foolish, but they are unable to do anything about it:

> Although the Governor's jokes are numerous,
> This is a joke we fail to see—
> If this is the Governor's fun so humorous,
> Bother the Governor's fun, say we!

> Oh you may laugh at our dancing-schoolery—
> It's all very well, it amuses you.
> But how would you like this dashed tomfoolery
> Every day from ten to two? (p. 101).

This returns our discussion to the almost humorless, realistic reaction of some of the characters to the cruel jokes of Gov. Griffenfeld. In *Utopia Limited*, written only a year earlier, Gilbert had presented his audience with a lengthy song on the joke of life (see above, p. 75), expressing the ridiculous irony of life's situations. In Governor Griffenfeld's arbitrary practical jokes in *His Excellency*, Gilbert seems to be giving dramatic form to this philosophy. The dancing hussars are a reflection of the ridiculous inconsistency of life itself in which man is forced into all types of asinine situations completely against his own will. The dreadful jokes Griffenfeld plays on his other subjects—Erling and Tortenssen.

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for instance—could be considered analogous to the unforeseen misfortunes that constantly wreck man's highest aspirations and leave him filled with disillusionment. As the Daily Chronicle noted, undoubtedly without realizing the full implication of its statement, "The plot consists of a series of experiments upon the credulity of persons of every degree..." Griffenfeld represents the brutal, mocking hand of fate, completely callous in its building up, then tearing down, of man's dreams in the cause of an elaborate cosmic joke. This cynical analogy is, in fact, stated by Griffenfeld and the Regent when they agree to play their "impersonation of the Regent" joke on the townspeople:

Oh, human joy at best is brief—
Alas, too soon it's turned to grief!
So it's our duty, you'll allow,
Our fellow creatures to endow
With happiness complete and vast—
Although that happiness may last—
But half an hour or thereabouts! (p. 115).

The concept of the ridiculous joke of life was dramatically depicted by Gilbert again ten years later in The Fairy's Dilemma in the character of Judge Whortle, the magistrate who makes verbal jokes in his courtroom while presiding over the most serious judicial cases:

Well, I've done an excellent day's work. A breach of promise, damages fifteen hundred; a serious libel action, damages five thousand; and a magnificent clerical scandal to top up with. They all 'went' magnificently! Court convulsed throughout! Never heard such roars of laughter in a Court of Justice before! (p. 24).

This, then, is perhaps the elusive philosophic basis of His Excellency:
it illustrates in dramatic terms Gilbert’s cynical outlook on the helpless state of man, a creature constantly being played the fool by the whims of a mocking and insensitive universe. To conclude on a positive note, however, one can say that in His Excellency Gilbert often covers this cynicism with the sparkle of genuine wit, and one of the most delightfully humorous statements on life’s maddening ironies is found in the casual observation of the sculptor, Erling, when Christina falls in love with the statue he has made of the Prince Regent:

That’s a typical instance of feminine perversity—doesn’t fall in love with me, which would be rational enough, but with the senseless inanimate work of my hands! My dear fellow (addressing the statue), I little thought, when I cut you out, that in course of time you’d return the compliment! (p. 95).

There are many minor lyrics in His Excellency that show Gilbert at his poetical best, and important major lyrics in His Excellency include the Prince Regent’s outrage with the National Anthem (pp. 110-111), Christina’s ballad about the “Bee who Tried to Swarm Alone” (pp. 127-128), and Griffenfeld’s lament on the lack of original verbal humour available for him to use (p. 134). Gilbert’s biographers, Dark and Grey, felt that “His Excellency unquestionably contains the best verse Gilbert wrote in his later years”—an opinion shared by other later writers.82

Even the much-reviled *The Grand Duke* has not been without its advocates. The dramatic critics of such influential organs as the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* (which had completely condemned Utopia Limited), and the *St. James's Gazette* were among early supporters of the work, and the review that appeared in *Clement Scott's Theatre* a month after the London opening picked up the main negative criticisms that appeared in the early reviews and gave fairly convincing arguments against them, concluding, "...the fact remains that *The Grand Duke* is from first to last a delightful entertainment." When the work was finally staged by a professional company in New York in 1961, Gilbert's libretto received high praise in the *New York Times*.\(^3\)

Certainly, there are facets of the work that show Gilbert at his creative best. The scene that begins the second act in which the theatrical troupe take charge of the Grand Ducal Court dressed in classical attire was called "as brilliant a bit of work as ever the Savoyards accomplished" in a survey of theatrical history written half a century later,\(^4\) and Ludwig's song (p. 74) on the fashions of classical Greece, sung as he begins his reign as the Grand Duke dressed...
MR. RUTLAND BARRINGTON AS LUDWIG IN "THE GRAND DUKE," AT THE SAVOY.

"At the outset I may mention, it's my sovereign intention
To realize the classic manners of Athens of its best.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFRED TALLIS, PHOTO-HISHER, LONDON.
Ludwig's song on classical Greece that begins the second act of The Grand Duke (p. 74):

Soprano—Ludwig.

At the outset I may mention it's my sovereign intention
To revive the classic memories of Athens at its best,
For the company possesses all the necessary dressers.
And a course of quiet cramming will supply us with the rest.
We've a choir hyposthenic (that is, bellet-opasitical);
Who respond to the choruses of that cultivated age;
And our clever chorus-master, all but capricious criticates,
Would accept as the choruses of the early Attic stage.
This return to classic ages is considered in their wages,
Which are always calculated by the day or by the week—
And I'll pay 'em (if they'll back me) all in obolos and drachmas,
Which they'll get (if they prefer it) at the Kalenda that are Greek.

(Confidentially to audience.)

At this juncture I may mention
That this erudition sham
Is but classical pretension,
The result of steady "cramming;
Periphrastic methods spurning,
To this audience discerning
I admit this show of learning;
Is the fruit of steady "cramming!"

Chorus.

Periphrastic methods, etc.

In the period Socratic every dining-room was Attic—
(Which suggests an architecture of a topsy-turvy kind);
There they'd satisfy their thirst on a recherché cold apéritif
Which is what they called their lunch—and so may you, if you're inclined.
As they gradually got on; they'd ἄρανες ἀπό τὸν ἄρναον
(Which is Attic for a steady and a conscientious drink).
But they mixed their wines with water—which I'm sure they didn't oughter—

And we modern Saxons know a trick worth two of that, I think!
Then came rather risky dances (under certain circumstances)
Which would shock that worthy gentleman, the Licensor of Plays,
Corybantic maniac kick—Dionysiac or Bacchic—
And the Dithyrambic revels of those undecorous days.
as King Agamemnon but wearing an imposing and incongruous Louis Quatorze wig, is an aspect of the work that both early and later critics have acclaimed. A. H. Godwin has noted that Ludwig's song is an example of Gilbert's use of involved language "in lines which scan well and never falter for a dexterous rhyme." Also worthy of favourable comment is the quintet, "Strange views some people hold" (pp. 57-58), which presents the obvious value that the Statutory Duel holds over the normal method of gaining satisfaction through physical violence. The lyric has none of the false rhymes of many of the other songs in the work, and its humane philosophy reminds one slightly of the suggestion that one of the characters in Remarque's novel, All Quiet on the Western Front, will make that wars should be fought in circus arenas with the political leaders as the sole combatants. There are also rich flashes of Gilbertian humour in some sections of the dialogue. This is especially true of the dialogue between the parsimonious Rudolph and the Baroness in the first act (pp. 61-63) and the theatrical banter between Rumskofp and Julia (pp. 50-51).

The Grand Duke also adds to our knowledge of Gilbert's attitude toward his professional associates and the Victorian theatre in general. The members of Ernest Rumskofp's theatrical troupe apply

85 Godwin, p. 86.
Gilbert's lyric, "Strange the Views Some People Hold" from The Grand Duke (pp. 57-58):

Quintet.—Ludwig, Lisa, Notary, Ernest, Julia.

Strange the views some people hold!
Two young fellows quarrel—
Then they fight, for both are bold—
Rage of both is uncontrollable—
Both are stretched out, stark and cold—
Prichew where's the moral?
Ding dong! Ding dong!
There's an end to further action,
And this barbarous transaction
Is described as "satisfaction"!
Ha! ha! ha! ha! satisfaction!
Ding dong! Ding dong!
Each is laid in churchyard mould—
Strange the views some people hold!
Better than the method old,
Which was coarse and cruel,
Is the plan that we've extolled,
Singing thy virtues manifold
(Better than refined gold),
Statutory Duel!
Sing song! Sing song!
Sword or pistol neither uses—
Playing card he lightly chooses,
And the loser simply loses.
Ha! ha! ha! ha! simply loses.
Sing song! Sing song!
Some prefer the churchyard mould!
Strange the views some people hold!
Humorous dialogue in *The Grand Duke* (pp. 61-62)

between the parsimonious Rudolph and the Baroness:

*Rud.* I was thinking of embracing you, my sugarplum. Just as a little cheap treat.

*Bar.* What here? In public? Really you appear to have no sense of delicacy.

*Rud.* No sense of delicacy, Bon-bon!

*Bar.* No. I can't make you out. When you courted me, all your courting was done publicly in the Market Place. When you proposed to me, you proposed in the Market Place. And now that we're engaged you seem to desire that our first tête-à-tête shall occur in the Market Place! Surely you've a room in your Palace—with blinds—that would do?

*Rud.* But, my own, I can't help myself. I'm bound by my own decree.

*Bar.* Your own decree?

*Rud.* Yes. You see, all the houses that give on the Market Place belong to me, but the drains (which date back to the reign of Charlemagne) want attending to, and the houses wouldn't let—so with a view to increasing the value of the property, I decreed that all love episodes between affectionate couples should take place, in public on this spot, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, when the band doesn't play.

*Bar.* Bless me, what a happy idea! So moral too! And have you found it answer?

*Rud.* Answer? The rents have gone up fifty per cent, and the sale of opera glasses (which is a Grand Ducal monopoly) has received an extraordinary stimulus. So, under the circumstances, would you allow me to put my arm round your waist? As a source of income. Just once!

*Bar.* But it's so very embarrassing. Think of the opera glasses!

*Rud.* My good girl, that's just what I am thinking of. Hang it all, we must give them something for their money!
stage values to every situation in which Gilbert places them, and
the satire on theatrical topics is more abundant and revealing than
that found in any of Gilbert's other librettos. An interesting first
night review in the Musical Times even suggested that there were
contemporary theatrical allusions to be found in Grand Duke Rudolph's
characterization and dialogue and the presentation of other non-
thespians in the plot. Of special note among the lyrics that deal
with professional topics are Dumkoph's song on the problems of a
theatrical manager (pp. 49-50) and satiric songs on the art of tragic
leading ladies that allow histrionic Julia Jellicoe to engage in some
wild and amusing stage action (pp. 52, 77-78).

The excessive selfishness of the characters and the many
nauseating references to food and drink have been interpreted by
several later critics as being either Gilbert's contribution to the
fin de siècle literature of decadence or, more likely, his satiric
attack on it. 86 Max Keith Sutton has recently developed an interesting
theory that the greedy, self-promoting aspect of the characters brings
the work into the realm of exacting social criticism 87—a plausible
concept that could equally apply to The Mountebanks and His Excellency.

86 See especially Goldberg, Sir William S. Gilbert . . .
pp. 135-136, and John Bush Jones, "Gilbert and Sullivan's . . .
pp. 211-224.

87 Max Keith Sutton, "The Significance of The Grand Duke,"
in Gilbert and Sullivan Papers, edited by James Holyar (Lawrence:
University of Kansas Libraries, 1971), pp. 221-228.
Humorous theatrical discussion between Ernest Dummkopf and Julia Jellicoe in The Grand Duke (pp. 50-51):

**Enter Julia Jellicoe:**

Julia. Herr Dummkopf, a word with you, if you please.

Ern. Beautiful English maiden—

Julia. No compliments; I beg. I desire to speak with you on a purely professional matter, so we will, if you please, dispense with allusions to my personal appearance, which can only tend to widen the breach which already exists between us.

Ern. (aside). My only hope shattered! The haughty Londoner still despises me! (aloud). It shall be as you will.

Julia. I understand that the conspiracy in which we are all concerned is to develop to-morrow, and that the company is likely to elect you to the throne on the understanding that the posts about the Court are to be filled by members of your theatrical troupe, according to their professional importance.

Ern. That is so—?

Julia. Then all I can say is that it places me in an extremely awkward position.

Ern. (very depressed). I don’t see how it concerns you.

Julia. Why, bless my heart, don’t you see that, as your lady, I am bound under a serious penalty to play the leading part in all your productions?

Ern. Well—

Julia. Why of course, the leading part in this production will be the Grand Duchess!

Ern. My wife?

Julia. This is another way of expressing the same idea.

Ern. (aside—delighted). I scarcely dared even to hope for this!

Julia. Of course, as your leading lady, you’ll be mean enough to hold me to the terms of my agreement. Oh, that’s so like a man! Well, I suppose there’s no help for it—I shall have to do it.

Ern. (aside). She’s mine! (aloud). But do you really think you would care to play that part? (Taking her hand.)

Julia (withdrawing it). Care to play it? Certainly not—but what am I to do? Business is business, and I am bound by the terms of my agreement.

Ern. It’s for a long run, mind—a run that may last many, many years—to understudy—and once embarked upon there’s no throwing it up.

Julia. Oh, we’re used to these long runs in England: they are the curse of the stage—but, you see, I’ve no option.

Ern. You think that the part of Grand Duchess will be good enough for you?

Julia. Oh, I think so. It’s a very good part in Derofstein, and oughtn’t to be a bad one in Pfeffen Halpfeffen. Why, what did you suppose I was going to play?

Ern. (keeping up a show of reluctance). But, considering your strong personal dislike to me and your persistent rejection of my repeated offers, won’t you find it difficult to throw yourself into the part with all the impasioned enthusiasm that the character seems to demand? Remember, it’s a strongly emotional part, involving long and repeated scenes of rapture, tenderness, adoration, devotion—all in luxuriant excess, and all of the most demonstrative description.

Julia. My good sir, throughout my career I have made it a rule never to allow private feeling to interfere with my professional duties. You may be quite sure that (however distasteful the part may be) if I undertake it, I shall consider myself professionally bound to throw myself into it with all the ardour at my command.

Ern. (aside—without effusion). ’Tis the happiest fellow alive.
There is certainly a discernible strain of social criticism running through The Fortune Hunter, the serious work Gilbert presented to the public a year after The Grand Duke failed. After one accepts the labored and dated melodramatic mode of its presentation, a second reading of The Fortune Hunter reveals not only some good general dramatic touches but also a fairly obvious underlying theme that validates its multi-national list of characters. Much of the dialogue was considered "well written and of high literary merit" by some of the early critics even if it was too grandiose for realistic stage purposes, and The Daily Chronicle said that "with all its faults . . . the play is marked by a certain amount of dramatic spirit . . . ," and the critic for the periodical, Black and White, called it "a great perhaps." A number of twentieth century writers have had at least passing kind words for it as Gilbert's best work of straight melodrama.

The main idea behind the play is that no nationality is inherently better than any other and that all are selfish "fortune hunters" in some respect. The first half of the above statement finds allusion at the very beginning of the play when Armand speaks of the dangers of big game hunting: " . . . in the desire not to be killed, your Frenchman and your Englishman are of one mind. So your Frenchman

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and your Englishman are equally disinclined to run away, when running away means certain death" (pp. 386-389). Armund is, of course, the most obvious "fortune hunter" in the play, and most of the early critics roundly condemned Gilbert for making such a selfish scoundrel the central male character. Yet Armund is a complicated creation, as he himself admits:

I am vain—arbitrary—dictatorial—self-sufficient. I pretend that I attach no value to the world's good word, but in that I lie, for praise is as the breath of my nostrils. I am headstrong—willful—passionate—and so, many times unreasonable. On the surface I am honourable, but it is with the honour of a gamaster who does not cheat his opponent but who ruins his tailor. In danger I am sufficiently cool and steadfast, but here again I am instigated by the lust of praise to do that from which I should shrink were I unseen and alone. To those whom I love I am kind to the verge of folly. I am open-handed and generous—but not generous to men who are my rivals (p. 405).

When he proposes to Diana Caverel he merely offers "the much that is bad and the somewhat that is good" (p. 405), and in the last act after he has betrayed her, he begs forgiveness:

It is in your mind that I am a callous, heartless man—well, that is natural. I have justified that estimate, and six months since I should so have described myself. Nevertheless, it is not wholly true, I find—to my surprise, I admit—that it is not wholly true (p. 436).

One early reviewer charged that with his self-reproachful tirades, the villain of the piece developed into such a bore that it would have been a relief had he stamped and cried 'Hai! Hai!' as those of his wicked order did in 'the good old days' of the British drama. As it was, one felt that Armund de Breville had missed his vocation; he would have done better as a parson.90

and another attacked Gilbert for creating this "almost incomprehensible compound of honest sentiment and contemptible meanness." Yet this ironic premise is the psychological factor of human nature that constitutes the philosophical basis of all important drama from classical times to the present day. Shakespeare had invented characters of equally dastardly deeds who occupy the better part of whole plays with soliloquy explaining their inner motivations, regrets, and desires. Albeit, one can hardly compare the melodramatic rhetoric of Armand with the tragic speeches of Macbeth, one can hardly condemn Gilbert for creating a character torn between honour and treachery, selfishness and loyalty, who openly expresses his confusion and guilt. Hesketh Pearson's comment that Armand was "the first attempt by a modern English playwright to portray a character who tries to psycho-analyze himself" is a little strong, but it is interesting to note that Gilbert's vile concept and treatment of Armand was not appreciated at all by most of the early critics. In estimating Armand's villainous role in the play, it should also be noted that it is he who is victimized in the last act by being refused any glimmer of forgiveness or understanding by shattered Diana—a rejection that ultimately results in his death.

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*Review of the Birmingham Production of The Fortune Hunter.*

The Standard, Sept. 29, 1897, p. 3.

*Pearson, Gilbert: Ills...*, p. 195. Of the work itself, however, Pearson quipped that it was "at first printed 'for private use only,' in which condition it should have remained" (p. 192).
Roger Dawson, "Armand de Breville," Gilbert & Sullivan Journal,
September 1927, p. 7:

We meet him in The Fortune Hunter—this vivid and most mercurial of Frenchmen. Few of Gilbert's characters either in or apart from the operas have such a definite personality. The pity is that he belongs to a play that has suffered a lamentable neglect. Strange indeed it is that some great actor has never been tempted to robe this brilliant figure in flesh and blood!

Armand de Brévillo is no "theatrical" Frenchman. He is no creature of eccentric habit and affected gesticulation. But a Frenchman he is without question. He is French in his virtues and French in his vices.

Chief of all is that vice of avarice, bidding him against his better self play false to a high-souled woman he loves with a romantic ardour, and to attempt to link himself, this scion of noble birth, with a vulgar plutocrat with ample purse strings.

Yet with all his traits this lad—for he is little more—is no unlovable fellow. There is about this Don Juan little of the monster of cunning. He has all the companionable arts and social graces. Ultimately, too, when he redeems his dishonour, he redeems it with a show of greatness that makes him, this adventurer who was his own worst enemy a creature of tragic and yet not unheroic penitence.

Gilbert certainly draws him sympathetically. In the main the first act is a deliberate effort to ingratiate him, to picture him as a volatile, agreeably-mannered, sports-loving Frenchman who professes, maybe a little in advance of his time, a sincere attachment to England. And in this aim the dramatist succeeds. Most of the other characters introduced are clearly subsidiary. For instance, the Coxe-Coxes, those slaves of a simply fearful snobbery, are obviously the merest puppets of comic relief in this remarkable play.

Can we doubt that Armand's love for the beautiful Diana Caverel was inspired by other than a genuine passion? She, it is true, was the heiress for whom the fortune-hunter was seeking, but well he realised that her worth was above and beyond that of ordinary gild. But then her riches vanish, and his devotion to a true, fine woman is tested against his overweening avarice and found deplorably wanting. So he seeks means to cast her from him, and to take instead the elderly, ugly widowed pork king's daughter. Thus does covetousness lead to loathsome expedience.

For his own ends Armand invokes the Civil Code. Under this a young Frenchman's marriage is not a legal contract without it has his parents' approval. He insists that in his own case this consent has been withheld because the wife he has wedded is not of patrician degree. Vainly does the tearful Diana plead that their great love should triumph over all such harsh injustices. In his own heart there fingers a tenderness for the woman against whom he has planned. It is a superb piece of dialogue writing. Later on there is a more dramatic passage still, and it is when the scorned wife repels the contrition of the man who has realised, too late, the treasure he has forfeited through falsehood and cupidity.

Critics will hold that this Frenchman that Gilbert drew is a figure of sheer melodrama. That in some measure is true. Melodrama—gilded melodrama—is in every fibre of his being. Its climax comes when, after attempting to take his own life, he goads his best friend to fury, incites him to a duel, and deliberately throws up his guard in order that he may receive the mortal thrust that shall be his act of retribution to the woman he has wronged. By his death alone can the nullity proceedings be stayed—and in his remorse he is swept to act solely by impulse.

It is a "far, far better thing I do" kind of dénouement, and yet it is very typical of that "perfect enigma" who was Armand de Brévillé.
The proud aristocracy of France is represented by Armand's parents, the Marquis and the Marquise de Bréville. They appear only in the latter stages of the second act, but to most of the early critics, Gilbert was at his dramatic best in portraying a sense of "irony and tragedy" in this act. Mid-way through the act, Armand leaves Diana ostensibly to go to Monte Carlo on business after a tempestuous scene of marital strife followed by a tender reconciliation; however, Armand sends Diana a shocking farewell letter from the station expressing his plan to annul their marriage by enacting the 183rd Article of the French Code. Before Diana receives this letter, she has an unexpected caller in Sir Cathbert and an even more unexpected first visit from Armand's aristocratic parents, the Marquis and Marquise. Since Diana does not come from noble stock and her father gained his fortune through commerce (as did the father of the Duke of Dundee it should be noted as one of the ironies of the play), Armand has previously warned her that his parents may not approve of the marriage, and "the conversation which ensues is heavy with suppressed feeling." The warning of Armand concerning his parents' reaction to the marriage proves correct, and the English baronet, Sir Cathbert, is stunned when the Marquis calls the ratiing a "recalliance" (p. 421). This gives Gilbert an opportunity to express some of his most explicit views on Anglo-French national characteristics:

Sir C. M. le Marquis, I must tell you that (quite unwittingly, I am sure) you do this lady a grave injustice. Marquis; It distresses me, Sir Orthbert Jameson, that you should think so, but it is possible that you do not quite appreciate the sentiment that actuates us. We of the old Noblesse are (as you would describe it) greatly prejudiced against alliances between one of our order and a lady, however worthy in other respects, of inferior birth. It is an act which we are so narrow-minded as to consider unpardonable. Sir C. Sir, this lady’s father was in every sense a gentleman, and my own intimate friend. His daughter is an accomplished lady, whom any man, even though he were descended from Pépin himself, might be proud to marry. Marquis, Sir, you speak as an English gentleman—frankly and straightforwardly, but entirely (forgive me) from your own point of view. In your country—a country in which men and women of distinguished rank do not think it beneath them to engage in trade—I believe I am right in this? Sir C. Well, of late years people of rank with narrow means have not thought it disgraceful to work for their living, Marquis. So I have understood. In a country in which this singular anomaly is recognized and permitted by its ancient aristocracy, I can well believe that our prejudice against trade may appear to be illiberal and narrow-minded. Still it exists, and must therefore be reckoned with (pp. 421-422).

But in the climax of this eventful act when Armand’s letter of intended annulment arrives, the Marquis and the Marquise redeem themselves and their countrymen by striking a dramatically unexpected pose:

Marquis: . . . When we came here to-day the only question in our minds was whether we should receive this lady into the bosom of our family. It never entered our minds to compass the ruin of an honourable lady, whom our son has shamefully lured into a secret marriage, by applying to have that marriage set aside. It is true that the law empowers us to do this, but that law is an infamous as he who would resort to it. It is not thus that French gentlemen are accustomed to act; Sir Orthbert Jameson. . . . When we came here today the question in our minds was whether we should receive you as a daughter. That is no longer a question. I take you to my heart as one to whom, in atonement for the outrage to which you have been subjected at the hands of this unworthy man, we owe infinite reparation. I have lost a son, but I have found a daughter! (pp. 423).
The critic of the Daily News commented, "A little cheap claptrap might have been made by presenting a Frenchman as ready to take rascally advantage of an unjust law. Instead Mr. Gilbert makes this French officer speak out like a man of sense and a gentleman."

Although the tone of this criticism matches the melodramatic mood of the scene itself, it cannot be denied that Gilbert has underscored the conciliatory aspect of the internationalism of his theme, and just as Armand proves himself not to be a complete villain later in the play, his parents exhibit a warmth and compassion here quite unexpected of them. Despite the extreme social prejudices Gilbert gives his French aristocrats, he does not make them the whipping-boys for all the social ills in the play.

The role of Sir Cuthbert as the "good, true, and tried" Englishman (p. 417) has been discussed earlier in this study in its melodramatic aspects; however, there are several situations involving Sir Cuthbert in which Gilbert's dramatic skill shines through. For instance, Gilbert foreshadows the tragic climax of the play in the very first scene as the curtain opens to find Armand and Sir Cuthbert engaged in a playful duel of irons in which Cuthbert scores a number of hits. Though quite different in personality, the two men are good friends until Armand's betrayal of Diana, and Gilbert once again drives home the international theme of his play when Armand tells Sir Cuthbert,

... you are a respectable John Bull. And, my respectable John Bull, you hate a Frenchman as you hate a bright Sunday. We are all vain, frivolous, egotistical. Is it not so—Hein? But we have our rôle—we send you actors, singers, fiddlers, painters—we amuse you and we decorate your wives—that is our
role. And while you pity the funny, ingenious, poor foreign devils, you are ready enough to laugh at their escapades and to pay them handsomely for cutting them. If good, respectable, church-going John Bull, you are wrong, wrong, wrong! A word in your ear—but it is in confidence. There are men in France who are not mountebanks! But you do not perceive them, for your nose is not long, and you can see no further than the tip of it. Go—you are a good fellow, and I am a good fellow, and there are many on my side of the channel that are as good as you, and better—far better—than I; but you do not perceive them because your nose is not long (pp. 395-396).

Gilbert’s technical effectiveness is exhibited in his handling of the dialogue between Sir Cuthbert and Armand leading to the fatal duel in the last act (pp. 440-441), even if the death scene following the duel is unsatisfactory.

Although an argument could be made that Sir Cuthbert’s faithful love for Diana makes him a “fortune hunter” (in a positive way), the real English fortune hunters in the play are undoubtedly the middle-class comic couple, Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Coxe (or, “Coxe-Coxe,” as they prefer to be called). The early critics attacked Gilbert’s inclusion of this humorous pair in the first and last acts because it was felt that they had “positively nothing to do with the development of the story.” This may be true as far as the serious triangles between the main characters are concerned, but the Coxe-Coxes do contribute heavily to the general theme of “fortune hunting”—both in a monetary and a social sense. In fact, some of the most amusing scenes in all of Gilbert’s plays are found in the attempts of the

95 The Pall Mall Gazette, p. 4.
Dialogue leading to the duel between Armand and Sir Cuthbert in the final act of The Fortune Hunter (pp. 440-441):

Sir C. I see that you are resolved to force a duel upon me. Well, you will find it difficult—I decline to cross swords with you.

De B. How, Sir Cuthbert Jameson? I thought you a brave man.

Sir C. You know me very well, but I am sorry to say that your opinion, one way or the other, is a matter of indifference to me.

De B. But it will cease to be a matter of indifference to you when I proclaim you throughout Paris as an English soldier who dared to inflict an insult on a French civilian, but who declined the consequences that a brave man would regard as inevitable.

Sir C. It will be time enough to declare what I shall do when you have taken that imprudent course. At present you are the husband of a lady whom I regard with profound esteem, and whose cause I am here to advocate. In that capacity you enjoy the privilege of giving your tongue full licence with impunity, and  

De B. Ah, you are here to advocate the cause of Madame la Vicomtesse de Bréville. Does it not occur to you that in thus identifying yourself with that lady without her husband's permission you are seriously compromising her good name?

Sir C. (amazed). What! Do you pretend to support her?

De B. (triumphantly), Ah, I have you now! (With passionate insolence). Does it not occur to you that you—a former lover of this lady—may not have altogether forgotten the influence which she once exercised over you—if, indeed, you are not still under that influence?

Sir C. Damn you, hold your devilish tongue!

De B. Does it not occur to you that the world may regard your interest in her as anything but disinterested interest; and that in accompanying her on her travels, whether she will or no, you are doing that which may tend to affect her blameless reputation—that it may believe, as I believe, that you are a friend neither to her nor to me, but a deadly foe to both—that it may regard your insolent offer—which you well know that I should reject with scorn and contempt as a transparent veil through which your insidious designs were but too clearly apparent? Does it not occur to you that a man who, under the guise of friendship, does these things, and when detected submits to that (striking him with rapier across chest), with patience and resignation—

Sir C. (who has been restraining his fury with difficulty during this speech). Curse you, you hound! Take your guard! [Seizing a rapier.]

De B. (taking the other). Ah, I thought I should bring you to this at last! 
Coxe-Coxes to insinuate their way into aristocratic circles, and it is small wonder that several later compilers have mistakenly listed The Fortune Hunter as a work of comedy. The scene in the first act (pp. 391-395) in which Dudley mistakes the Duke of Dundee's courier for the Duke himself, discards his erstwhile bumptious nature to bow and scrape before the courier, and even goes to the extreme of collecting the courier's cigar end is an excellent example of social class satire at its best. The national snobbery of the Coxes, expressed in such lines as "... it may interest you to learn that in a civilised country no one has a right to hold his head higher than an English gentleman" (p. 368) is as real as the snobbery expressed by the proud French aristocrats, the Marquis and Marquise de Broville, and one magnificent irony of the piece is that the middle-class English couple of the play glorify the upper classes as much as the Marquis and Marquise. The Dudley Coxes outwardly mouth contempt for social class distinctions, but their comical, obsequious behavior toward the Duke and Duchess of Dundee reveal them to be as class-conscious as any couple could be, despite their English protestations of complete belief in social and political

96 The Stage said, "... if these persons and their colleagues were taken bodily out of the play they would make, as they are, an amusing commedia in themselves..."


98 To anyone who considers this incident overdrawn, I can vouch for a similar incident in real life—a well-dressed crowd at a Vanderbilt show scrambling for the cast-off cigar end of the Prince of Wales. "Bubbles" in the Clarion, Oct. 2, 1897, p. 315.
Mr. Coxe. Do you know, Godiva, I'm quite glad that we are going to travel with a live Duke and Duchess.

Mrs. Coxe. My dear Dudley, what an extraordinary speech! What in the world are the Duke and Duchess to us?

Mr. Coxe. Absolutely nothing—except for the amusement it will indirectly afford us.

Mrs. Coxe. Oh, from that point of view I admit they have their value.

Mr. Coxe. My dear Godiva, these enormous swells exude an atmosphere of perpetual comedy. They don't see it, poor souls, as they think it's all right enough—but to the independent looker, who doesn't care a fig for those tinted distinctions, comedy is delightful. It will be interesting to watch the production of these pompous nobodies upon the tipsy old K.G.'s, the cheap colonels, the seedy subalterns, the hump-backed globe-trotters, that crowd the quarter-deck, who will give us matter to moralise upon for a month!

Mrs. Coxe. And the woman-folk of these genties! How they will scheme and manoeuvre, and plot and plan to get a bit of notice—if it's only a morning nod—from the great people! And his wife's gaudy American taste suitable for its chaste but daring originality! Aah, my dear Dudley, there are sad sights in this world!

Mr. Coxe. Yes; it's ungentile—(Rises). Hallo!—Mr. Coxe. What's the matter?

Mrs. Coxe. (impressed). I believe I've been sitting on the Duke's chair!

Mr. Coxe (arrested). No!

Mrs. Coxe. I do believe I have! (Looks at chair). I have! It's the Duke's own chair!

Mr. Coxe (putting the seat). It doesn't look new, I wonder. If he's sat on it much—and, by Jove!—Godiva—(To Godiva). What's the matter here?

Mrs. Coxe. You've been actually sitting on the Duke's chair?

Mrs. Coxe. So I have! Oh, Dudley! (Ducks it with a pocket-handkerchief). It's very like other people's chairs.

Mrs. Coxe. (hastily recovering himself). Why, of course it is, You don't suppose that those people are as rich as you are, do you? But they're wiser than we are, in one thing—they take care to have them placed on the cool side of the deck—(To Coxe). Yes; it's dreadfully hot on the port side—gets all the afternoon sun. I think I should like my chair placed this side. Will you tell the quartermaster?

Mr. Coxe. Quartermaster! (Seizes a chair). Just being Mrs. Coxe's chair here—you'll find it between those of Sir Gilbert Jameson and Lord Frederick Foley, (Exit QUARTEEMASTER). By Jove, I see the harumi-master's launch! They are coming! I don't like that hat, Godiva—haven't you another one?

Mrs. Coxe. Plenty. Shall I wear the white felt with the strawberry leaves?

Mr. Coxe. The strawberry leaves by all means. Nothing could be better.

Mrs. Coxe. I won't be a minute. (Exit down companion.)

Mr. Coxe. Shall I be smoking a cigar? No. And yet one looks sore at one's ease with something in one's mouth. Not a bit. (Throwing away cigar)—a cigarette is better form.

Mrs. Coxe. And I know perhaps the Duchess doesn't like tobacco. (Lights one.) Aah...?—I know—perhaps the Duchess doesn't like tobacco. (Lights one.) And throw it away when she sees me. It's just as well to let her put it in her mouth, as that is one accustomed to the habits of refined society.

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Enter Quartermaster with chair.

Quar. Where will you have it, sir?

Mr. Coxe. Oh, put it down anywhere. (Pointing to vacant place near the Duke's chair).—Here, there's just room.

Quar. (with bated breath). That's the Duke's chair, sir.

Mr. Coxe (angrily). The Duke's chair, sir! Well, what the devil is the Duke to me? Damn the Duke, sir—put it where I tell you! (Decks as much mims as has! (Quartermaster places chair as directed and exit.) Upon my word, the coddle-liness of people is perfectly astonishing! (Coxe places case and Duchy's chair close to his own). It's enough to turn a fellow into an unfeeling Radical! (Strolls up and down the deck). He mistakes him for the Duke. Oh, here comes the Duke—now for it! (Strolls up and off.)

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Mr. Coxe. With great deference, I beg your pardon.

Bar. Eh?

Mr. Coxe. You were good enough to mention my name, I think?

Bar. Oh, you're Mr. Coxe. Yes. I read it off your chair. You'll be rather in our way here, I fancy. Would it be troubling you too much to move to another part of the deck?

Mr. Coxe. Oh, remove it at once—pray permit me—quartermaster placed it there. (Removing it.) Charming weather.

[Bar. rings own cigarette end. Coxe picks it up, while Bar. is arranging rugs on chair, and puts it in his own case.]

Bar. Yes—smoke outside though.

Mr. Coxe. Is there? You yacht a good deal, I believe?

Bar. Yes—we usually winter in the Mediterranean; but this year we went up the Nile to Wady Haifa.

Mr. Coxe. Indeed! How awfully good of you—I mean that must have been very pleasant. By the way, I trust my cigarette is not disagreeable to you? If so, I'll—


Mr. Coxe (evasively). With the very greatest pleasure. Pray permit me.

[Mr. Coxe offers cigarette case. Bar. with the very greatest pleasure. Bar. picks out cigarette end.

Bar. Hallo! Why, I just threw this away!

Mr. Coxe (confused). Oh, I beg your pardon. I'm—collecting cigarette ends!

Bar. Curious hobby! Come from far?

Mr. Coxe. Calcutta. By the way, we travelled across India with the Vicereoy.

Bar. Oh, Elliston?

Mr. Coxe. Yes, Elliston. You know him, of course?

Bar. Know him? Rather! I travelled all over Europe with him a couple of years ago. Quaint old fellow.

Mr. Coxe. Most quaint—most charming—most delightful. So frank and open-hearted.

Bar. (dubiously). Humph! Close-fisted old chap, I should say.

Mr. Coxe. Close-fisted! Never. He was travelling with the Marquis of Samborough.

Bar. Ah! Good fellow, Samborough; pretty daughters, too—especially Lady Arabella. Sad business her marriage.

Mr. Coxe. Awful—frugid—deplorable.

Bar. Turned out well, though, eventually.

Mr. Coxe. Turned out splendidly—magnificently—eventually.
Photograph of the Dudley Coxe-Coxes as portrayed by Mr. C. Coutts and Miss Nora O'Neill in the 1897 Crouch End production of The Fortune Hunter.

MR. AND MRS. DUDLEY COXE (MR. C. COUTTS AND MISS NORA O'NEILL).

The Sketch, October 20, 1897, p. 519.
democracy. In rescuing the Coxes from a charge of impersonation
and fraud in the last act, Arnaud assures the Duchess of Dundee
that the couple are not hardened criminals but merely members of
the English school of social climbing:

Duchess, these are merely two of Nature's noble people who
have got themselves into difficulties through an audiable
desire to associate with their superiors in more social
rank. . . . It is an excusable ambition, Mr. Cox, which
you share with many of your audiable countrymen and women.
But, my good Cox (Coxe shouts 'Coxo-Coxe, sir'), permit
me to give you a hint. If you are an amateur of blacking,
lick the boots of as many noblemen as will permit you to
do so—oh, there are plenty!—but before you begin, make
quite sure that the blacking has the proper aristocratic
bouquet. The blacking of a courier is not nice (p. 432).

Although Gilbert had visited America during the days of the
Savoy opera boom and many amusing stories emerged from his dialogue
with the people he had met there99 Buphemia S. Van Zyl— the Duchess
of Dundee—is the only genuine transatlantic character to appear in
any of his works for the stage. It must be admitted that basically
Gilbert is not unkind in his characterization of the pork heiress
turned Duchess. Buphemia lacks the refined polish of the French
aristocracy and the stiff reserve of Sir Cuthbert, but she is not a
negative character in the mode of the obnoxious, self-seeking Coxes.
The Clarion described her as "a sensible, warm-hearted, noble woman;
broad and slangy certainly, but . . . all grit," and despite her

99One painful society lady asked Gilbert if "dear Baytch"
meaning Bach—was still composing, and Gilbert replied that Bach
was currently in the state of "decomposing." See Hesketh Pearson,
also be noted that Gilbert's adopted daughter, Miss Nancy Keibisch,
who starred in *Utopia Limited, His Excellency*, and *Fellen Fairies*
was an American.
Miss Cicely Richards as the Duchess of Dundee

(The Sketch, October 20, 1897, p. 518):

THE DUCHESS OF DUNDEE (MISS CICELY RICHARDS).

Photo by Whitchurch, Birmingham.
stereotyped characterization, as the open-hearted yokel, she was called the "one altogether delightful character" in the play by the critic for the *Sketch*. Of Gilbert's dialect for Euphemia, the *Stage* said, "The Americanisms which he has put into the mouth of the Duchess are startling both in quantity and quality." It is also true that Euphemia helps to hammer home the international fortune-hunting and status-seeking theme of Gilbert's play. Armand had met and proposed to Euphemia in Chicago before she met the Duke of Dundee, but the traditional lustre of the Duke's title when she met him had prompted her to decline Armand's offer in favour of the Duke's. She later confessed to Armand, "But when a British Duke dazzles her, what's a Chicago girl to do?"

*De B.* Is his Grace so brilliant? *Duch.* Well, no, he's not exactly what you'd call brilliant, and that's the truth. But he is His Grace—and in common fairness don't forget that I'm a Republican. *De B.* True—that should not be forgotten. And when the Duke came—he is not in his first youth, I think? *Duch.* No, I can't say he is. He's eighty-five, and bad at that. *De B.* And when the Duke came—who is an indifferent eighty-five—poor de Breville—who was a well-preserved four-and-twenty—received his congé. Oh, it is fit and proper! The Duke has his precedence, and de Breville acquiesces. He is not a discarded lover—he is the victim of social etiquette (p. 403).

Years later in a socialistic study of the work, one writer said, "This play failed probably because it appeared distasteful to both aristocracy and bourgeoisie; to the former as viewed in the light of fortune hunters; to the latter as viewed in the light
Although it is somewhat doubtful that this was the main reason why the play did not receive public approval, the content of the comment is valid as far as the theme of the work is concerned. When Armand speaks of the snobbishness of Dudley Core, Euphemia confesses, "Well, Core is a snob—there's no two ways out of that. But, Lord bless you, so am I! I've worked a bit harder and paid a bit dearer than he has to get into good society..." (p. 433).

Thus, Gilbert, in a Henry James stance, reveals that the allure of Old World titles is not lost on even the inhabitants of the New, although the frontiersmen have supposedly forsaken such trappings. In lines that allude both to the paradox of America's cross economic drive and the new country's secret longing for acceptance by cultural Europe, Armand muses,

But, United Statesman, what a blind, illogical race you are! You profess to place enormous import duties upon all commodities that are unable to produce, and yet you admit, on free-trade principles, the British Peer, who drains more dollars out of your country in a day that your Customs will produce you in a twelvemonth! (p. 404).

A minor but positive character in the thematic underpinning of Gilbert's play is the Scotsman, Macquarie, Purser of P. and O. ss. "Africa," whose apathetic attitude toward the nobility is one of the more refreshing aspects of the play. His confrontation with Barker, the Duke of Dundee's arrogant courier, is in striking contrast to the

fawning attitude of some of the characters:

Bar. But stop! I am accustomed to have a cabin to myself.

Pur. Are you? Well, you won't have one this voyage—we're full up. When do the Duke and Duchess come on board? We get under weigh in half an hour. Bar. The launch is going back for them. I suppose you'll be here to receive them? Pur. No—I don't think that will be necessary. If the Duke wants me he can send for me. I shall be in my office. [Exit.]

Bar. Cool hands these merchant fellows, upon my honour!

(pp. 391-392).

The heroine, Diana Caverel, the Australian English girl, is also a fortune hunter, but in a way somewhat different from the other characters. It is neither money nor social prestige that she seeks, but a life of careless adventure, free from what she calls "duties to discharge that would fret and gall me" (p. 399). However, her dreams of freedom from convention lead to her tragic marriage with Armand. Sir Cuthbert comes to the rescue at the play's conclusion to apparently offer her the life of a good squire's wife she had previously refused in the first act (p. 399). Consequently, Gilbert assays Diana's search for a life without conventional responsibility as being as vain and as negative as the pursuit for material fortune and social class distinctions that motivated the other major characters. It could also be argued that the tragedy that overtakes Diana represented to basically conservative thinkers like Gilbert the evil to be visited upon those women who spurned the traditional protection of matrimony offered by men like Sir Cuthbert and followed the perilous example of Ibsen's Nora.
Dear Mr. Stuart.

Would you care to consider the question of producing a 3 act dramatic play of mine in which I have a very strong belief? It has never been played in London - only in the Country [about 8 years ago] & I have never offered it to any Manager since its production in the Country as I could think of no actor who could satisfactorily play the leading part - a very difficult part to cast. - a kind of "Maldonado"

It occurred to me the other evening, at the first performance of Mrs. de la Posture's play, that Mr. Oscar Asche was the very man for the part & that the heroine would exactly suit Miss Lily Brayton. If you care to entertain the question I will come up to town & read it to you (& to Mr. & Mrs. Asche if you please) any day after Thursday next. The piece is called "The Fortune Hunter" - but the name does not quite please me & I should probably alter it. The play is modern & towards the close, strongly dramatic. I have altered it considerably since it was produced (by a very indifferent Company) in the Country. It went enormously on the first night (Birmingham) & I had six calls at the end. However, this means very little.

If you could spare the time it would give me great pleasure if you & Mr. & Mrs. Asche would be so good as to come down here to luncheon on Thursday next (or on any other day that would suit you) & I would read the piece after luncheon. You get down here via Euston to Harrow & my car would meet you at the Station. You could return by a train reaching Euston at 6.20.

Yours truly

W. S. GILBERT.

P. S. I hope Mr. & Mrs. Asche will pardon the informality of the invitation.
Despite its complete failure, Gilbert never lost his enthusiasm for The Fortune Hunter. He even vainly tried to interest a number of important theatrical personalities into taking it into production as late as 1905, and his comments on it in a letter reproduced in typescript in the Reginald Allen collection fully exhibit the almost paranoid delusions he had about its failure and value. One close acquaintance wrote many years later, "... Gilbert was immensely keen about it. I can still hear him reciting whole passages in his quick authoritative way, like words of command." 101

The underlying concepts in The Fairy's Dilemma are not as easy to pinpoint as those in The Fortune Hunter. "The point of a joke lies in the ear of the man who hears it," wrote the critic for the Daily Telegraph in 1904, "and not everyone, we feel sure, who sees 'The Fairy's Dilemma' will be quite certain whether the satire is addressed to him or expended on a somewhat old-fashioned form of entertainment—or is not satire at all, but mere freakishness." A week after the production opened, A. M. L. in the Lady's Gazette spoke of the "controversial arguments" to which the play had "given birth." William Archer in the World suggested, "... perhaps to his surprise, we must count Mr. Gilbert also among the symbolists."

The Theatre.

"The Fairy's Dilemma"—The critic is reviewing "The Fairy's Dilemma" at the Garrick Theatre, saying it is a play for young and old, but to enjoy the full flavor of its delicacy one must be at least acquainted with the classics. It is a parody of a romanticism. The pantomium of to-day sheds only its absurdities upon itself. What shall literature choose? But it is the pantomium of thirty to forty years ago—the pantomium of H. L. Blanchard, the Valeries, and Beverley—there was a definite correation for the pantomium to take hold of. On the Garrick play, Charley, indeed, there are suggestions of a still younger age. The full title of the piece is "Harlequin and the Fairy's Dilemma," and the author seems an echo back to earlier original pantomimes in the eighteenth century. But above all, it is the thought that the play is on a theatrical level, which might be written out on this. And this makes the play, simply as a travesty of the pantomime of Charley, the most successful pantomime ever made as a travesty of pantomime, while Picchleit left it, not yet appraised in a style or degraded to the level of the variety show. As an illustration of English stage-humor, "The Fairy's Dilemma" may also, in its various ways, with another delightful piece of retrospective homage—Mr. Gilbert's "Merry Wives of Windsor." The overtone takes us at a bound right back to the classics. It consists of the music-hall times of that day as sung like numbers on a string with a few old English airs, hornpipes, and country-themes, interpreted. And truly, one may have found food for speculation reflection. I do not think of elgant jingles of to-day are quite as intelligently trivial as "Charley" or "Shap-Bang," or "Puddle your own canoe." But it is not their musical merits that now concern us. It is their historical associations. They take us back in a flash to the days of the Elizabeths and the elgant, of stepheh troubadours and troubadours covering, to the days of Queen Victoria of the Court Bohemian, of the second Reform Bill, of the British Absonian expedition, and the Isambardia clausa; to the days when Sedan suggested nothing but chains, and Jupin was chiefly associated with laugher; to the days when Darwinian was a jest, Wagnerian a jest, and Nietzsche an unborn monster—in a word, that seems almost incredibly small, pleasant, and humoral in companionship with the tender, dangerous planet of huge empires, huge armaments, huge wars, huge riches, huge aspirations, and huge profits. It may not be apparent what all this world historic recital does to Mr. Gilbert's unpretending pantomime-travesty, but I am merely stating a fact of personal experience when I say that the good part of the pleasure this gave me lay in its incidental revelation of a bygone age, as real to us now as remote to us seems almost fabulous. It was a pleasure analogous to that of going through old volumes of French. We laugh at the comic joke, the famous anecdoty, yet over and anon the "lapse, idle to use of mid-Victorian sentiment" rise in the heart and gather to the eyes in thinking of all that foolishness of all, those queer, piddling men and women, and our own dead in whom, invariably awakened up in the great golf of the past.

The type of pantomime which Mr. Gilbert parodies was a characteristic product of those jingling times of many prosperity. It always began in the Demon's Cavern; it always ended in an apotheosis, represented in Mr. Gilbert's play by "The Revolving States of Radiant Reproduction," and everywhere and at all times the Good Fairy was at hand to both the Demon and rescue the Prince and Princess from her clutches. Now, Mr. Gilbert imaginatively superimposes the machinery of pantomime upon real life, while he brings the ethical system on which it is founded into clear harmony with experience. The struggle between the Good and the Evil in the pantomime makes a pretty mess of things for the monster with whose destinies they meddle. Not Malevishness, but stupidity, is the mischief-maker in human affairs; that is, if one can call it a thing. Whether he intended it or not, I do not know; but I know whether Shakespeare or the philospher of pantomime. But there it is, so plain as need be; and, if up to his surprise, we must count Mr. Gilbert also among the symbolists.

Philosophy apart, however, the pantomime is one unbroken anachronistic fantasy in the author's happiest rain. How delightful is the conception that may sit on the very threshold—which of the Demon with no car for motes or phanoe, who is compelled, by the inexorable conviction of his fate, to talk always in couplets! When the Fairy Rosedale appears, the Demon becomes his of taking a man advantage of him in always speaking the first line of the couplet, and leaving him to find the rhyme. The workmanship of this opening scene is admirable: the verse shines with a rare, hard polish of which Mr. Gilbert has the secret. As the play goes on, never a minute passes without some new touch of ingenuity, whimishness. The verse are created. "The Rev. Algernon Rosedale, M.A., 0f33, Princes' Hall," is a triumph of the art of abracadabra. It presents to the mind's eye an instant vision of the delightfully corny theological doctrines Mr. O. B. Chausson so emphatically avows. As for "Older Sir Trevor Marnasty, Bart. (of the Household Cavalry)," so fair that ever were ongles could possibly help in giving him the typical Wicked Baronet of comedies. It is in this light that the Fairy Rosedale appears, and beholds him! be not a Wicked Baronet at all, but the sound of chivalry and honor, who, when metamorphosed into the Count, mutates again on account of the heroines and unied characters which the Fairy's error compels him to perpetrate. In Mr. Justice Whorley, the sardonic judge whom it needed so very startling miracle to transform into the Pantoloon, we have a little dash of satire to favor the otherwise wholly selfish absurdity. Some people seem to have left, on the first night, that the Harlequinade carried the joke too far. But the Harlequinade is the necessary consummation of the old-fashioned pantomime, and this was very brief and very amusing. Certainly the most deftly injected incident of the whole evening was the transformation of the Rev. Algernon into Harlequin. It is a play that Sir Trevor's metamorphosis cannot be as easily managed.

The actors entered admirably into the spirit of the thing. Mr. Chausson was perfect an Elbiff, and, to put it in the style of the Demon Alcibiades, "As Clown or Devil, nothing could be clearer than Mr. Boursin as Sir T. Marnasty." Miss Violet Vane as Lady Angela, Mr. Sydney Valentine as Mr. Justice Whorley, and Miss Dorothy Grimston as Clausa were all exceedingly good; Mr. Jervis Robertshaw seemed born for the part of the Demon; and Miss Jessie Rankin was charming as the Fairy Rosedale, though I fancy she ought to have taken the part a little more gravely.

In sum, "The Fairy's Dilemma" is one of the most delightful works of an imitable (though too often imitated) humorist. The charm of the first night was appropriately heightened by the selection from Sullivan's which the band played between the acts. As the close, elegant, sparkling melodies flowed through the theatre, each of them singing, as it were, the well-remembered words that had inspired it, one could not but reflect on all that we owe to the most fortunate partnership, surely, in the annals of English art, and only rejoice to find one of those great creations of harmless pleasure adding, in the new century, a new item to our debt.
The pantomime transformation scene that occupies most of the second act is the most cryptic aspect of the play. When Sir Trevor, transformed into Clown, suddenly stops his inane antics and questions himself:

What have I been doing? What detestable acts of unbridled profligacy have I been committing? I, a Colonel of Household Cavalry, a Baronet of the United Kingdom, a Deputy-Lieutenant for half a dozen counties, a landed proprietor, and Chairman of the Quarter Sessions! Surely, I so far forgot my manhood as to strike an aged man—and that aged man, a Judge of the High Court! (p. 37).

It is clear that Gilbert intends for the scene to be interpreted as much more than just a parody of pantomime. Lady Angela, Judge Whortle, and the Rev. Parfitt also undergo, in the words of the Horseting Advertiser, "intermittent moments when they realized the absurdity of their respective positions," and, according to E.F.S. in the Westminster Gazette, "they deplored their conduct and pitied themselves." When this occurs, one is reminded once again of King Paramount's song on the joke of life in Itonia Limited. The ironic injustice of the situation is humorously presented in Parfitt's humorous lines as he surveys his transformation into Harlequin:

Trevor, my dear old friend, we have all undergone a remarkable, and, to me, quite unaccountable, change. I am led to believe that, in my case, it is the reward of a virtuous life. If that be so, the moral that is to be drawn from it is deplorable (p. 32).

Even Fairy Rosebud, the misdirected guiding force that has caused all this grief for the hapless mortals, is not insensitive to the unjust situation she has created:
Well, the fact is I'm not at all comfortable. These poor people whom I've transformed—highly respectable, all of good social position, and much looked up to in their respective capacities—and we've taken this monstrous liberty with them . . . (p. 39).

The joke of life there—verbally presented in King Paramount's song in Utopia Limited (see above, p. 75) and graphically symbolised perhaps by Gov. Griffenfeld's practical jokes on his helpless subjects in His Excellency—is also emphasised in The Fairy's Dilemma by Judge Whortle's verbal jokes ironically told amid roars of laughter in the incongruous setting of his Courtroom where defendants are anxiously awaiting his supposedly just and solemn judgements:

Judge. No, I think not . . . Judicial humour is my strong point. A trial at law is an extremely serious matter for both parties, and both parties are generally in a condition of heart-aching despondency until the verdict is delivered. I hold it to be a kind act, a considerate act, and a consolatory act on the part of the Judge to relieve that depression, to dissipate that despondency, and to cause both parties to forget, if possible, the important issues at stake by indulging them with a course of jocular comment—of lighthearted facetiae, and in short, with a display of general a—a—Sir, T. Tomfoolery! Judge. A—well, yes—thank you, Sir Trevor—that's not quite the word I wanted, but something of that description. I flatter myself that 'Hears of laughter, in which the learned judge could not help joining,' is a paragraph that appears more often in cases tried before me than in any other Court of Justice in the kingdom, Aloy, (timidly). But, if I may venture to make a suggestion, Sir John, a jocular attitude would be scarcely in keeping with—Judge. (angrily). But you may not venture to make a suggestion, Mr. Parfitt. I am not here to receive suggestions! (p. 13).

When Gilbert put ecclesiastical Parfitt, judicial Whortle, military Sir Trevor, and noble Lady Anglæ into the ridiculous roles of Harlequin, Pantaloon, Clown, and Columbine, broad social satire was also undoubtedly intended. " . . . to me it contains a world of
terrible satire on the humbug of the present age which no one seems to have given the author credit for," wrote M.C.S. in the Free Lance, and the "Peripatetic Pagan" in Modern Society noted that

Mr. Justice Whortle, a conventionally 'funny' judge, is only seen in his true light when transformed into pantaloon by the fairy's wand; one sees rather a new view of the old man than a new man. When the Rev. Aloysius Farfitt is changed, too, into a harlequin, the change is not so great, for the patchwork costume seems a fit symbol of the conventional eclecticism of opinion which afflicts so many modern divines.

When the Judge is transformed into a comic pantomime Pantaloon by Fairy Rosebud, he cries, "A more flagrant case of Contempt of Court I have never encountered. I have had experience of many cases of contempt of the Court over which I preside, but never anything to equal this!" (p. 32); but he has also made an interesting discovery: "Deary me! It's not as great a change as I should have supposed!" (p. 31). There are also certain autobiographical aspects in Gilbert's characterization of Judge Whortle. Some journalists who were not well disposed toward Gilbert questioned the crusty librettist's 1891 J.P. appointment, citing his well-publicized short temper and/or his comic literary efforts as not in keeping with the dignity of the position. In this sense, perhaps Gilbert had himself in mind when he wrote the part of Judge Whortle.

Through the character of Judge Whortle, Gilbert also attacks the concept that the Courts are always wise and just, and he has a great deal of fun at the expense of the judiciary in general. Concerning

his judicial wig, the Judge reveals,

Without it (taking it off) I am simply an intellectual middle-aged gentleman of a refined and cultivated type; but with it, Miss Collins (putting it on), I am at once the embodiment of the abstract Majesty of the Law—three centuries of the concentrated wisdom of both Houses of Parliament in tabloid form (p. 12).

In other works in this study, Claudius assumes the role of Judge when he sentences Hamlet first to death and then to England in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and Gov. Griffenfeld assures his heartless daughters that he will don his judicial robes to gain an acquittal if the girls are sued by their suitors for breach of promise in His Excellency:

Hauke. Their disgust and desperation when they see the situation some congenial occupation for the lawyers will prepare—

Thor. We shall find their loud abusing both instructive and amusing, and of violent accusing there'll be symptoms in the air—

Grif. And their libellous expressions and their angry indiscretions will be tried at Quarter Sessions, when I occupy the chair!

Hauke (gleefully). When you occupy the chair—

Thor (gleefully). When you occupy the chair—

Grif. When I occupy the chair! (p. 140).

Gilbert continues in this vein in Utopia Limited when Sir Bailey Barre exclaims,

All preconceived ideas on any subject I can scout, And demonstrate beyond all possibility of doubt, That whether you're an honest man or whether you're a thief Depends on whose solicitor has given me my brief (p. 432),

and the happy conclusion to Haste to the Wedding is partly the result of some obvious courtroom chicanery as "... English justice, nobly fair—/ (This is a great Countree!) / Is freely tipped with English gold!" (p. 185). 103

103 When Nats Munk bribes a sentry to take Nat's side in a dispute in His Excellency, Nats confides to the audience, "I've tipped
When the respectable dignitaries of The Fairy's Dilemma are magickedly transformed into pantomime performers, the indignant utterance of one of them to Fairy Rosebud, "I desire to give you notice that I shall at once place the matter in the hands of my solicitor!" (p. 32), only adds to the ironic humour of the situation (and inadvertently draws attention to Gilbert's own record of bringing hasty lawsuits against these parties who he felt had treated him unfairly). Comic allusions to solicitors and barristers are found throughout Gilbert's later works as he satirizes the supposed omniscient efficiency of the legal profession and the myth that lawyers can produce a panacea for any problem. Gilbert combined this type of legal satire with his satiric treatment of Hamlet in The Mountebanks:

Ophelia to her sex was a disgrace,
When nobody could feel compassion for,
Ophelia should have gone to Ely Place
To consult an eminent solicitor,
When such promises as these
Breaks a suitor, rich and regal,
Why, substantial charges
Is the panacea legal—
From a jury—sons of Adam,
Though as stony as Adam,
Maid or madam, she'd have had 'em,
Would Ophelia! (p. 461).

In The Grand Duke, Tannhauser the Notary superciliously boasts,
'It is always amusing to the legal mind to see a parcel of laymen

his till he doesn't know whether he stands on his head or his heels!" (p. 137). 'It is ridiculous to assume that this admirer of Dickens, whose satire of courts of law Gilbert has been said to echo, was not concerned with serious criticism of legal corruption" Farnsworth, p. 268.

For a discussion of Gilbert's representation of the legal profession in all his works, see Robert Gray, "Gilbert's Lawyer Characters," G & S Journal, March 1933, p. 131.
Trick photograph in The Tatler, May 18, 1904, p. 288, showing actor Sydney Valentine as both Pantaloon and Judge Whortle in The Fairy's Dilemma:

![A TRICK PICTURE OF THE JUDGE LOOKING AT HIMSELF](image)

This picture shows Judge Whortle (Mr. Sydney Valentine) astounded at his own appearance as the pantaloon into which the Demon Alcohol transforms him. He does not do this in the play, of course.
bothering themselves about a matter which to a trained lawyer presents no difficulty whatever" (p. 55). Of course, there is a bit of Gilbertian truth in this statement in the sense that the legal mind can twist any situation to suit its own purposes. Gilbert's most cynical observation on this aspect of the man of law appears in Utopia Limited:

A complicated gentleman allow me to present,
Of all the arts and faculties the most abounding,
He's a great Arithmetician who can demonstrate with ease
That two and two are three, or five, or anything you please;
An eminent Logician who can make it clear to you
That black is white—when looked at from the proper point of view;
A marvelous Philologist who'll undertake to show
That 'yes' is but another and a neater form of 'no' (p. 431).

When the Prince Regent falsely introduces himself to Gov. Griffenfeld as a "strolling player" in His Excellency, Griffenfeld replies, "A professional rogue, eh?" and the Regent retorts, "Well—a technical rogue—such as a lawyer is a technical gentleman—that is to say, by Act of Parliament" (p. 112). There are, in fact, a number of satiric references in Gilbert's later work to the glorified band of lawyers at Westminster, but Gilbert's most concentrated attack on Parliament in his later works occurs in the second act of Utopia Limited when King Paramount boasts of his country's great reforms in the House of Lords. The opening lines are reminiscent of certain comments about Parliament in Dolanthia, and the remainder of the quotation alludes to the fact that commercial interests rather than intellectual ones control the British Parliament:
King. Our Peerage we've remodelled on an intellectual basis, which certainly is rough on our hereditary races—

Chorus. We are going to remodel it in England.

King. The Brewers and the Cotton Lords no longer seek admission, and Literary Merit meets with proper recognition—

Chorus. As Literary Merit does in England!

King. Who knows but we may count among our intellectual chickens like you, an Earl of Thackeray and perhaps a Duke of Dickens—Lord Mikes and Viscount Millais (when they come) we'll welcome sweetly—

Chorus. In short, this happy country has been Anglicized completely! (pp. 440-441).

At the beginning of the century, Shelley had proclaimed that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world," and Gilbert at the end of the century apparently saw little change in the "unacknowledged" aspect of Shelley's idealistic statement. In the Duke of Trumiptopshire condescendingly speaks of "small tradesmen and other Members of Parliament, who think rump steak and drink bottled bear" (p. 165), and in The Grand Duke the Prince of Monte Carlo excuses the bad manners of his entourage with these lines:

To account for their shortcomings manifest
We explain, in whisper bated,
They are wealthy members of the brewing interest
To the Peerage elevated (p. 86).

Judge Whortle in The Fairy's Dilemma employs a bit of legalistic dialogue to excuse his uncontrollable pantomime antics:

Did I do that? God bless my soul, I believe I did! But, Sir Trevor, to constitute a criminal offence, the animus furandi must be proved, or reasonably presumed. In the absence of the mens rea the case comes under neither statute nor common law. I can lay my hand upon my heart and proudly say that, to all intents and purposes, I am innocent of this larceny! (pp. 37-38).
One of the characters in The Grand Duke says:

We know that complicated laws,
Such as a legal draughtsman draws,
Cannot be briefly stated (p. 56),

and Gilbert's work during these later years is ripe with mock examples of the formal legal jargon of the courts, illuminating a bit of satire Gilbert employs in His Excellency when Dame Cortlandt upbraids Nate Munch, the town syndic, for his unprofessional rhetoric:

Although of men's vulgarity, 0--
I'm no unfair inquisitor,
I hate familiarity, 0--
In a family solicitor!

Your tone is not professional, 0--
It's neither grave nor courtly:
Such lack of common-sense
Inspires no confidence (p. 118).

The bandits in The Mountebanks justify their recoil from personal danger with use of contractual jargon:

Glo. . . . You see, as we are all to be married in the course of the next three weeks, we are bound, as men of honour, to hand over our personal charms in the same condition of substantial and decorative repair that they were in when we captivated these confiding creatures. Arr. Naturally. It is plain that a man who offers a girl his hand, and comes to claim her with his arm amputated at the shoulder, is no longer in a position to fulfill his contract. A man who proposes with a Roman nose and turns up at the altar with a snub is guilty of flat dishonesty, on the face of it (p. 360),

and Captain Fitzbattleaxe of Utoria Limited saves Princess Zara from two unwonted admirers with a similar spiel (pp. 426-427).

The satire and underlying implications in The Fairy's Dilemma are certainly not just social and legal, however. In fact, a strong
case can be made that the main interest of the entire work—like so many of Gilbert's other efforts in the post-1890 period—is basically theatrical. The parody of pantomime is obvious, and at the time of its original production, William Archer in the World felt that "as an illustration of English stage-history, The Fairy's Prime may rank, in its very different way, with another delightful piece of retrospective humour—Mr. Pinero's Trelawny of the Wells." However, there are some obvious allusions to contemporary Edwardian theatre in the work which might rescue it from the charge of being completely behind the times in its theatrical subject matter and which, indeed, may be of fundamental importance in understanding the reason Gilbert wrote the piece. It is significant to note that he labelled the work "an original domestic pantomime" (p. 1), indicating that the satire was not directed at Drury Lane pantomime and extravaganzas exclusively, but also aimed at the "domestic dramas" and "the inanity and 'fashion' of the modern Society comedy" of the sophisticated Haymarket. "Dramatic work—as distinguished from merely theatrical entertainment—has disappeared from the London stage," complained A.B. in the Sphere.

In the West-end houses of to-day there is not a single play which can be classed as good or serious drama, and there is not a comedy worthy of the name. Spectacular displays, frivolous farces, and variety entertainments masquerading in theatres are to be seen on all sides. But fine comedy and real drama are nowhere to be seen.

Gilbert himself wrote of "the bad work put before the public"

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105 A.M.T., "Stageland," The Clarion, May 13, 1904, p. 3.
during these years, and his use of leading actors for the pantomime scenes of *The Fairy's Dilemma*—an employment that brought angry condemnation from a large segment of the press—could be interpreted as a Gilbertian analogy on the contemporary condition of London theatre during these years in which the finest acting talents of the day were being wasted on works which he felt were of little dramatic value. "It appears as if Mr. Gilbert has been going the round of London theatres lately," said perceptive M. C. S. in his review of *The Fairy's Dilemma* in the *Free Lance*, "and has watched with grave alarm the vapid tomtomolery and circus wit that the stalls and boxes have been so vigorously applauding under the fictitious name of humour." The writer went on to ask:

... why shouldn't W. S. Gilbert, in all conscience, hold the mirror up to nature and show us the sort of people who enthuse to madness... who fill the highest-priced seats of the theatre to suffocation and pronounce such a piece as [J. M. Barrie's] 'Little Mary' as 'quite the most awfully clever thing ever seen on any stage before don't yer know!'

During the first half of the first decade of the present century when Gilbert wrote *The Fairy's Dilemma*, the London stage was flooded with light-hearted entertainments (*Peter Pan* was the great hit of 1904 when *The Fairy's Dilemma* was produced) and tepid but "well made" serious plays and comedies that concerned themselves with trivial aspects of social propriety among the respectable upper classes.  

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106 Quoted in *Dark and Grey*, p. 143.
It was from this latter category of contemporary drama that Gilbert borrowed his mortal characters in *The Fairly's Dilemma* with their melodramatic social class problems. The exaggerated speech and moral stance of Gilbert's characters (pp. 8-10) reveal them clearly to be in this pattern, and such plot touches as nurse Jane Collins' secret identity as Lady Angela Wealdstone are obvious parodies of the "woman with a past" social themes of these plays. It is the problems of these highly respectable drawing-room drama characters (the involvement of "supernaturals" with "unnaturals," using Gilbert's illuminating terminology, p. 2), the critic for the *St. James's Gazette* said:

"This curious couple of introspective supernaturals are planted by the designing author bang into the middle of a typical West-End drawing-room comedy . . . there to work their most sand-washing will upon Mr. [Henry Arthur] Jones's carefully-concocted plot, to the utter disconcertion of the entire Jonesian scheme.

According to W.S., in the *Free Lance*, Gilbert was saying, "It makes me tired to see how the stage is being blinded with the red-hot pepper flattery and artificial adulation of society . . . Let me show the other side of these people and see what happens . . ."

The result is ironic indeed:

Judge. Ruined! My instant removal from the Bench will be peremptorily demanded by both Houses of Parliament!
Aloy. The Bishop and all my parishioners! How shall I explain it all to them? *Lady Ag* My father the Marquis! It will break even his sturdy old heart! *Sir T* And I shall be tried by Court-martial for conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman! (p. 41)."
Enter Sir Trevor in undress uniform.

Sir T. Aloysius, my dear fellow—

Aloy. Trevor, my old friend!

Sir T. This is a critical moment, Aloysius! In an hour's time we shall have achieved the good deed to which we solemnly pledged ourselves a year ago! In one hour we shall be married men!

Aloy. Yes—still, I cannot help wishing that the humane and unselfish work to which we have so earnestly dedicated ourselves could have been achieved without resort to a deception, which, harmless though it be, is a deception nevertheless.

Sir T. I think you are, perhaps, over-sensitive on this point. Recollect that, Maddened with righteous indignation at the oppression to which weak, helpless, and submissive women are but too often subjected at the hands of arbitrary, dictatorial, and mercenary parents, we solemnly vowed that we would devote ourselves, heart and soul, to the emancipation of the very first instances of such oppression that came to our knowledge—

even though it were necessary to take the extreme course of marrying them in order to release them from such inhuman thraldom.

Sir T. Prompt, nurse, prompt; with your tongue in your hat, and silver in your hand.

Aloy. Yes, short reckonings make long husbands. Nurse Collins is, I have no doubt, equally the victim of some description of oppression, and you, I am convinced, have equally sacrificed yourself at the altar of altruistic self-abnegation.

The exaggerated speech and moral stance of Gilbert's mortal characters in The Fairy's Dilemma and their "problem play" upper social class dilemma are effectively presented in these humorous lines (pp. 8-10):

Sir T. (after a pause). Aloysius, I am about to confide to you a secret which, hitherto, I have confided to no one. The lady whom you know as Jane Collins, the hospital nurse, is no other than the Lady Angela Wealdstone, only child of the haughty and despotic Marquess of Harrow

Aloy. The lady who ran away from home a year ago?—Bless my heart, you don't say so!

Sir T. The Marquis had insisted on her marrying the wealthy but disreputable Duke of Danderly, whom she regarded with absolute detestation. At that time Lady Angela was a year under age and a Ward in Chancery. So, at my suggestion, she left her home, and, changing her name to Jane Collins, she entered herself as probationer at Bushey Heath Cottage Hospital. She is now a fully qualified nurse, and as such I procured her an engagement to attend on Lady Whortle, who, as you know, is a chronic invalid. Lady Angela also came of age yesterday, and we are also to be married before the Registrar to-day.

Aloy. Yes. There are, however, two points upon which I confess my conscience is uneasy. Although I embarked upon my engagement to Clarissa from a simple sense of duty, I cannot conceal from myself that, despite a certain tendency to frivolity, which it will be my constant study to correct, I have grown to be strongly attached to Clarissa.

Sir T. And, between ourselves, I am devotedly fond of Angela.

Aloy. Indeed! I had no idea of this.

Sir T. I am devotedly fond of Angela, but as her affection for me is based entirely on the belief that I am sacrificing my life's happiness to her interests, it won't do to let her know, just yet, how particularly happy I am to be permitted to do so. Now, what is the second point that exercises you?

Aloy. Why, the deception to which I have been a passive party—my having allowed everyone to suppose that I was engaged to Lady Angela, whereas I was really engaged to Clarissa! It is true that I never said as much to any one, but—

—i never contradicted it.

Sir T. My dear boy, the arrangement was made with the full consent and connivance of both ladies, and no one has any right to complain. After all, what does it amount to? You are supposed to be engaged to Lady Angela, whereas you are really engaged to Miss Clarissa. I am supposed to be engaged to Miss Clarissa, whereas I am really engaged to Lady Angela—and both ladies enter, heart and soul, into the arrangement!
Apart from its value as a document to study Gilbert's philosophical, social, and theatrical beliefs, The Fairy's Dilemma has many amusing passages of dialogue, a number of ironic Gilbertian twists, and the characters—with a few exceptions—are extremely humorous and engaging. Certainly Alphonse, the demon "who seems affected by a Philistine sense of propriety,"107 was such a delightful creation that he was considered "a welcome addition to the gallery of Gilbertian worthies."108 by most of the early critics. His excuse for being late for an appointment with Fairy Rosedale presents a humorous reference to one of Gilbert's main pleasures at the turn of the century: riding around the countryside in a motor car (Gilbert owned several of the new inventions):

A thousand pardons! Driving here from town
By brand-new Demon motor-car broke down;
A puncture long delayed me—this fatality
Affects one's character for puncture-ality (p. 23).

In a book on contemporary English drama published four years after its presentation, The Fairy's Dilemma was called "one of the wittiest productions of recent years," and a quarter of a century later, A. H. Godwin wrote a long article in its praise in the Gilbert and Sullivan Journal.110 However, the play has received little study

109 Mario Borsa, The English Stage of To-Day, translated from the Italian by Selwyn Brinton (London: Lane, 1908), pp. 74-75.
THE DRAMA OF TO-DAY.

"THE FAIRY'S DILEMMA" AT THE GARRICK THEATRE.

Mine may possibly be the "true detective in deserts," but, if I mistake not, beneath the red and extravagant mannerism that Mr. W. S. Gilbert stuffs upon his new fairy pantomime, plays comedy—call it what he pleases—there lies a far deeper meaning than we grasp at first sight, and it is no secret a world of terrible satire on the humanity of the present age which no one seems to have given the author credit for.

It appears as if Mr. Gilbert has been going the round of London theatre lately, and has watched with grave alarm the rapid monotony and conveniences that the stage has become so vigorously applauding under the frillier names of houses.

He has weighed with masterly skill that gaudy society, he has permed for the beauty of this highly-watered crowd of which we hear so much, but alas! he has found nothing but.

"Puffy, potty, all the way." In the words, therefore, of Robert Browning, the author has said to himself.

"And, Mr. Gilbert, you write of plays.

Here's a subject made to your hand.

So, with characteristic discernment and wonderful deference, he has sort his people, tuned them into his fine dramatic sense, and lifted them carefully till they stand revealed to the world as they pretended to be, scurred over with a thin transparency of sham beauty, Broadway pretty, Bow Street heartless, and High Court scepticism, but with the mandate of make-believe torn from their shoulders and exposed in their natural costume to the searching glare of clear and truthful daylight.

If Mr. J. B. Barrie, all unintentionally, I darrely, held up to ridicule the entire medical profession, and sought to prove that if we only gave more attention to our minds, and kept them clean and wholesome, there would be no need for so many doctors' bills, or visits to Hemsburg, Bales-Badges, Aix les Bains, &c., in order that the over-fed crowd might go through the one-month's cleansing process after the rest of the year's unhealthy life, with its gluttonous excess, its subliterate selfishness, and tainted atmosphere, why shouldn't W. S. Gilbert, in all conscience, hold the mirror up to nature and show us the sort of people who enthusiasm to undo this sort of play, who fill the highest-priced seats of the theatre to sufferation and penury, such a piece as "Little Mary" as "quite the most awful clever thing ever seen on any stage before don't you know?"

I have had a splendid day! A smart divorce case as a lover and robber, and a nice bit of electrical sound to bring the curtain down at the finish, not that I take it in the High Court as a theatre; at least, I say don't.

Thus speaks Mr. Justice Whipple, the High Court of Judicature, or rather in words to that effect.

"I am not going to be photographed solemnly, like this," again says his Judge, "I take you just as if I were saying a bit in Court, and I pose for a portrait to be taken accordingly.

Away go the judge's secret role, whirled off from behind walls known in the world, and Justice Whipple shows a Pantoheen. In a like manner the author conceives Colonel Sir Thomas Mainwaring, Bart., a member of the Household Cavalry, of his handsome uniform, and Arthur Bourriere is proclaimed to the world a clown—and one of the funniest yet seen in a pantomime of late. Sound of poor Harry Payce; why he memory will be utterly blotted out by Mr. Bourriere's performance of the merry joker who positively appears to revel in the quips and cranks of eccentricity. He returns the smiles with disdain and an inward chuckle after the pantomime with the orthodox hot-pot potter if he were enjoying himself for the very first time in all his life.

"But I can't live without expensive clothes; I paid seven guineas for this hat," cries Clarissa, the pretty daughter of Mr. Justice Whittle.

The costume of the great carriages, there is no redemption of all for this character; she's an out-and-out wrong but, so with a hop, skip, and a jump Clarissa is seized by the Demon Alcohol and whisked in his arms to the flaming regions below.

There is a lovely presence, all smiles and sweetness, the Lady Angela Westminster—daughter of the Earl of Hare. She is a sort of Magdalen Pharaoh, who has donned the uniform of a hospital nurse, and is plotting a runaway match with a member of the Household Cavalry. That's only her disguise, and the author up his sleeve, as Violet Vaneburgh appears in their long blue cloaks, close-sitting bonnet, with its wide strings decorously tied under her chin, and the long garment of her graceful over her shoulders—this is what she really is at heart—and a tall, pink column of steps from the nurse's neckline.

It makes me tried to see how the stage is being filled with the red-hot pantomime and artificial adulation of society, sights the author. Let me show the other side of these people and what happens, and he immediately lifts the secret broadcloth from the shining body of the Rev. Aloysius Parfit, M.A. (of St. Peter's). Surely that name alone is it sufficient to show the author's little game—and there—quack as fox—litter a wrenched, trembling little harlequin, who but a moment before has been proposing his makeup theories and inspired ideals, with all the pretended conscientiousness of a modern "Pantofel," when his Pantomine fire was then suddenly and brutally extinguished.

Nothing could be more artful than the acting by Mr. E. B. Clarke of this benignant gentleman, and his actions are cut and distinct.

Indeed, the overall performance is easy to form the main hand of Mr. W. S. Gilbert, who, as we all know, possesses such an extraordinary power for making his characters not only speak their lines but that no syllable is lost, but singing them into the bargain.

In the world of supernaturals, both Mr. Jerrold Robertshaw and Miss Jessie Hatton are excellent, and thoroughly enter into the ecstatic satire of the situation.

Unlike Mr. Harris, however, who tells us here in the disease and here is the remedy, Mr. Gilbert leaves the problem—and it is a facetious one—impressed as we set off to follow him and his wife, and although he drops the most hilarious aside of it with a mumble of fantastic absurdity, yet there it suddenly in, and the author has done his best to leach a lesson as pleasant and genial a way as he possibly can.

The dancing of pretty little Iris Hawkins is a revelation, and it is a treat to watch this baby mite, who merely cannot be a day more than six or seven. Miss Dorothy Grimstone, too, is charming as Clarissa, the expensive daughter of Mr. Justice Whittle, who in his turn is admirably played by Mr. Sydney Valentin.

Lavishly clever—are people brilliantly acted, chiefly by Misses. Arthur Bourriere and E. B. Clarke. Let Mr. Gilbert's play, the "Pantomime's Entourage," gets right there immediately; but in the deep-thinking it does more than this—it pieces our consciousness with the finest robes of Teutic steel, and it sets one thinking, thinking, and wondering and wondering.

Cast in a comic mould, in fashion in fantasy, there is yet a depth of thought and world-weariness in the pantomime that everyone should see and study; for, with all its variety and its bizarre effects, it is an object lesson only for the philosopher of the hour, but for all gifted with a sense of the lightness and shade of philosophy.
from most writers on Gilbert's life and work since the time of its
production. It is passed over as being merely a belated parody of
Victorian pantomime, although, as indicated above, even a cursory
reading reveals that this is not its only (or perhaps even its main)
significance.

Neither have later critics had many good words to say about
Fallen Fairies—the last major work Gilbert attempted—although, it,
too, is an unusual and somewhat innovatory work. It seems in the
realm of a Middle English moral tale in its fantastic or artificial
setting for a story told in serious tones and speeches—including
some phrases of obvious biblical inspiration (see especially pp.
195, 229). "It will be noticed that 'Fallen Fairies' is not described
as a comic opera," said a fairly intelligent opening-night review in
Musical News, "and that is just as well, for the humour... is a
little out of the picture. The libretto is more of a moral epic poem,
and the entire work is one of beauty and seriousness." Gilbert's
basically serious intent in the libretto is shown by the absence of
the usual satiric or humorous names for most of his characters.

Gilbert, himself, had called it "a combination of comedy and
drama such as I have never attempted before at the Savoy," and
Alfred Kalisch in the World, a publication known for its critical
excellence, said, "... it is in the nature of an experiment in a
very new direction... It is surprisingly fresh, and may be

111 The Daily Telegraph, Dec. 9, 1909, p. 11.
No text provided.
recommended to all in search of surprising impromptus . . . " On the other hand, in many unfavourable reviews one can sense that the critics had expected a Savoy opera and were disappointed when Gilbert gave them something quite different and much more serious. The work was also far removed from the musical comedy medium that had blossomed in the nineties and now controlled the English musical stage with an iron hold. "The press are always howling for something better than musical comedy," roared Gilbert, somewhat justifiably, "and when they get it they won't have it." 112

"... It is often useful to shake off conventionalities," wrote Gilbert to Mrs. Richard D'Oyly Carte concerning her husband's objections to the all-female chorus that Gilbert was discussing for Fallen Fairies as early as 1897. 113 Although the innovation did not please the critics in 1909, Gilbert should at least be given credit for trying a new approach to the eternal problem of the dramatic musical chorus. Gilbert's belief in this innovation—or, at least, his lack of fear in attempting it—emphasizes the important role women play in his works under any circumstances. Despite his general anti-feminist and "woman's place is in the home" stance, Gilbert's attitude toward his female characters was not a condescending one, and his most distinct statement concerning the dominant influence of woman in the


113 Quoted in Dark and Grey, p. 144.
affairs of men appears in Lutin’s song, “There is a Lady in the Case” from the Fallen Fairies libretto (pp. 221-222), and the failure of the work itself was at least partly caused by the presence of “a lady in the case.” Gilbert’s adopted daughter, Miss Nancy McIntosh, whose casting in the leading role of Queen Selene caused constant dispute between Gilbert and the producers of the piece during the entire ill-fated run. In almost all of Gilbert’s later works, women are in control of much of the action and are in a commanding position over the fortunes of many of the male characters. Queen Selene of Fallen Fairies is a prime example, but Princess Zara of Utopia Limited and the Duchess of Dundee of The Fortune Hunter are also custodians of great power in the plays in which they appear; in a less positive way, so is Fairy Rosebud in The Fairy’s Dilemma and Ultrice in The Proteus Banks. Tricky problems are resolved by females in the climactic moments of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and Utopia Limited. Gilbert’s female characters are often deceptively intelligent and cunning despite a veneer of naiveté, and much of Gilbert’s work reveals a cynical admiration for the female of the species. Gilbert is fond of presenting a situation in which a girl’s fiancé or hopeful lover must helplessly step aside and let someone else cuddle or entertain his beloved, and such situations occur in Haste to the Wedding.

Lutin's song on "There is a Woman in the Case" from Fallen Fairies (pp. 221-222):

**SONG.—LUTIN.**

In yonder world, which devils strew
With worry, grief, and pain in plenty,
This maxim is accounted true
With *nemine disseminat*: A woman doth the mischief brew
In nineteen cases out of twenty!

**Chorus.**

A woman doth the mischief brew,
In nineteen cases out of twenty!
In all the woes
That joy displace,
In all the blows
That bring disgrace
On much enduring human race,
There is a lady in the case!
Yes, that's the fix
We have to face—
Her whims and tricks
Throughout you trace.
In all the woes that curse our race
There is a lady in the case.

**Chorus.**

Yes, that's the fix.
They have to face, etc.

If woman from great Nature's scheme
Were utterly eliminated,
Unruffled peace would reign supreme,
No quarrels would be propagated.
But that is a Utopian dream
Of mortals unsophisticated.

**Chorus.**

But that is a Utopian dream
Of mortals unsophisticated!
It's true that foes—
Might then embrace,
And earthly woes
Dissolve apace.
But where would be the human race
With never a lady in the case?
Yes, that's the rub
We have to face—
It gives a snub
That kills the case.
What would become of all our race
With never a lady in the case?

**Chorus.**

Yes, that's the rub
That kills their case, etc,
In fact, Gilbert's females are often far ahead of their male counterparts in wit and mental adroitness. This can especially be seen in scenes between Lady Angela and the Rev. Parfitt in *The Fairy's Dilemma* and the Governor's scheming, prankster daughters and their unsuspecting suitors in *His Excellency*. Gilbert's women also exhibit a shrewd practicality at times that his men rarely reveal, and Nanna's rejection of Erling's marriage proposal in *His Excellency* (p. 121) is reminiscent of Raleigh's sagacious Elizabethan nymph.

When a male fairy returns from the wicked earth to Fairyland in *Fallen Fairies*, the female fairies— erstwhile models of moral purity—anxiously await his report and are sadly disappointed when he refuses...
Blanca and Corporal Harold from His Excellency (St. James's Budget, Nov. 2, 1894, p. 38)
Nanna's calculating rejection of Erling's marriage proposal in His Excellency (p. 121):

Though it seems
You yourself needn't stick
In July simply;
In January;
It really costs a mint—
A mint of money!
No lamb for us—
House lamb at Christmas sells
At prices handsome;
Asparagus—

In winter, parallels
A Monarch's ransom.
When purse to bread and butter barely reaches
What is your wife to do for hot-house peaches?
'Ah! tell me that!' 'Ah! tell me that!'
What is your wife to do for hot-house peaches?
'Your heart and hand;
Though at my feet you lay,
All others scorned!'
As matters stand,
There's nothing else to say
'Except—good morning!'
Though virtue be a husband's best adorning,
That won't pay rates and taxes—so, good morning!
to divulge the more risque of his observations. This draws attention
to the fact that Gilbert's females are rarely as pure as they would
have the world believe. In its review of *Utopia Limited*, the Times
ironically commented that the "desire behaviour" of the two young
daughters of the King "suggests that they are less innocent than they
look," and when Gov. Griftenfeld in *His Excellency* warns his daughters
not to be present because of abusive language they will hear when
their suitors realize they have been jilted, the mischievous girls
reply,

> When these gentlemen conceited both discover
they've been cheated, all our fun will be
defeated—that's a thing we couldn't bear—
So, however, they may rave it, we'll unquestionably
brave it; you may take your affidavit we will
certainly be there! (p. 139).

The ire of the other female fairies toward Queen Selene because
of her amorous success with the visiting mortals in *Fallen Fairies*
is an example of the sharp wit and sarcasm of woman-to-woman cattish
reportes found throughout Gilbert's later work:

**Selene. . . .**

> He told me that he loved me—loved me well—
That I had holy angel-eyes that rimed
A gentle pity on his stubborn heart—
That I was fairer in his worldly eyes
Than all the maids on earth or in the clouds!

**Zayda (piteously).**

> Could any words more eloquently show
The reckless of his delirium?

**Selene (surprised).**

> Nay, he was conscious then,
**Mleta (very sweetly).**

> No doubt he was.

**But, sister, in the triumph recollect**
**He scarce had seen us.** (p. 210).
Another humorous example of this is found in the female wedding chorus at the beginning of The Grand Duke:

One might say, if one were spiteful,
Contradiction little dreading,
Her bouquet is simply frightful—
Still, it is a pretty wedding!
Oh, it is a pretty wedding!
Such a pretty, pretty wedding!
If her dress is badly fitting,
Then's the fault who made her trousseau.
If her gloves are always splitting,
Cheap kid gloves, we know, will do so.
If her wreath is all lop-sided,
That's a thing one's always dreading.
If her hair is all untidied,
Still it is a pretty wedding! (p. 45)

When jealous Ultrice overhears supercilious Teresa making negative comments about her appearance to Alfredo in The Mountebanks (pp. 365-366), Gilbert incorporates one of his famous polysyllabic patter exercises that not only reveals the vicious nature of the two females but also shows their mastery over the male, Alfredo, who seeks to quiet them. In fact, the dominant, scheming personalities of Ultrice and Teresa make the male, Alfredo, seem a pale and witless component of the triangle indeed.

Gilbert's belief in the sinister power of a gossiping, back-biting woman's tongue is best illustrated in Fallen Fairies when the female fairies using slander and deceit vie for the favours of three visiting men from the wicked world. In this context, the complaint of E.F.S. ("Monocle") in the Sketch that the fairies "did not seem essentially different from any ordinary collection of middle-class young women" takes on an ironic and unintentionally amusing meaning. Queen Selene's
Repartee between Ultrice, Teresa, and Alfredo in The Mountebanks (pp. 365-366):

**QUARTETTE.—ULTRICE, TERESA, ALFREDO, AND AFTERWARDS.**

**ELVINO.**

*Ut.* Upon my word, miss!  
*Ter.* Oh, it's you, miss! How d'ye do, miss? Didn't know you. Overheard, miss!  
*Ut.* Oh, you spiteful—  
*Ter. (curtseying):* How politeful!  
*Ut.* One I owe you, You tattling, tattling, reckless, rattling, twopenny-ha'penny parcel of vanity!  
*Ter.* High gentility, amiability, both combined with true humility! You mischief-making, character-taking, clicking clacking hot of insanity!  
*Ut.* Play propriety, or society may suppose it's inebriety.  

**Alf.**  
Now, ladies, pray you, listen to me—  
• Dicky-birds in their nests agree, If they can do so, do so too.  
*Ter.*  
What has it, pray, to do with you?  
*Ut.* Dicky-birds don't, to gain their ends,  
*Ter.* Depreciate their absent friends.  
*Ut.* Dicky-birds don't, whatever they hear; Forget that they are ladies, dear!  
*Ter.* Dicky-birds tweetle, tweetle tweetle, Which may be silly, and does sound weak; But dicky-birds don't, whatever they hear; Forget that they are ladies, does it?
embittered curse on Ethais, the Hunsich knight who betrayed her love, gives us Gilbert's most perpspicuous statement on the subject of the female scandalmonger, a type of individual whom Gilbert undoubtedly encountered many times during his lifetime of peppery theatrical associations:

Mark, ye, sir knight, I'll yield my fairy state,
That I may follow thee to yonder earth,
And join the whispering band of hidden hate
Who feed on falsehood and war with worth;
The busy band who stab in secrecy;
The blighting band within whose lips is hung
The deadliest weapon of earth's armoury!
A woman's tongue—a woman's blighting tongue! (p. 231).

Lutin, the comic mortal visitor to Fairyland, is the character who actually delivers the "There's a Woman in the Case" lyric in Fallen Fairies. Most of the early critics found his antics a worthy change of pace in the generally serious proceedings and even suggested that Gilbert should expand his part in the piece. Indeed, Lutin is a delightful dunc, and his dialogue and songs have witty polish. His comments and song (pp. 218-219) on the value of his physical ugliness is thoroughly Gilbertian in its topsy-turvy logic (although vaguely reminiscent of lines from Rostand's Cyrano). Yet, as the review in Musical Times noted, "... the bulk of the best work is in the more serious portions of the opera. ... Selene's oration at the end is an admirable piece of prosody," and the journal, Truth, stated, "... there are certain really fine passages, as, for instance, the fairy queen Selene's curse—a speech which Shakespeare might have put his name to with credit." Certainly, Gilbert's
C. H. Workman as Lutin in *Fallen Fairies* (The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, Dec. 25, 1909, p. 708) and his song on the allure of his physical ugliness (pp. 218-219):

**SONG.—LUTIN.**

Suppose you take, with open mind,
Twelve handsome men—what do you find?
Twelve people, twenty-five years old,
Twelve shapes, in seven series;
Twelve faces, cast in classic mould
(A type that quickly wears);
Twelve heads—the same from crown to nape,
In tedious iteration;
Twelve noses—all alike in shape,
Without a variation;
Two dozen eyes—all large and bright;
Two dozen lips—all modelled alike;
Like Cupid's bow—and underneath
Somewhere about three hundred teeth,
By arbitrary calculation.
This is a principle you may disseminate:
Good-looking men are effete and effeminate.
As for variety, they haven't got any—
Monotony mild in their mawkish monotony.
But take twelve plain men, and you find
Variety of every kind:
You've eyes that swirl—eyes that squint.
And dribbling eyes, and dry;
And mottled cheeks of every tint;
And hair that's red and grey;
You've mouths that grin and mouths that gape;
Large ears that don't offend us;
Ugly teeth grotesques in shape,
And noses, too—tremendous!
You've noses flat and noses snub,
Gigantic noses, noses club;
You've noses long and noses short,
And some that snore and some that snort.
With energy stupendous!
Why we're unpopular passes the wit o' me!
Each of his kind is a comic epitome,
Teeming with humour of dissimilarity—
Quite a museum of peculiarity.
melancholy cynicism toward romantic love was never more forcefully declared than in Fallen Fairies, in which, in the words of the Daily Chronicle, Gilbert took the paradoxical mantle of "a cynic with sentiment." The technical skill of Gilbert's language throughout Fallen Fairies is excellent—even if some of its homilies are a bit too heavy-handed for modern stage presentation. "So far as what is called literary polish is concerned the book is, for the most part, equal to anything its author has given us," said the Pall Mall Gazette.

His command of rhyme, metre, and lucidity is as masterly as ever; and his songs have the old tripping lilt which seems to make music of them even without notes. ... a little mellowed by the years perhaps, but still standing quite alone, a master of his art.

Unlike the very minor changes he made in the dialogue when he transformed his The Wedding March into Haste to the Wedding in 1892, Gilbert entirely rewrote all the blank verse of The Wicked World when he adapted it for musical presentation as Fallen Fairies. The one thing most later critics\(^\text{115}\) have agreed on in their discussions of the libretto is that Gilbert's technical literary skill was as sharp as ever, and composer Edward German later testified, "Although the opera did not enjoy a popular success, I shall always look upon the 'book' as an absolute classic—one of the most polished and beautiful he ever wrote."\(^\text{116}\)


\(^{116}\)Quoted in "Recollections of Sir W. S. Gilbert," Bookman, July 1911, p. 164.
A few days after the *Fallen Fairies* opening, one London newspaper announced, "Sir W. S. Gilbert has it in view to adapt 'The Palace of Truth' in a lyric version, in the same way as he has converted 'The Wicked World' to musical expression." This idea was lost, of course, in the dismal popular failure of *Fallen Fairies* in the winter of 1909-1910, but considering the excellence of language and dramatic power in the reading of *Fallen Fairies*, one feels slightly vexed for literary reasons, if nothing else, that Gilbert did not continue with his project of reworking his old fairy dramas into new lyrical concepts.

Although *The Fairy's Dilemma* and *Fallen Fairies* both represent certain innovations in Gilbert's work, they pale into insignificance in this respect when compared to *The Hooligan*—the grim final work in which Gilbert, perhaps more by chance than design, at last succeeded in producing a truly convincing, if minor, serious work. "*The Hooligan* is not merely a new departure," said the *Morning Post*; "it is of its kind a well written and quite notable play. Nothing he has done has more distinction, and distinction of the right sort."

Gilbert's life-long interest in criminology (evidenced by his huge collection of books on the subject that was valued at £1000 when it was sold in 1955\(^{118}\)) and his experience with criminals as a Justice of the Peace gave the sketch an "iron realism"\(^{119}\) that few

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118 See C.G.R., "Gilbert's Criminological Library," *Gas Journal*, Sept. 1955, p. 120.
thought sentimental and bombastic Gilbert was capable of achieving in his writing. "Whether so distressing a piece is suited to a Coliseum audience may fairly be questioned," remarked the Morning Post:

many present evidently held that it was not. Yet the fact that Sir W. S. Gilbert should have written such a piece is noteworthy. Hitherto his least successful work has been that in which he has endeavored to reproduce actual life on the stage. 120

After the melodramatic, ornate, and moralistic language of such pieces as The Fortune Hunter and Fallen Fairies, the vulgar, realistic, yet dramatically effective, dialogue of The Hooligan—"utterly without the exaltation and beauty of language that even Aristotle claims" 121—was an almost unbelievable accomplishment.

"Certainly, if no name had been disclosed," wrote the somewhat aghast critic of the Daily Chronicle, "the 'retired humorist' of Harrow Weald would be the last person in the world to whom it would have been credited," and in 1912, one Gilbert critic asserted that "... surely the entire change of style in 'The Hooligan' was of itself an astounding feat." 122

120. A decade earlier critic Stanley Jones had written, "The nearer Mr. Gilbert endeavors to approach actual life the further he gets from success." Stanley Jones, The Actor and His Art: Some Considerations of the Present Condition of the Stage (London: Downey, 1899), p. 201.


The dramatic scribe of the Illustrated London News called

The Hooligan

... a drama that is absolutely sincere, unflinchingly realistic, and makes no concessions in the way of fine writing or sentiment. It bears the very stamp of truth, as it should do, for it is the work of a magistrate, and its while pathos—and that is irresistible—depends on its never straining a single point. If playgoers are not moved by the almost bald simplicity of the episode... then nothing will move them.

Other notable early tributes to the work came from the Sunday Times ("It is not a pleasant play, but it is a very powerful piece of work..."), the Daily Chronicle ("... one of the most sincere and moving little dramas that I've been seen either on the 'legitimate' or the other stage for a long time"), and the Penny Illustrated Paper ("The Coliseum admits that the British public has brains."). Among later critics, G. Wilson Knight has called it Gilbert's "most powerful straight drama," and said it had a "force impact." Gilbert's biographers, Dark and Grey, felt that "in this last play Gilbert was supremely successful. Indeed, it may, we think, be reckoned the greatest serious achievement of his career."

The sketch has been called a "melodrama" by some later critics; however, it is only melodramatic in a nineteenth century sense in its conclusion, and even there the "saved by reprieve" device of pure melodrama is completely corrupted by the heart failure of the convict.

124 Ibid., p. 250.
125 Dark and Grey, p. 146.
126 Including Jane Stedman who said, "It is the only one of Gilbert's serious melodramas which has retained anything like its original force." Stedman, "William S. Gilbert...", p. 159.
The sketch avoids the obvious devices of theatrical language and heroic characterization on which traditional melodrama thrives. "As a play it studiously avoids being a very striking work of art in itself," said the critic for the Daily Chronicle. "It is just a record, into which humour and pathos come of their own accord, as they do into life." There were, however, important dramatic touches apparent in the production. Gilbert, as much the skilled stage manager as ever, heightened the effect of the claustrophobic confines of the prison cell by screening off four-fifths of the large stage of the Coliseum in black to form a small box for the scene. "You seem to have a rabbit hutch in front of you," explained one early writer; "never was the fourth wall theory more perfectly exemplified."

There are also touches of dramatic irony and subtle foreshadowing in the dialogue, especially in regard to the hooligan's heart failure at the very close of the sketch. There is also a suggestion of an ironic black humour in the frenzied mutterings of the hysterical hooligan:

"... I never cut a gal before—not in the 'ole course of my bloomin' life I didn't (and that's in my favour, mind yer), and my 'and slipped on account of youth and inexperience. Now I arst you fair, is a bloke to be 'ung besos 'e never cut a gal afore? (p. 484).

Another interesting passage is the hooligan's description of a nightmare that runs through his mind each time he falls asleep. It is worth

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Solly's description of his nightmare from The Hooligan (p. 482):

There's the court—not a regular proper court such as one's seen everso many times, but a court—half a mile across an' a quarter of a mile deep, wiv a red judge everso far off in the middle; five hundred jurymen on one side, a couple of hundred lawyers in the middle, an' a thousand public coves on the other—the jury noddin' their 'eds all the time, and the lawyers noddin' their 'eds, an' the public noddin' theirs—all noddin'-kept the old judge. An' he says, "Prisoner at the bar," see he, "Them jurymen has found you guilty, and blow me if I ain't o' their way of thinkin'," see 'e. "And this here's the sentence," see 'e, and 'e claps a black cap on 'is napper an' 'is two arms stretches out o' his red togs—and they grows longer an' longer—quarter o' a mile long they grows—till 'is fists is close to my face, the billin' in court noddin' their 'eds all the time, as much as to say "That's right—go on—give it 'im!" an' when he reaches me he clutches me round the gullet and squeezes me wiv both 'ands—till I'm fair choked—the crowd a noddin' all the time, as if to say, "Just so; we quite agrees, go on!"... An' just wen I feels I'm a-dyin' I gives a screech and wakes up shiverin' wiv cold an' all of a 'ot perspiration, like a bloomin' toad, wiv my heart a-beating nineteen to the dozen by.
mention not only because of its fantastic imagery but also because of its vague affinity with the comic nightmare songs from the Savoy operas. Even those contemporary critics who attacked Gilbert's sense of propriety in presenting "a theme which makes, to day the least, an unhealthy form of entertainment." had to admit that The Hooligan was without technical flaw and deeply effective in a dramatic sense. The Observer concluded, "If the thing was to be done at all it could not have been done better, and there criticism must leave it."

The obvious, if inadvertent, social value of The Hooligan and its relationship to Gilbert's belief in hereditary and environmental determination have been mentioned previously in this study. It cannot be denied that many people accepted it as a form of protest against certain social ills. "It disturbed everyone," said the Penny Illustrated Paper.

Most to applause; a few to resentment. There was the ruddy, ample gentleman whom I met in the bar... 'You came here to be amused, not to be----' He groped for the word and lost it, 'A man of a morbid turn of mind might think it all right, mightn't he?'

A play that can wing a ruddy, ample gentleman; leave him puzzled, gasping, unsettled; stir up vague doubts of killing folk and giving them 'no chanst'--a play like that is a play which you ought to pop in and see at once.

However, Gilbert called The Hooligan "a character study" (p. 77), and this is probably all he intended it to be: a realistic portrait of a weak and ignorant human being caught in a moment of excruciating duress, a piece written primarily not for the purpose of exposing

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social injustice but to allow an actor whose talents Gilbert admired to prove his dramatic skill. The social impact of the piece, resulting from Gilbert's finely-wrought authenticity based on this personal knowledge of the subject matter, probably is accidental, although it provided fuel for the arguments of those truly committed, or sympathetic, to social change.

Regardless of Gilbert's motive in writing the sketch, it is a valuable document in assessing his innate dramatic genius. Gilbert's philosophy of the theatre, expressed on many occasions, was that a dramatic work was only as good as its popular appeal. When examined during his 1897 libel suit with the Era, Gilbert expressed the opinion that "a play that fails is for all practical purposes a bad play," and in 1908 in an interview with Bram Stoker, he said, "... It rarely pays to attempt anything beyond mere entertainment." This attitude, coupled with a Victorian sense of dramatic propriety, influenced his efforts throughout his entire career, but in writing The Hooligan Gilbert apparently felt free from the life-long stricture of pleasing his audience with a work of conventional theatrical flourish. Despite its hard-hitting impact, it was written hurriedly and without agony as a short, unsung sketch for an acquaintance in the profession,

129 Quoted in The Daily Telegraph, March 30, 1898, p. 10.

and Gilbert undoubtedly undertook the work without feeling the pressure of attempting to gain public approval with it. To mentally prepare himself for the task, Gilbert had himself confined to a prison cell at Fentonville for a few hours and then wrote the sketch in one sitting after he returned home that night. The result was terse and honest. The argument of one later writer that when "it was well known that [the public] enjoyed even the ugliness of life, [Gilbert] tried to satisfy them with The Hooligan" is refuted by this passage from a 1911 article by Laurence Irving in the *Fortnightly Review*:

... when I remember the fate of Mr. Galsworthy's finely serious, not gloomy, morbid, or despondent play, Strife, in the provinces, my sentiment towards the English public becomes a little harsh. In the very centres where the conflicts so sympathetically portrayed and so dramatically contrasted by Mr. Galsworthy mostly occur, Strife obtained only the scantiest support. I do not take such a case as Tolstoy's *Dominion of Darkness*, which few judges of drama would deny to be among the mightiest tragedies of the world's literature, because the ban of the Censor is against its performance in this country. I do not take a play such as Gorki's *The Lowest Depths*, of which two performances sufficed in England as against a year's representation in Berlin. I know that the gloominess of their titles would act as veritable box-office scare-crows in this country; while the latter labours under the added disadvantage of not having one 'gentleman' among its characters.  

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The authenticity of dialogue, characterization, and mood that prevails in *The Hooligan* raises the question of what Gilbert might have achieved if he had escaped the tenets of his own Victorian stage background and the dictates of convention-bound audiences and joined the naturalistic movement of these later years. Certainly, *The Hooligan* presents a sharp contrast to all of Gilbert's previous work and refutes many theories concerning his artistic limitations as a serious dramatist. It stands as a small but disturbing enigma at the very end of his long career.

Of course, the measure of Gilbert's genius does not lie in idle speculation about what he might have done if his philosophy of the purpose of the theatre had been more radical and if his theatrical expression had taken a different course. His most notable works are in the areas of fantasy and satire, and it is in these areas that his value to the theatre must finally be judged. For the most part, his last ten works continue to reveal his genius in these areas—or, perhaps, one should say his genius in mating these two areas. His wild excursions into the realms of topsy-turvy fantasy were—like Swift's—only satirical views of the real world in which he lived. The "put a penny in the slot" robots of *The Mountebanks*, the dancing hussars of *His Excellency*, and the Pantaloons Judge of *The Fairy's Dilemma* are just three of a host of fantastic character conceptions Gilbert uses in this manner. The sinless land of the fairies in *Fallen Fairies* and the idealized tropical island of *Utopia Limited* invaded by mundane creatures of a more conventional world are further examples of this Gilbertian marriage.
of the commonplace with the impossible. On another level, the depiction of the theatrical troupe who assume the seat of state in The Grand Duke agrees with this canvas of purposeful incongruity. Bernard Shaw employed a similar, if more subtle, theatrical mode in his attacks on society, and comparisons between some of the contrivances in Gilbert's later work and devices Shaw afterward used in his plays welcome speculation concerning the degree of direct debt Shaw owed to Gilbert which Shaw would consequently pass on to other twentieth century dramatists. Certainly Shaw was very much aware of everything that was happening on the London stage when Gilbert's later works were produced between 1890 and 1911.

Yet the popular failure of Gilbert's later work is also relevant in this context of his perpetual binding of the absurd with the commonplace. Although only rarely did an early reviewer openly express offence at Gilbert's satire, there are certain ambiguous references to Gilbert's excessive "cynicism" or "topsy-turvydom" in many reviews that might indicate a general, though only vaguely defined, feeling that he was sliding too deeply or too accurately into the foundations of the society in which most of his countrymen had so much faith—or, perhaps worse, that he was proclaiming the absurdity of life itself. Often neither critics nor audiences fully understood Gilbert's purpose in these later works, and that probably frightened them even more: "Yes, that is funny—but is it us?"
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COMPLETE LIST OF THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF WILLIAM SCHMENCK GILBERT AND THE DATES OF THEIR ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF EARLY NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS WITH REVIEWS OF GILBERT'S STAGE WORKS, 1890-1911
APPENDIX A:

COMPLETE LIST OF THE DRAMATIC WORKS OF WILLIAM SCHENCK GILBERT AND
THE DATES OF THEIR ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

* denotes work written in collaboration with Sir Arthur Sullivan

1866— Dulcamara; or, The Little Duck and the Great Quack.
1867— Robinson Crusoe; or, The Injun Bride and the Injured Wife.
     Allow Me to Explain.
     Highly Improbable.
     Harlequin Cock Robin and Jenny Wren; or, Fortunatus and the
     Water of Life, the Three Bears, the Three Gifts, the Three
     Wishes, and the Little Man Who Woo’d the Little Maid.
1868— Le Vivandière.
     The Merry Zinzara; or, The Tipsy Gypsy and the Pipsy Wipsy.
     Robert the Devil; or, The Nun, the Dan, and the Son of a Gun.
1869— No Cards.
     The Pretty Druidess; or, The Mother, the Maid and the Mistletoe
     Bough.
     An Old Score.
     Ages Ago: A Ghost Story.
1870— The Princess.
     The Gentleman in Black.
     Our Island Home.
     The Palace of Truth.
1871— Randall’s Thimble.
     A Sensation Novel.
     Creatures of Impulse.
     Great Expectations.
     On Guard.
     Pygmalion and Galatea.
     *Theseps; or, The Gods Grow Old (64 performances).
1872— Ganymede and Galatea.
     A Medical Man.
     Happy Arcadia.
1873— The Wicked World.
     The Happy Land.
     The Realm of Joy.
     The Wedding March.
1874— Charity
     Ought We to Visit Her?
     Committed for Trial.
     Topsy-Turvydom.
     Sweethearts.
1875— *Trial by Jury (175 performances).
     Tom Cobb; or, Fortune’s Toy
     Eyes and No Eyes; or, The Art of Seeing.
     Broken Hearts.
1876—Princess Toto.
   Dan'l Bruce, Blacksmith.
1877—On Ball.
   Engaged.
   *The Sorcerer (175 performances).
1878—Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.
   The Ne'er-Do-Weel.
   *H.M.S. Pinafore; or, The Lass That Loved a Sailor (700 performances).
1879—Gretchen.
1880—The Pirates of Ponzance (363 performances).
1881—Patience (576 performances).
   Foggerty's Fairy.
1882—*Toolanthe; or, The Peer and the Peri (395 performances).
1884—*Princess Ida; or, Castle Adamant (246 performances).
   Comedy and Tragedy.
1885—*The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu (672 performances).
1887—Ruddigore; or, The Witch's Curse (283 performances).
1888—*The Yeomen of the Guard; or, The Merryman and His Maid (423 perform.)
   Branthingham Hall.
1889—The Brigands.
   *The Gondoliers; or, The King of Barataria.

GILBERT'S WORKS FIRST PRODUCED AFTER 1890

June 3, 1891—Charity Matinee: Vaudeville Theatre—Rogersrants and Gildenstern.
Apr. 27, 1892—July 15, 1892: Court Theatre Triple Bill Programme—Rogersrants and Gildenstern.
Oct. 27, 1894—April 6, 1895: Lyric Theatre—His Excellency.
Sept. 27, 1897: Birmingham Theatre Royal—The Fortune Hunter.
Oct. 18, 1897: Crouch End, Queen's Opera House—The Fortune Hunter.
Feb. 27, 1911—March 25, 1911: London Coliseum—The Hooligan.
APPENDIX B

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF EARLY NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS WITH REVIEWS OF GILBERT'S STAGE WORKS, 1890-1911

Productions Listed:
1. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Charity Production, Vaudeville Theatre, June 2, 1891.
2. The Mountebanks, Lyric Theatre, 1892.
3. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Triple Bill Programme, Lyric Theatre, 1892.
4. Haste to the Wedding, Criterion Theatre, 1892.
6. His Excellency, Lyric Theatre, 1894-95.
8. The Fortune Hunter, Theatre Royal, Birmingham, 1897.

(Exact dates of reviews are given in the lists following the discussion of each work in Chapter II.)

Dates given with each publication are taken from the British Museum Catalogue.

THE ATHENAEUM (1828-1921)—Intelligent literary review; Joseph Knight was dramatic critic, 1867-1907. Reviewed 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.
BLACK AND WHITE (1892-1912)—Popular illustrated journal with well-written dramatic reviews. Reviewed 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.
THE BYSTANDER (1903-1940)—Popular society journal. Reviewed 10, 12.
THE CLARION (1891-1927)—Radical newspaper, alternating between London and Manchester as its publication location; interesting theatrical comments. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12.
THE DAILY CHRONICLE (1872-1930)—Liberal newspaper. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.

THE DAILY EXPRESS (1900- )—Independent-Unionist newspaper. Reviewed 10, 11, 12, 13.

THE DAILY GRAPHIC (1890-1926)—Illustrated newspaper; Joseph Knight was dramatic critic until 1906. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.


THE DAILY MAIL (1895- )—Independent-Unionist newspaper under Alfred Housman (Lord Northcliffe); leader in newspaper circulation from 1896. Reviewed 10, 11, 12, 13.

THE DAILY MIRROR (1903- )—Unionist; attempted to appeal to the "modern" generation of news readers. Reviewed 10, 12, 13.

THE DAILY NEWS (1896- )—"Official Organ of the Liberal Party." Reviewed 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.


THE DAILY TELEGRAPH (1855- )—Liberal (Unionist after 1896) newspaper; leader in circulation until 1896; long reviews of Gilbert's works; dramatic critic until 1896 was Clement Scott, afterward Malcolm Watson. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

DRAMATIC OPINIONS (1891-1892)—Dramatic journal. Reviewed 10, 12, 13.

THE DRAMATIC REVIEW (1885-1894)—Dramatic journal. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5.


THE ECHO (1894-1909)—Liberal-Unionist newspaper. Reviewed 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.

THE ENCORE (1892-1930)—Music hall and theatre review. Reviewed 5, 6, 13.

THE ENTER'ACTS (1872-1907)—Music hall and theatre review with drawings by Alfred Bryan. Reviewed 2, 6, 7.

THE ERA (1832-1939)—"The acknowledged organ of the Theatrical and Musical professions"; long reviews and cast listings for all of Gilbert's works; Gilbert sued the publisher, Edmund Ledger, for libel in 1898 because of editorial comments in the publication on an Edinburgh interview Gilbert gave in connection with The Fortune Hunter. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

THE EVENING NEWS (1881- )—Conservative newspaper. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13.

THE EVENING STANDARD (after 1904; AND ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE) (1880-1916)—Conservative newspaper. Reviewed 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12.


THE LONDON FIGARO (1881-1898)—Independent-Unionist family journal. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9.


FUN (1865-1901)—Comic journal. Reviewed 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

THE GENTLEMAN (1890-1926)—Intelligent, quality woman's journal, with welle-written dramatic criticism. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10.

THE GLOBE AND TRAVELLER (1822-1921)—Conservative newspaper. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12.
NOTES AT A PUBLIC READING-ROOM.

The whole "WORLD" of her feet.

Cutting a "LADY" at her feet.

Very much behind the TIMES.

Ladies' waiting keeping an interested eye on the "QUEEN".

Old age in search of "TRUTH".

A short-sighted man treading the "PEOPLE" under his feet.

A hard fight for the "STANDARD".

Conpletely wrapped up in the leaves of the "GARDEN".

An old lady seeing "LIFE".

Enjoying his "PUNCH", with the aid of glasses.

One charming little bit looking over "LAND & WATER".

The girl who is usually found with a "MAIL".

Burst in the "FIELD".

SOME OF OUR CONTEMPORARIES.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reviewed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOOD NEWS OF THE WEEK</strong> (1893-1894)</td>
<td>General summary of the week's events.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE GRAPHIC</strong> (1869-1932)</td>
<td>Weekly illustrated journal.</td>
<td>2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE GUILDRON</strong> (March 26-May 7 1892)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS</strong> (1842- )</td>
<td>Popular illustrated journal.</td>
<td>2, 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE ILLUSTRATED SPORTING AND DRAMATIC NEWS</strong> (1892-1943)</td>
<td>Popular illustrated journal of the sporting and theatrical world.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE LADY</strong> (1885- )</td>
<td>Intelligent quality woman's journal with well-written dramatic criticism.</td>
<td>2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE LADY'S GAZETTE</strong> (1901-1904)</td>
<td>Quality woman's journal.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE LADY'S PICTORIAL</strong> (1881-1921)</td>
<td>Quality illustrated woman's journal.</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS' GAZETTE AND HOTEL COURIER</strong> (1874-1941)</td>
<td>Journal dealing mainly with sporting and theatrical affairs (despite its catering profession title).</td>
<td>4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS' MIRROR</strong> (after May 1892: THE SPORTING MIRROR)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS' MIRROR</strong> (Published by B.T. Gale; entry with identical title listed immediately above published by Wm. H. Cox)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1898-1904. Same description as entries listed immediately above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIFE</strong> (1879-1905)</td>
<td>Society journal; dramatic critic, 1890-93, was Ibenite J. T. Green.</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LLOYD'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER</strong> (LLOYD'S WEEKLY NEWS) (1849-1928)</td>
<td>Liberal weekly newspaper.</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13</td>
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<td><strong>THE LONDON MERCURY</strong> (1891-1893)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE LONDON MUSICAL COURIER</strong></td>
<td>See: THE MUSICAL COURIER.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE LUTE</strong> (1883-1899)</td>
<td>Musical journal.</td>
<td>2, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
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<td><strong>THE MAGAZINE—JOURNAL OF NEWS AND GENERAL LITERATURE</strong> (1892-1893)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE MAGAZINE OF MUSIC</strong>—Journal of music.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2, 4, 5, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE MAIL</strong> (1868-1922)</td>
<td>Afternoon edition of The Times, usually with re-prints of The Times dramatic criticism.</td>
<td>7, 10, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>M.A.P.</strong> (MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE) (1898-1911)</td>
<td>Weekly journal of social news.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE MAN OF THE WORLD</strong> (1888-1900)</td>
<td>Society, sporting, and theatrical journal.</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE MINIM</strong> (1893-1902)</td>
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<td><strong>THE MINSIREL</strong> (1892-1896)</td>
<td>Journal of art, literature, and society.</td>
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<td><strong>THE MINUTE</strong> (1896-1897)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MODERN SOCIETY</strong> (1882-1927)</td>
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<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD</strong> (1871-1960)</td>
<td>Journal of music.</td>
<td>2, 5, 6, 7, 12</td>
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MOONSHINE (1879-1902)——Comic journal. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
THE MORNING (1892-1992)——Independent newspaper (Conservative after 1892). Reviewed 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
THE MORNING ADVERTISER (1812-1865)——Politically independent newspaper of the Licensed Victuallers. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12.
THE MORNING LEADER (1892-1912)——Liberal newspaper. Reviewed 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13.
THE MORNING POST (1803-1937)——Conservative newspaper for the upper classes. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.
THE MUSICAL COURIER (after 1895; THE LONDON MUSICAL COURIER) (1895-1935).
THE MUSICAL HERALD AND TONIC SOL-FA REPORTER (1899- )——Reviewed 7.
THE MUSICAL NEWS (1871-1898)——Journal of music. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12.
THE MUSICAL STANDARD (1862-1933)——Journal of music with long reviews of important musical productions. Reviewed 2, 5, 7, 12.
THE MUSICAL TIMES AND SINGING CLASS CIRCULAR (1844- )——Important musical journal with interesting reviews. Reviewed 2, 5, 7, 12.

MY PROGRAMME (May 7-August 27, 1904)——Entertainment guide. Reviewed 10.
THE NATION——See: THE SPEAKER.
THE NATIONAL CRITIC (Oct 23-Nov. 6 1897)——Reviewed 9.
NEWS OF THE WEEK (1897-1900)——Reviewed 9.
THE NEWS OF THE WORLD (1843- )——Liberal-Unionist newspaper. Reviewed 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13.
THE OBSERVER (1838- )——Liberal (Unionist after 1892) newspaper. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8(7), 9(7), 10, 11, 12, 13.
THE O’LOCKER (1900-1913)——Illustrated society journal. Reviewed 12.
THE ORACLE (1889-1892)——A financial review which includes reviews and notes from the sporting and theatrical world. Reviewed 2.
THE FALL MALL BUDGET (1863-1894)——Weekly summary from THE FALL MALL GAZETTE (although some dramatic reviews are original). Reviewed 1, 2, 4, 5, 6.
THE FALL MALL GAZETTE (1863-1921)——Radical (Independent-Conservative) newspaper, with well-written reviews of Gilbert’s work. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.
THE PELICAN (1889-1920)——Popular general journal. Reviewed 2, 6, 7, 10, 12.
THE PENNY ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER (1861-1913)——Reviewed 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13.
THE PEOPLE (1881- )——Largest circulation weekly newspaper: Conservative in political views. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13.
PICCADILLY (1888-1892)——Popular journal. Reviewed 1, 2, 5.
THE PICTORIAL WORLD (1874-1892)——Independent illustrated journal. Reviewed 1, 3.


PLAY-PICTORIAL (1902- ) — Each issue is devoted to a single current popular play in pictures. Reviewed 10.


PUBLIC OPINION (1861-1951) — Journal presenting a digest of articles from other periodicals. Reviewed (in this manner) 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12.


THE QUEEN (1894-1922) — Intelligent, quality journal with well-written dramatic criticisms. Reviewed 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12.

THE RAILWAY REVIEW — see THE NEWS PAPER.

THE REFEREE (1877-1928) — A sporting and theatrical journal. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13.

REID'S LONDON ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE (1892- ) — Theatrical review and guide. Reviewed 6, 10, 12, 13.

REYNOLDS'S NEWSPAPER (1851-1923) — Radical weekly newspaper. Reviewed 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13.

THE RIALTO (1893-1919) — A financial review with social and theatrical news. Reviewed 1, 2.

SALA'S JOURNAL (1892-1894) — Popular journal. Reviewed 4, 5.


THE SATURDAY WESTMINSTER GAZETTE (1904-1922) — For description, see The Westminster Gazette. Reviewed 10, 11.

THE SKETCH (1893-1904) — Popular illustrated journal. Reviewed 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

SOCIETY (1880-1901) — Society journal. Reviewed 2, 4, 5, 6, 7.

THE SPEAKER (incorporated into THE NATION in 1897) — Liberal journal; dramatic critic 1890-99 was A. B. Walkley. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 (all by Walkley).


THE SPORTING MIRROR — see: THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS MIRROR.

THE SPORTING TIMES (1865-1931) — Sporting and theatrical journal. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11.

THE STAGE (1881-1959) — Important theatrical journal. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13.

THE STANDARD (1827-1916) — Conservative newspaper. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13.

THE STAR (1881-1915) — Radical newspaper; dramatic critic 1888-1900 was A. B. Walkley. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13.

THE ST. JAMES'S BUDGET (1800-1911) — Weekly digest of The St. James's Gazette. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11.

THE ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE (1880-1905) (Incorporated into The Evening Standard, March 1905) — An independent and Conservative newspaper. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11.
ST. PAUL'S (1894-1900)—Illustrated journal. Reviewed 6, 7.
ST. STEPHEN'S REVIEW (1883-1892)—Conservative journal. Reviewed 2, 3, 4.
THE SUMMARY (Oct. 7-Dec. 23 1893)—Reviewed 5.
THE SUN (1893-1906)—Radical (Conservative after mid-nineties) newspaper.
Reviewed 5, 6, 7, 9, 10.
THE SUNDAY SUN (THE WEEKLY SUN) (1891-1906)—Weekly newspaper. Reviewed
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10.
THE SUNDAY TIMES (1822—)-Conservative (Independent after 1893)
newspaper. J. T. Grein dramatic critic after 1903. Reviewed
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13.
THE TATLER (1901-1940)—Sophisticated society journal. Reviewed 10, 12, 13.
THE THEATRE (1893-1897)—Important theatrical journal; informative and
well-written reviews of Gilbert's work; Clement Scott, editor.
Reviewed 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10.
THE TIMES (1835—)-Dramatic critic before 1900, J. P. Presset;
after 1900, A. B. Walkley. Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,
12, 13.
TODAY (1893-1905)—Illustrated general journal. Reviewed 6, 7, 10, 11.
TRUTH (1877-1957)—Radical journal; founded and edited by Henry Labouchere,
who had several legal scuffles with Gilbert and whom Gilbert satirized
in certain lines in His Excellency; Clement Scott dramatic editor
before 1898. Reviewed 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13.
VANITY FAIR (1868-1929)—Sophisticated society journal with illustrations.
Reviewed 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12.
THE WEEKLY DISPATCH (1817-1923)—Liberal newspaper. Reviewed 2, 3, 4, 6,
8, 10, 12, 13.
THE WEEKLY SUN—see: THE SUNDAY SUN.
THE WEEKLY TIMES AND ECHO (1885-1912)—Radical newspaper. Reviewed 1, 2,
4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13.
THE WESTMINSTER BUDGET (1893-1904)—See description for The Westminster
Gazette. Reviewed 5, 6, 7.
THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE (1893-1928)—Intelligent Liberal newspaper;
co-founded by Charles Morley, the editor, to continue Liberal traditions
of The Pall Mall Gazette when that paper went Conservative in 1893.
Reviewed 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13.
WHAT'S ON (1907-1919)—Amusement guide. Reviewed 12.
THE WOMAN (1890-1910)—Woman's journal with dramatic reviews. Reviewed
2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.
THE WORLD (1874-1922)—Intelligent independent journal. Dramatic and
musical reviews by Bernard Shaw and William Archer. Reviewed 2, 3, 4,
5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12.
COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MATERIAL
WITH DIRECT REFERENCE TO GILBERT'S LATER WORKS

"... D'Oyly Carte might care to consider incorporating in their programmes the question 'Is there a bibliographer in the house?' He could certainly be kept busy for a long time if so."

Comprehensive bibliographies of either the printed texts of the works of W. S. Gilbert or criticism related to these works have been attempted in some degree in this century by the now deceased Gilbert enthusiasts, Carroll A. Wilson and Dr. Isaac Goldberg, neither of whose bibliographical work ever saw full published form, and by Tomley Searle whose compilation has been attacked for inaccuracies and ambiguities by a number of later writers. Reginald Allen drew up a list of items on view at a 1951 New York exhibition commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Gilbert's death, but this, of course, hardly claimed to be a complete inventory on the subject. Perhaps, as a writer in Glasgow's Library Review recently wrote, a complete bibliography of Gilbert (and Sullivan) is practically unattainable:


A full G&S bibliography must obviously take account of references to the two men and their operas in works of a wider nature, not to mention all newspaper and magazine material as well—which is a sobering thought, for the amount of such material is formidable, encompassing as it does anything from detailed studies in serious musical journals right down to local press reports.

However, while doing research for this study I began to feel that a fairly comprehensive bibliography of the materials available on Gilbert's works first produced after 1890 might be within reason since these works have been largely neglected by publishers, critics, and theatrical producers since the time of their original productions. I have, therefore, attempted a comprehensive compilation of materials written both during and since Gilbert's day on these later works using the facilities discussed in the Introduction to this study. The bibliography is by no means limited to scholarly material but includes every item in periodical, newspaper, or book form that I have encountered which gives mention of any of Gilbert's later works. The entire list is arranged alphabetically by author (except for anonymous items that are listed at the conclusion of the bibliography). I decided that any other form of division would necessitate too many cross references to important critics if the works were not listed under a single author-name grouping.

The first-night reviews listed in Chapter II are, of course, not repeated here, although other early material concerning the original productions that was not presented in formal reviews is included. Also omitted are items in the Gilbert and Sullivan Society's Gilbert and Sullivan Journal (1925- ) since the most important articles from this

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important publication are given in the footnotes in the text of this study. The reader’s attention is especially drawn to "An Operatic Glossary: XIX—'Storia Limited'" in the Sept. 1937 issue and "An Operatic Glossary: XIX—'The Grand Duke'" in the Dec. 1937 issue. Items in the Savoyard (1952– ), the official publication of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust, Ltd., are also excluded. The original articles by leading Gilbert authorities in Gilbert and Sullivan Papers: Presented at the International Conference Held at the University of Kansas in May 1970, edited by James Hoyler (Lawrence: University of Kansas libraries, 1971) (copy available in the Royal Holloway College Library, University of London, Surrey) are also omitted from the bibliography, although the articles with the most specific references to Gilbert’s later work can be found in footnote references in the present text.

In the British Museum, one should not overlook "The Death of Sir W. S. Gilbert: A Collection of Miscellaneous Newspaper Cuttings,\(^5\)

"Sir W. S. Gilbert During His Lifetime: A Collection of Miscellaneous Newspaper Cuttings," and "Savoy Operas and Other Plays by Sir W. S. Gilbert: A Collection of Miscellaneous Newspaper Cuttings." Of invaluable aid to scholars doing research on Gilbert’s later years is material deposited in the Dept. of Manuscripts of the British Museum during the nineteen-fifties (Add. MSS. 49280–49285). This material includes original autograph manuscripts of the later plays with notations by Gilbert, as well as Gilbert’s diaries (most of them written in French)

\(^5\)See also "Gilbert Dead, Yet Living": A Collection of statements from London newspapers on the death of Gilbert, Literary Digest (N.Y.), June 29, 1911, pp. 1244–1245.
and letters during the period in question. Also of importance are
the "Chronological Type Copies" of the correspondence of Gilbert and
the correspondence of Sullivan during these years in the Reginald Allen
Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City.

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pp. 202-205.

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"Gilbert and Sullivan as Seen by Two Close Friends."

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ANONYMOUS DIRECTORIES

