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"GOOD OLD GAIETY."



THE "SPIRIT of the LAMP."

# “Good Old Gaiety”

*An Historiette*

*and Remembrance*

BY.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.



“Whom the Gods love die young.”

LONDON:  
PUBLISHED BY THE GAIETY THEATRE COMPANY, LTD.

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# *Preface*

**I**N my original partnership with my friend Mr. GEORGE EDWARDS it

the notion of the  
is a Gaiety in London, the critics will never want employment.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

✕ his mark.



ERRATA.

(PAGES 70 AND 76.)

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Mr. Hollingshead regrets that he is in error in stating that Mr. Edmund (printed Edward, *page 76*) Payne is a son of the late Mr. Harry Payne, or a member of the Payne family.

*In Town (page 70) read Mr. James Leader for Mr. Branscombe.*

## *Preface*

**I**N my original partnership with my friend, Mr. GEORGE EDWARDES, it was covenanted that I should do all the writing and speech-making. In preparing this booklet—at once a record and an epitaph—I am keeping to my bargain, although I never expected to live to record the peaceful death of the “Greatest Variety Theatre on Earth.” I finish with the sincere hope that its big brother across the road—the New Gaiety—will uphold the honour of the family. While there is a Gaiety in London, the critics will never want employment.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

✕ his mark.









# “Good Old Gaiety.”

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## CHAPTER I.

### A LONG CHAPTER OF HISTORY.



THE labour of writing this little booklet in memory of a playhouse whose matinées and nights are condemned to death by the inexorable law of “London improvements,” would have been as melancholy a task as the drawing up of a last dying speech and confession or an elaborate epitaph on an old friend, especially to the present writer, without the knowledge that while we say “The Gaiety is dead ;” we can also add, “Long may the Gaiety live.” There is no occasion to select a stone from the ruins created by the sacrificial pick-axe, and muse over it like a Clare Market Hamlet in the “Alas ! Poor Yorick !” vein, when the apostolic succession of the house and its policy—the policy of serving the public with what it wants, and not with what a Government Education Act thinks it ought to have—is assured by the creating of a New and Improved Temple of Go-as-you-please-Drama within view of the old site, and at the most prominent corner of new-born Central London. “Whom the Gods love die young.” The old Gaiety has had a short life for a leading London Theatre, but it has done its best to make that life a merry one. The lamps it lighted, “sacred” or electric, were never hidden under a bushel, and never will be.

“There goes the old, here comes the new :

Regard it—a familiar face.”

It is pleasant to say “ditto” to Lord Tennyson.

The site of the Gaiety Theatre—a playhouse that I can take liberties with and will therefore call the “dear departed”—was not the offspring of a “fluke.” The fluke enters very largely into theatrical affairs, but not in this case. A capitalist, taking his Johnsonian walk up or down Fleet street, was not inspired to say, “Halloo! here’s a site; let us build a theatre!” The dear departed, whatever its faults and merits may have been, was the be-all and end-all of a deep design. It was an aggregation of properties quietly acquired by a gentleman with brains and money, who was quite able to manage his own affairs, without seeking wisdom (and not often finding it) in a multitude of counsels. He was supposed to have an ambition to pose as a music-hall proprietor, the fact having leaked out—(the tank that holds facts is always very leaky),—that he had purchased the “Strand *Musick* Hall,” as it was rather affectedly called. This hall, the only one so far east on the road to Temple Bar, was started by Mr. Syers, a gentleman of education and enterprise, who had been a merchant in the City in a large way of business. The hall gave itself superior airs. It was inoculated with a disease known at that time—about forty years ago—as the “March of Intellect.” Its architecture was a museum of “samples”; its decoration was scrofulous; its programmes had an educational taint, and it came to the Strand-end of Catherine street, just as that once riotous thoroughfare began to lose its popularity as the Haymarket of Central London. Still it was the heart of a theatrical market, which hardly exists at present. It was surrounded by old taverns like “Simpson’s,” the “Edinburgh Castle,” and the “Albion”—the latter the homely dining-place of Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and half the blend of literature and journalism in the ’fifties and ’sixties. The “Caves of Harmony”—the Coal Hole, the Cyder Cellars, and Paddy Green’s (better known as “Evans’s”) were near; the Lyceum was struggling under many lesseeships, some of them distinguished and all of them interesting; the Strand Theatre, having given up its position of jackal to the Insolvent Debtors Court, was nourishing the genius of Marie Wilton, under the Swanboroughs; the Olympic was still the “little Olympic”—a house with a history. Drury Lane was playing Milton’s *Comus* to twelve pounds a night, as it afterwards played *Hamlet* (in Italian) to ten pounds (the wrong thing in the right place)—the manager trying to make a round peg fill a square hole. The Adelphi was revelling in Toole, old farce (writ large) and melodrama, soon to be housing Colleen Bawns and Jefferson; and Covent Garden was doing nearly everything it was not intended to do under the Davenant Patent of Charles II.

For all this “market” the “Strand Musick Hall” was not a commercial success, and it went into liquidation. Mr. Lionel Lawson, chief proprietor of



JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD



the *Daily Telegraph*, and therefore essentially a "gentleman of the press," acquired it. He also silently acquired various shops, coffee-houses and tenements that fringed the block framed by the Strand, Wellington street, Catherine street, and Exeter street. These included in the latter street an old tavern called "The Fountain," well-known to old pressmen, like the late Doctor Richardson, of the *Times*, who was a two-bottle man—(port for choice)—but with no objection to other liquors—who was a second edition of the celebrated *Porson*.

"The Fountain," if its sign had been altered to that of the "Rat and Cockroach," could easily have played up to it. Its century-old smell of stale tobacco; its half-suppressed kitchen odours in which grilled steaks, chops, and boiled cabbage predominated; its heavy dust-laden carpets which frightened no one, as the schools (National or Board?) had not then taught the natural history of microbes and bacilli. "The Fountain" was not alone in London. It had "Clunn's" in Covent Garden, the "Crown and Anchor" in the Strand, the "Sablonière" in Leicester square, the "London Coffee House" on Ludgate hill, the "Blue Posts" in Cork street, Burlington gardens, and the Gray's Inn Coffee House in Holborn, where creditors could drown their financial sorrows in the "flowing bowl."

On the south side of the block—the Strand side—the Hermit Pioneer of periodical literature was quietly bought out or in, and the wondering Limbird with his weekly *Mirror*—*The Mirror*—ceased to look over his green window curtain at the busy world pushing each other off the pavement before his door and disappeared as one whom the paper duties had preserved from competition. He had held up the *Mirror* to nature and the public—a rather neglectful public—and, in fairness, he should not be altogether forgotten.

The rising periodical literature of the day, and its professors who moved from place to place, with little lumber to hamper their movements, except the traditions and habits of Grub street, had seized upon a bankrupt Arcadia—called Exeter arcade—full of little shops that sold nothing to nobody, with the printed words, "To Let," in every dusty window. It was young and new, and had not put on the mark of hopeless and shabby insolvency. Here literary Bohemia of forty years ago and more "squatted"—there is no other term—and succeeded in getting a few "backers"—printers who thought they might "strike" a catchpenny reef of periodical wealth, and publishers who inserted poetry and paid for it, after measuring with the inches of a two-foot rule. The writers, when they were not frying sprats in the back-parlours, were "publishing" these fly-sheets across the counters, and when the day's work was over they often slept under these counters with

bundles of "back-numbers" for pillows, as many a real industrious apprentice has done before them. Poor fellows! many of them earned a character for dissipation far too easily. A weak constitution and slender food have much to answer for. This new Grub street, elevated to the dignity of an arcade, together with the watch-tower chambers at its Wellington street end, where "Johnny" Toole at that time was in residence, were part of the Lawsonian purchase. The arcade had never been "dedicated to the public" by its owner, the Marquis of Exeter, and therefore no Act, parliamentary or local, was necessary to close it at the required moment.

The site having been thus patiently acquired with mole-like quietude, the work of carrying out the Gaiety design emerged to a certain degree from underground. The late Mr. J. C. Phipps appeared occasionally without a mask and a dark lantern; Mr. Lionel Lawson was less reticent and oracular; and the builder, Mr. Simpson, and his clerk of the works, Mr. Tasker, were appointed. This was at the close of 1867. I heard of the scheme from Mr. Dion Boucicault, which was important and eventful at that day, when a new theatre was as rare as Christian charity, and was looked upon as an almost impious attempt to widen the area of theatrical enterprise. The Lord Chamberlain, then Earl Sydney, under the pressure of the Select Parliamentary Committee of 1866, had only just surrendered his guiding principle, that the supply of playhouses should be regulated, in a great degree, by the real or supposed wants of a particular neighbourhood, and no distinction appeared to be made between the Strand—the thoroughfare of the world—and any back street in Soho or the Seven Dials. The completed site of the Gaiety had been well-manured with theatrical guano. It was there exactly, where the condemned Gaiety now stands—to become the "dear departed" in a few weeks, that a large building stood, called the Lyceum, erected as far back as 1765, by Mr. James Payne, a fairly well-known architect of the period. It seems to have been a cross between the Polytechnic Institution, the Old Adelaide Gallery, the "Hall of Rome," and Madame Tussaud's, and housed amongst many things during its varied and half-licensed career, the exhibitions of a certain "Society of Artists" which were, no doubt, the origin of the Royal Academy, before it moved to Somerset House opposite, on its road to Piccadilly. This place was under the administration of the celebrated Dr. Arnold, who extended the building toward Exeter street in 1794. It was still condemned to exist as what the Americans call a "Museum"—another name often for a Dime Show, generally opened in an empty shop with a fat woman, a Hottentot Venus or a porcupine man. Amongst the Lyceum attractions—(Lyceum No. 1)—were the "Musical Glasses," immortalised by Oliver Goldsmith in the *Vicar of*



"PROSPERITY"







C. J. PHIPPS



*Wakefield.* It was left for Mr. S. J. Arnold, son of Dr. Arnold, to obtain a modified Lord Chamberlain's license, as distinguished from the magistrates' Georgian permit, and the liberty to call his Lyceum an English Opera House. This led to more rebuilding, under Mr. Samuel Beazley, a more distinguished architect, and it was opened on the 15th of June, 1816. It was still devoted to "variety" business, in the intervals of more pretentious performances, occasionally permitted by the Dogs-in-the-Manger of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, under protest. It is no exaggeration to say that its operations often covered the recreations of Exeter Hall and the "Fives Court," and that it was equally ready to welcome an oratorio or a prize fight. It tried the experiment of "two houses a night" towards the end of 1817.

The time came at last for the first Lyceum and English Opera House to be destroyed, not by the London County Council of its day, but by what the eloquent newspaper reporters called "the devouring element." The fire occurred (to be exact) on Feb. 26th, 1830. The theatre, said to have cost £80,000, and much adjoining property, was burnt, and the proprietor-manager, Mr. Arnold, was said not to have been insured. This was real tragedy.

The Lyceum (No. 2)—the present paralysed Lyceum, that will exist for ever in theatrical history on the strength of the Henry Irving record—was not rebuilt for four years, the delay arising from certain extensive public alterations in the Strand, involving the planning of North Wellington street (and hill), the clearance of Cross's projecting menagerie and Exeter change (the latter often confounded with Bohemia's Exeter arcade), the construction of Burleigh street, and the widening of Disraeli's favourite thoroughfare.

The present Lyceum (what is left of it) was placed on the west side of the North Wellington street slope—the continuation of Waterloo Bridge, then charging a penny toll for suicide—and South Wellington street. A curvilinear inclined plane was thus dedicated to the heavy market traffic. The Thames Valley levels and the local authorities of 1830 have certainly much to answer for. After the four years' delay the second Lyceum was at last opened with a triple bill, July 14th, 1834.

"Variety" was still the order of the night. Light and low comedians sang comic, or alleged comic, songs, between the pieces. This duty was in their agreement, the same as the clause confining the actor to residence within one mile of his workshop—the play-house. Supper was not then a meal forbidden by Act of Parliament, and eating against time was not made one of the few things legal at night, and the infallible mark of a good citizen. Indigestion was not then the pet of the State and the licensing authorities.

With part of the site of the first Lyceum cleared by fire, and not absorbed by the various shops and tenements round the block, it was not surprising that, in the fulness of time, a "Variety Theatre" should make its appearance, where the "English Opera House" once stood, bearing the title of the "Strand *Musick* Hall." The only wonder is that such an establishment for the supply of amusement "snacks" should have waited something like thirty years before it had courage to face the public. We have more daring at the present hour—call it foolhardy, if you will. A variety theatre is built and opened every three months—sometimes called a Palace—sometimes an Empire—and no suburb, or extreme point, of London is left unserved, or not served brilliantly, by these Temples of Light and Leading. Poor Edmund Kean was born a little before his time. Instead of tramping hungry and footsore over the bleak hills between Exeter and Dorchester, he could have ridden in a hired brougham between Drury Lane and Balham, and between Balham and Peckham Rye, playing an act of Shylock as an after-piece, taking half the gross receipts for his services and "drawing power."

The "Strand *Musick* Hall" may have been a little behind its time in creation, but it was certainly a good deal behind its time in management. It tried to be "superior"; it was tainted with educational longings. As a building it never comprised much of the Gaiety Theatre. Where the "*Musick*" Hall ended, the Gaiety *Theatre* began. The theatre was practically built on the clearance of Exeter arcade and Exeter street.





SAMUEL PHELPS





## CHAPTER II.

### THE FOUNDER AND THE FINDER.



O manager of a popular London theatre probably ever began business under more eccentric conditions than I did. The building, as a building, was designed, its position chosen, its plan mapped out, its leading idea (as a building) had been decided upon, its title had been selected, its architect and decorators had been commissioned—all this, and more had been effected, before I came upon the scene. I met Mr. Lionel Lawson in the street by accident.

I said to him, "I hear you're building a theatre?"

"Quite true."

"I should like to take it."

"All right. Got any money?"

"Not much, about two hundred pounds."

"No matter, you can get more."

The lease was settled without more words. I then learnt the size and name of the Theatre. Its design had been copied, on a reduced scale, from the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris—now Sarah Bernhardt's Theatre—with a dress-circle in front of a semi-circle of private boxes. The leading idea of the building was a dual structure—a restaurant attached to a theatre, and a theatre attached to a restaurant. This enabled visitors to dine and walk into the theatre without going into the street, or to leave the theatre and pass direct into the supper-rooms. This could be done in 1868, and we did it; in

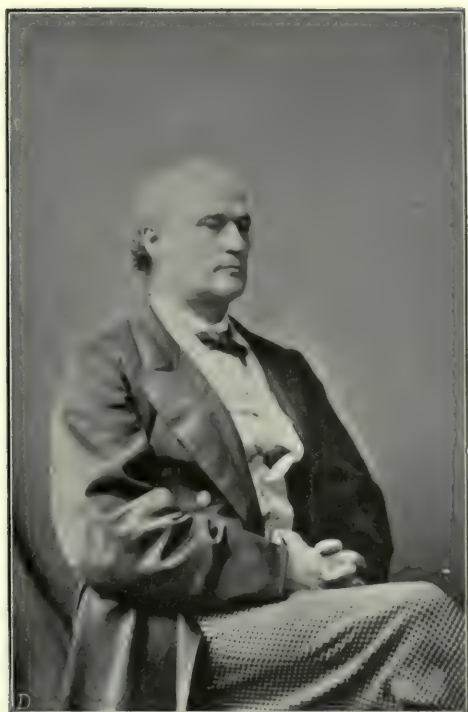
1872 it became illegal. The arches of communication had to be bricked up with a two-foot brick-wall, and the Siamese Twins were doomed to enforced separation on a legal technicality. Whatever public safety may exist in broad openings was destroyed by this Act, much to the concern of the then Lord Chamberlain. I increased the difficulty, by disclaiming all responsibility for accidents from panic in face of these official barriers, and Sir William Harcourt, then Home Secretary, was worried into a *non possumus* utterance. As for myself, my manners were usually framed upon Lord Chesterfield, an affable gentleman, but my language was sometimes not more polite than that of Junius. I often shocked my good landlord, who always loyally stood by me in every emergency.

The Gaiety building progressed rapidly, as there was plenty of money to work with, and I found myself in the position of "sole lessee and manager"! What had been my apprenticeship? A "gallery boy," a frequenter of those nurseries of talent—the "Saloon Theatres"—a dramatic critic for about six years of the *Daily News*, the *Leader*, *Punch*, and other journals, a small dramatic author, and a three years' experience as stage director of the Alhambra, in Leicester square. What was my age? Forty-one—a pretty time of life to go into what was practically to me a new business. If I had been in the Civil Service, my chiefs would have been seriously thinking whether I ought not to apply for the official "two-thirds" retiring pension. To have been a journalist was, in England, little or no recommendation. It was always a stepping-stone in Paris, but never in London.

What was the title of my theatre? "The Gaiety." This at once stamped it as a "place of amusement." I could embellish amusement as much as I liked. I could flavour occasionally with High Art Sauce, but though an old literary colleague of Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Dr. Norman Macleod, I had to steer clear of the rocks of literature, properly so-called. I steered instinctively, I took a middle course. I strove to fluke with dignity. I saw everybody, I looked at everything. I even answered letters. I was most accessible from ten to six, with no luncheon hour. After that I was everywhere and anywhere—at any theatre or music-hall—except at the Gaiety.

I had secured my priceless burlesque boy, my equally priceless chambermaid, in the person of Miss Ellen Farren. The first "leading man" I interviewed was Mr. Alfred Wigan. As an actor I had known him for years, but as a gentleman (and he *was* a gentleman and a scholar) I met him almost for the first time. I was surprised at one thing. Though a man of education, a gentleman in thought, and by training, he had not been armour-proof to one





ALFRED WIGAN





MADGE ROBERTSON (MRS. KENDAL)



defect of the theatrical profession. He believed in annual "benefits." Once a year, he thought, there was no disgrace in sending round the hat. It never seemed to have struck him that, in doing this, he was trying to saddle his friends and the public with a duty that really belonged to his employer, for the time being—the necessary manager. The artistic labourer was worthy of his hire, but this hire had already been deposited at the box office. The benefit system was a survival of the old, so-called, "palmy days" of the drama, when two houses claimed and held a monopoly in the higher drama—Protection masquerading as Education—when actors had an artificially limited market for their talent; when the divine law of supply and demand was openly violated, and a profession with infinite possibilities was degraded by coarse familiarity on one side, and insolent patronage on the other. I tilted at the benefit windmill, as I was quixotic enough to do, and it ended in my commuting the privilege of sending round the hat by paying Mr. Alfred Wigan an extra five pounds a week during his engagement.

My "leading lady" soon came when I had found my leading man, and Miss Madge Robertson, on her road to become Mrs. W. H. Kendal, added another corner-stone to the rapidly-rising mansion. When I wheeled my office desk and chair into the one room of the old Strand Musick Hall, which, in course of demolition and adaptation, threatened to do me no more harm than choking me with brickdust, I was on the Strand frontage, and was attached to many buildings that made me feel less like a squatter in a new country. At the south-west corner was the office of the *Morning Post*, a paper for which I had acted as Special Commissioner during the terrible famine year of 1861, in which at least three thousand wretched people, mostly dock labourers and their families, died of absolute starvation. My friend Toole, for whom I wrote a farce for the Lyceum Theatre opposite, was expelled from his Watch Tower Chambers by the sacrificial pickaxe, but the corner house next door, which was not incorporated with the theatre until many years after, was originally the office of *Household Words*, where I first met Charles Dickens, and joined his staff ten years before the Gaiety Theatre arose to give me another employment. On the east side of the block, in Catherine street, Strand, was the *Illustrated Times* Office, a paper long since dead, but conducted most ably by the elder Mr. Vizetelly—the head of a family as talented as the Mayhews. This was another of my journals, for which I worked, looking at the late "Bill" Tinsley, one of my publishers, opposite. The evicted Bohemians of the vanishing Arcade I still held communion with, some time after we had founded the Savage Club in the days of its penniless simplicity.



### CHAPTER III.

#### BRICKS AND MORTAR.



THE building of the "dear departed" was, of course, not altogether free from the difficulties attending the creation of a large theatre and restaurant combined at the sides of great thoroughfares. The levels kept the site free from the irruption of water, even in sinking a twenty-foot cellar, but we were not free from the "ancient light" difficulty, if we escaped the evil of more ancient cesspools. The "ancient light" question cropped up at a critical period of the construction in connexion with the back part of the premises of the *Morning Post* which almost adjoined the theatre property on the west side. The relations between Lord Glenesk (then Mr. Algernon Borthwick) and Mr. Lionel Lawson were of a friendly kind, but business is business, and "ancient lights," before now, have been known to part father and son, and to breed a feud as violent as a Corsican vendetta. It came to this, that a block of theatre offices on one side of an intervening ventilating shaft of a yard could not be raised without a little encroachment on the light of a block of newspaper offices on the other side. The process of adjustment by law was too slow to satisfy anybody interested in raising the Gaiety, and it was quietly decided to build the obstruction in dispute first, and to argue the question of its obstructiveness afterwards. The time selected for this Aladdin-like operation was Saturday—all day and night from an early hour and a great portion of Sunday. This time covered the hours when editors,



CHARLES MATHEWS

JOHN L. TOOLE

SAMUEL PHELPS





managers, and servants of the newspaper were anywhere except in Wellington street, and as bricks, stones, timbers, girders, mortar, cement, window-sashes, planks, and every material required were ready to place in position, the drilled workmen began and finished the job, and a good meal afterward, without observation or disturbance. When the ruling powers of the journal came on Sunday afternoon to prepare their Monday's issue, they saw that the obstruction had been raised like a set scene on the stage, and they thought what they thought, but said little. They retired to their journalistic labours to take part in the government of the universe. An amicable settlement was arrived at.

As the theatre progressed, the preparations for the opening night progressed with it. An operetta, a romantic comedy-drama, and a burlesque had been selected by me, and this triple bill demanded attention spread over many places. The boots were made at one shop, the dresses at several shops, the scenery was painted at a studio off Drury lane, the properties were made at another workshop, the operetta was rehearsed in one room not far from Leicester square, the choruses were rehearsed at another, the comedy-drama was "run through" in a drawing-room, the ballet danced themselves into the required figures at "Evans's" singing rooms in Covent garden, then under the direction of dear, old, full-blooded Paddy Green, the band rehearsed at Covent Garden Theatre, the pantomimists at the Alhambra, and the burlesque was put together at Astley's. I lived more than half the day in a hansom cab. The pieces of this Chinese puzzle came together for the first time about three o'clock on the afternoon of the day of opening; the junior acting-manager was in hysterics from overwork and nervous excitement, and the stage-manager felt very much hurt that he could not have the royal ante-room for a stage office.

About a fortnight before the theatre was due to open—an event that I had backed to "come off" with several friends connected with public works and railways—the painting-room of Messrs. Grieve and Son off Drury lane was burnt down, and with it went the bulk of the finished scenery for the three Gaiety pieces. A floor cloth factory had to be hired at Camberwell, and being in a bleak position, this structure rolled about like an air-ship just inflated. The scenery had to be painted again, and it was re-painted.

At last the important day arrived, Monday, December 21, 1868. The opening programme cannot be better and more briefly stated than in the following newspaper advertisement. The shilling a line, more or less, charged by newspaper managers for advertisements, is the best teacher of condensed statement, and direct English, of any educational process.

## THE GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND.

(Designed by C. J. PHIPPS, Esq., F.S.A.; Decorated by GEORGE GORDON, Esq.; Stage and Machinery by Mr. TASKER; Contractor, Mr. SIMPSON.) Will be OPENED on MONDAY, December, 21, 1868, under the sole Lesseeship and Management of Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

The Theatre, containing upwards of 1,500 seats, has been built with every regard for the public convenience and safety, and has been decorated and furnished in the most costly and artistic style. All box, booking, and other fees will (with the necessary assistance of the public) be thoroughly abolished, and the performances will always conclude at a reasonable hour.

The Company consists of

Mr. Alfred Wigan.	Miss Maude Elliott.
Miss Madge Robertson.	Miss A. Tremaine.
M. Stuart (from the Odéon, Gaieté, and Porte St. Martin Theatres, Paris).	Miss Lilian Hastings.
Miss E. Farren.	Miss Litton.
Mr. C. Lyall (from Her Majesty's Opera).	Mr. R. Barker.
Miss Constance Loseby.	Mr. Eldred.
Mr. Robert Soutar (Stage Manager).	Mr. Joseph Robins.
Miss E. Fowler.	Mr. Griffiths.
Mr. Maclean.	Mr. R. Teesdale.
	Mr. J. Reeves.
	Miss A. Lister.
	Miss I. Henrie.
	Mr. Bolton.

The BALLET will be principally selected from the Royal Italian Opera.

Principal Dancer—Mdlle. Bossi

(From the Porte St. Martin Theatre, Paris; and the Opera House of Rio de Janeiro).

Principal Grotesque Dancers and Pantomimists:

Mr. John Danban and Mr. John Warde.

The CHORUS will be selected from the two chief Opera Houses, and the Vocal Music will be under the direction of Mr. J. PITTMAN.

The ORCHESTRA will be most full and efficient, under the direction of M. KETTENUS (from Her Majesty's Opera).

The SCENERY will be painted by and under the direction of Messrs. T. GRIEVE and SON. And the Elaborate Costumes have been designed by ALFRED THOMPSON, Esq. The Act Drop painted by GEORGE GORDON, Esq.; and the Proscenium Fresco by H. S. MARKS, Esq., R.A.

The Lobbies supplied with Scented Fountains by RIMMEL.

The Opening Pieces will be THE TWO HARLEQUINS, an Operetta in One Act, by M. E. JONAS (the English words by G. A'BECKETT, Esq.). The principal parts in which will be sustained by Mr. C. Lyall and Miss Constance Loseby.

### "ON THE CARDS."

A Comedy-Drama in Three Acts (adapted from "L'Escamoteur") by ALFRED THOMPSON; in which Mr. Alfred Wigan, M. Stuart, Miss Madge Robertson, and Miss E. Farren, will represent the chief characters.

### "ROBERT LE DIABLE,"

An original Operatic Extravaganza, by W. S. Gilbert, Esq., which will be supported by the whole Comic, Vocal, and Pantomimic strength of the Company.

The Burlesque will include Two Ballets.

Doors open at 6.30; Performances to commence punctually at 7. Box Office open from 10 to 5. No Booking or other Fees.

Prices:—Orchestra Stalls, 7s.; Balcony Stalls, 5s.; Private Boxes, £1 1s. 6d. and £2 2s.; Upper Boxes, 4s.; Pit, 2s.; Gallery, 1s.

Grand entrance to Stalls and Boxes in the Strand; Pit and Gallery entrances in Catherine street; Royal entrance in Exeter-street, and Stage entrance in Wellington-street.

Places may always be secured at Mitchell's, Chappell's, Lacon & Ollier's, and Bubb's, and the chief Libraries.

NOTE.—The Saloons will be opened on the same night (December 21, 1868), and will communicate with the Theatre on every level. The extensive Café and Restaurant attached to the Theatre will be opened in a few weeks.



DOWNER

ADELAIDE NEILSON



M. Kettenus went back to the Italian Opera in March, and Herr Meyer Lütz began his connexion with the Gaiety Theatre which lasted over a full generation.

The system of advertisement avoided bills and posters, and confined itself to newspaper announcements and paragraphs. Anything "sensational" was pressed into the service of publicity, and a flash-light was installed on the roof, with the largest voltaic battery then attainable. It played upon the church of St. Mary-le-Strand at one moment, and Charing Cross terminus the next. It was discontinued, having served its purpose, before it frightened the horses, and caused damage to life and property.

All the advertisements never omitted the statement that the Gaiety Theatre was in the Strand, as a playhouse that does not fix its own locality in its title, must have that locality fixed for it. Cabmen were not neglected, and were educated to know where the theatre with the French name stood, by being the first thought of by the dispensers of managerial favours. The title never gave them so much trouble as the neighbouring Vaudeville, when it came into existence as a rival. That name was immediately shortened into the "War-Devil."





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE BILL OF FARE.



THE theatre opened without any low comedian of commanding popularity—a comedian with a name—though it had plenty of comic talent, but Miss E. Farren (generally called “Nelly” Farren), who was in private life Mrs. Robert Soutar, was a host in herself. “Cheeky” in tone and manner, without the slightest tinge of offensive vulgarity, she was the brightest boy-girl or girl-boy that ever graced the stage since the greatest of stage-managers, Sir William Davenant, blessed that institution with Nature’s born comedians—women. She opened the Gaiety in 1868, she remained with me for eighteen years, and she continued with my successor, Mr. George Edwardes. Her apprenticeship was passed at the Victoria (the “Vic.”) and the old Olympic, as mine was passed at the Alhambra; probably no actress, unconnected by family ties with the place where her fame and popularity were nourished, ever continued so long a time in one theatre, and largely under one management. A spinal complaint, which troubled her in her early Gaiety career, developed into locomotor ataxy on a voyage back from Australia. The substantial gratitude and esteem of her many friends was strikingly shown a few years



HENRY J. BYRON





ago, and her partially restored health enables her to enjoy occasionally the acting of others, if it does not allow her to act herself.

The policy of the Gaiety at this time was not to whip a crawling piece into a poor imitation of a run, but to consign it to the Hospital for Dramatic Incurables, often without an obituary notice. "One down and the other come on" was the motto that guided managerial action. Mistakes may have been made by this diseased activity, but no matter. The Gaiety, with all its reputation for frivolity, was more like a factory than a theatre. Some people compared it to a treadmill. It was a source of profit to the Lord Chamberlain's Reader of Plays, whose chief income is drawn from fees charged for performing this duty.

A change of programme took place in March, the Anglo-French drama, *On the Cards*, being replaced by a five-act drama, by Tom Robertson—then the most popular author of the day—called *Dreams*. It was ushered in with an operetta, and bowed out by the Gilbertian burlesque of *Robert the Devil*. Playgoers at the Gaiety, in 1869, could not complain that the management gave them hardly enough for their money! Tom Robertson's sister, Miss Madge Robertson, who had just attained her majority, and was free from her father's leading strings, as she told me, did her brother good service, but the chief drawback was Mr. Alfred Wigan, a superb character actor, no longer young, insisting upon playing a dual part (quite within his right, but beyond his power), one of the parts being a young romantic lover. John Clayton, though not by any means an ideal lover, would have suited the young part better, leaving the elder part to Mr. Wigan. This was not to be done at the time, but later on in the year, when the piece was revived, Mr. Henry Neville was placed in the young part, and Mr. Sam Emery in the old part. Other minor alterations were made, and the piece had a renewed life, and was sold for touring in the country—a business which was then in its infancy. Tom Robertson wrote from Italy to thank me.

At Whitsuntide, as *Robert the Devil* seemed to flag a little, a spectacular extravaganza called *Columbus*, written and arranged by Alfred Thompson, who was an "Admirable Crichton" in his way, and of immense service to me in giving an artistic tone to the theatre. His combinations of colour amounted to genius, though his forms may have been a little ultra-French and extravagant. This he got from his French and German training.

*Columbus* was more like a French Parisian *fêerie* than anything that had been seen on the London stage since the Lyceum days of Madame Vestris, when Planché was the stock author, assisted by the brilliant and invaluable Charles Mathews, and Beverley invented what is now called the "transformation scene," to dazzle and amuse the British public.

In 1869 Mr. W. S. Gilbert made his first appearance as a writer of comedy, with a three-act piece called *An Old Score*. It had one great and only fault: it was "too clever by half." It was too true to nature—disagreeable nature. It was not served up with enough make-believe sauce. Playgoers have a sneaking kindness for humbugs—Tartuffes, Mawworms, Sleeks, and all the tribe. *An Old Score* flew in the face of their sympathies, and, as John Oxenford said in the *Times*, "the work was too genuine a comedy to suit the taste of the age."

An intermediary burlesque by Alfred Thompson on the operatic subject of *Linda of Chamouni* paved the way for a romantic drama, called *A Life Chase*, in which Miss Adelaide Neilson joined the company. The burlesque became such a favourite with the Prince of Wales (our present King), that on one occasion he "commanded" a special performance of the trifle as part of the programme. Mr. Alfred Wigan again appeared in a young romantic part, which would have been better placed in the hands of John Clayton, and the piece suffered in consequence. In all these changes the triple bill was maintained, operetta, drama or comedy, and burlesque. This was only changed when a quadruple bill was given, an operetta playing the people in, and another operetta playing the people out.

On December the 13th, 1869, Mr. J. L. Toole commenced an engagement at the Gaiety, which, though intermittent in character, owing to country contracts, extended over several years. He brought with him from the country a three-act drama by Henry J. Byron, called *Uncle Dick's Darling*. In its production at the Gaiety the mechanism of a transformation scene, usually confined to extravaganzas and pantomimes, was applied to drama. The effect well repaid the expense and trouble. No low comedian, posing more or less as a "star," could complain of the way in which he was supported, as the following programme will abundantly testify:—



MR. HENRY IRVING (SIR HENRY IRVING)



# The Gaiety Programme.

Sole Lessee and Manager - - - MR. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Stage Manager - - - - - Mr. ROBERT SOUTAR.  
 Assistant Acting Manager - - - - - Mr. W. H. GRIFFITHS.  
 Musical Director - - - - - Herr MEYER LUTZ.

Commence at Seven o'clock with Offenbach's Operetta of

## THE ROSE OF AUVERGNE!

MISS TREMAINE, MR. C. LYALL, MR. PERRINI.

At 7-45, a New Drama, by Mr. H. J. Byron,

## UNCLE DICK'S DARLING

Dick Dolland (a Cheap Jack) ... ..	Mr. J. L. TOOLE.
Mr. Chevenix ... ..	Mr. HENRY IRVING.
Hon. Claude Lorrimer ... ..	Mr. H. R. TEESDALE.
Joe Leonard (a Blacksmith) ... ..	Mr. J. CLAYTON.
Mrs. Torrington ... ..	MISS MARIA ELSWORTHY.
Alice Renshaw ... ..	MISS LITTON.
Kate Landrail ... ..	MISS L. HENRIE
A Servant ... ..	MISS A. HERBERT.
Mary Belton ... ..	MISS NEILSON.

At 9-30, a New Operatic Extravaganza,

## WAT TYLER, M.P.

By Mr. George Augustus Sala.

Richard II. King of England ... ..	MISS R. COGLAN.
Queen ... ..	MISS LITTON.
Henry Plantagenet, <i>alias</i> Reginald Beaumanners ... ..	MISS E. FARREN.
Sir William Walworth ... ..	Mr. J. MACLEAN.
Walworth Road (his Son) ... ..	MISS L. HENRIE.
Duke Humphrey ... ..	MR. N. MARLOWE.
Lord Epsom of Saltsbury ... ..	MISS R. WILSON.
Garter King at Arms ... ..	MISS A. HERBERT.
Wat Tyler ... ..	Mr. J. L. TOOLE.
Mrs. Tyler ... ..	MRS. HENRY LEIGH.
Ellen Tyler ... ..	MISS CONSTANCE LOSEBY.
Jack Straw ... ..	Mr. PERRINI.
Lucy Straw ... ..	MISS TREMAINE.

Scene 1.—A TOWN IN ESSEX.

Scene 2.—TYLER'S 'UMBLE 'OME.

BALLET OF FOOLS.

Scene 3.—KING RICHARD'S COURT AT BAYNARD'S CASTLE.

Scene 4.—THE LITTLE EASE IN THE TOWER.

Scene 5.—OLD HOLBORN BRIDGE AND SNOW HILL.

MAYPOLE DANCE.

The Gaiety Theatre was the last theatre Charles Dickens visited, and *Uncle Dick's Darling* was the last piece he ever saw. He also saw in the piece traces of *Dr. Marigold's Prescription*, and in Mr. Chevenix a reflection of Mr. Dombey. He had little doubt about the future of the actor—Henry Irving.

Mr. Sala's extravaganza (his first attempt at this kind of work) was produced on the first anniversary of the opening of the theatre. The distinguished author was well treated by the management, and John Oxenford said in the *Times* that the mounting of the piece was worthy of the best days of Charles Kean at the Princess's Theatre.

This advertisement was issued:—"With the exception of Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, and Good Friday, this house—a rare thing in London—has been open every night for a whole year with one unbroken form of entertainment. That entertainment, consisting of operetta, drama, and operatic extravaganza, has been copied by several metropolitan theatres. It is a fact, which may be taken for what it is worth, that the Gaiety has given constant employment to nearly 300 members of the dramatic profession. Though the management never pledged itself to patronise the so-called British drama, the British drama has fared very well at the Gaiety. Out of five plays produced, three have been of English growth, viz., *Dreams*, by T. Robertson; *An Old Score*, by W. S. Gilbert; and *Uncle Dick's Darling*, by H. J. Byron; the other two were avowed adaptations. The extravaganzas, as usual, have been English, and the author of two of them, Mr. Alfred Thompson, is a gentleman who made his first appearance as a dramatic author at the Gaiety. To-night, another gentleman, Mr. George Augustus Sala, will appeal to you for the first time in a similar capacity. Those who have watched the pieces at this theatre will admit that much has been done by the management to raise the artistic standard of stage costume. The comfort of the public has been carefully studied in the front of the house, and the result has been an amount of patronage very satisfactory in the past, and very encouraging for the future."

Though the claim of the Gaiety burlesques of this early period was often urged and not often disputed, the production of Offenbach's *Princess of Trebizonde* in its entirety, stamped the Greatest Variety Theatre in England, for the time being, as an opera-bouffe house. Neither Mr. J. L. Toole, nor Miss "Nelly" Farren, could be called "singers," even in the most elastic English, but they were quite good enough to satisfy the composer, with all his musical skill and experience. He liked people who could "make something" of his characters, or whom he could pick up and



JOHN CLAYTON





make "something of." When he came over to see his piece, he passed many evenings at the music halls, and saw considerable possibilities in two drolls named Brian and Conolly. He was simple and anti-Parisian in his habits and tastes, and dined nightly at "Simpson's" in the Strand, being satisfied with a slice of roast mutton and a boiled potato.

The *Princess of Trebizonde* was bright and tuneful, with the grace and melody of Auber, and an amusing and unoffending book, rendered into fairly good English by Charles Lamb Kenney, the son of the great adapter. It had one fault, and this not a little one. It was ten years before its time. The public wanted educating up to this form of entertainment, and their schoolmasters, the musical critics, were too busy quarrelling amongst themselves, to educate them.

With a musical equipment, such as the Gaiety possessed, a season of opera in English was not difficult to arrange, and the command of Miss Julia Matthews, who had just returned from a country tour, enabled us to vary "English opera" with Anglo-French opera-bouffe. Miss Matthews was the best all-round performer of Offenbach's chief works available in England. The engagement of Madame Florence Lancia and Mr. W. H. Cummings (now the principal of the Guildhall College of Music) strengthened the company for comic opera of the French school. Offenbach's *Barbe Bleue*—the entire work was produced in four days—no man but Meyer Lutz could have done it—the tenor having to be changed on the second day, and another tenor sought for and engaged. Fortunately we found Mr. Beverley, who if not a Dupuis, was a good average singer. The various works given at this period were infinite in their variety, and they led up to the return of Mr. Charles Santley to the stage, and the production of Hérold's *Zampa*, the first time it had been heard in England. After *Zampa* came this difficulty with Santley—What opera next? Operas, as a rule, are written for tenors, not baritones, and after much consultation and many futile suggestions, the great and popular singer plumped for *Fra Diavolo*. The character suited his acting, and was far more interesting than *Zampa*, but much of his music had to be transposed—notably the world-wide celebrated serenadé, "Young Agnes." *Fra Diavolo* closed Mr. Santley's first engagement at the Gaiety, and it was settled that he was to return at the following Easter, when an English version of the German opera, called *Czar and Zimmerman*, was to be prepared for him. Its English title was to be *Peter the Shipwright*.

Mr. J. L. Toole came back at Christmas, and arrangements were made for an original opera-bouffe, the music by Hervé, called *Aladdin the Second*.

It was the first piece placed upon the English stage in the Japanese style, a style just then (1870) becoming popular in Paris. The "book" was by Alfred Thompson, and the dresses were one of his great and peculiar triumphs. One effect, obtained by stencilling white satinette with terra-cotta "smudge," in flower patterns, was so much admired by the lady-patronesses of the theatre, that they wrote to know where they could get "some of that beautiful embroidery!"

Mr. Toole, well supported, as usual, by Miss E. Farren, Miss Constance Loseby, Mr. Charles Lyall, Mr. Perrini, Mr. James Stoye, Miss Tremaine, and others, made a success in the quaint magician, and his phrase, "Still I am not happy," became the catch-phrase of the period. In these days *Aladdin* would have run for a couple of years, and it would have run much longer than it was allowed to run in 1870, but the time arrived for the return of Mr. Charles Santley, and the production of Lortzing's opera. *Czar and Zimmerman* is a classic in Germany; in England Mr. Charles Santley contrived to make it a respectable success. Great care was taken to realise the scenery, furniture, and costumes of Holland when Peter the Great was learning his business as a shipwright. Old prints of the period were collected by friends in the "Low Countries."





GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA







F. C. BURNAND





## CHAPTER V.

### MANAGERIAL METHODS.



HERE was no finality about the prices of the Gaiety. The gallery began at a shilling, but it was afterwards reduced to sixpence. This sixpence was again raised to a shilling, as it was found, in practice, that the low price attracted an audience a little too demonstrative for the general comfort of the house. The seven shilling stalls were raised to ten shillings, when the "little theatre in the Tottenham Court road" advanced its stalls to ten shillings and sixpence. It was a matter of pride and trade rivalry. I could not allow "the Bancrofts" to "do my dags." When I had French plays, these seats were always a guinea. I used occasionally to visit my own gallery. I found the occupants sociable, and inclined for conversation. One quiet tradesman or workman of the neighbourhood told me that he regularly used the house. "I'm sorry," he said, "they raised it to a shilling, although I don't grumble. I can't come so often, and I likes the place. I knows the people and I feels at 'ome."

A visitor of the same class unconsciously pointed out the weak point in Gilbert's *Old Score*. Speaking of the father and son in the piece, he said, "I don't care what the old man is. He may be a reg'lar bad lot, but his son didn't ought to speak to him like that. Whatever he is, he's his father!" These words pronounced the death warrant of the play.

The "no fee" system was not enforced without difficulty. One comic maniac brought fifty or a hundred threepenny pieces, and stuck them in the frames of the "notice" boards. An old lady one night was taken ill, and gave

the cloak-room attendant on her level much trouble. She offered the girl half-a-sovereign, which was respectfully refused. The old lady wanted to know why, and was told "by the manager's orders."

"And who is the manager, may I ask?" said the old lady with dignity.

"Mr. John Hollingshead."

"Then please give that gentleman my compliments, and say I insist upon giving you that for the trouble I have caused you."

The Gaiety stood alone amongst London theatres, in being the only one without drinking bars. These were the property of the restaurant attached, with a right of serving the visitors. The manager of the theatre may have been a sinner, but he was not a publican. Before Messrs. Spiers and Pond took a lease of the restaurant and bars, and spent seventy or eighty thousand pounds sterling in building, enlarging, furnishing and decorating them, the early tenant was not free from financial difficulties. A levy was made one day on a judgment summons, and I instructed my military commissioner to watch the seizure and see that none of the theatre property was interfered with. The orders were received in full military form, the man standing erect, and saluting. The dialogue was short but to the point:—

"Watch those brokers."

"Roight, sur!" (*saluting*).

"Those things and those things (*pointing*) are not to be touched."

"Roight, sur!" (*saluting*).

[*A short pause.*]

"Will I use voilence?" (*saluting*).

"If necessary."

"Roight, sur!" (*saluting*).

In the summer of 1871, the year of the Commune, when London was full of French people who sought refuge from what they feared was a "reign of terror" in their own country, the Gaiety gave house-room to the company of the *Fantaisies Parisiennes* from Brussels—a company as good as any company in Paris, but not yet stamped with the Parisian stamp. The theatre in Brussels was a small one, with a "sliding roof," and the director, M. Humbert, was an honest, liberal, and straightforward man with whom it was a pleasure to do business. He shortly afterwards "discovered" Lecocq, the composer, and acquired an European reputation by producing at his little house, then known as the Alcazar, and decorated in the Moorish fashion, *La Fille de Madame Angot*. He was naturally tempted later on to bring this effective comic opera to London, and took it to the St. James's Theatre, once the only house for "French plays." The first night, in French, it was played to an audience which represented in money *fourteen shillings*,—one orchestral stall booked at Mitchell's.

His company at the Gaiety included Mdlle. Paolo Marie, Mdlle.





CHARLES SANTLEY



Delorme, Mdlle. Gentien, Mdlle. Clary, M. Mario Widner, M. Ed. Georges, M. Jolly, and others, who, one and all, were soon gladly welcomed in Paris.

At the close of this French engagement—the first attempt at French plays at the Gaiety—Mr. Walter Montgomery was given a chance, which he sought himself, of playing a round of Shakespearean and so-called “legitimate” characters. The absence of the stock company on tour, rendered necessary by the Brussels importation, made this possible at the Great Theatre of Varieties. The Gaiety had given house-room to “Taste and the Musical Glasses,” and why not to Shakespeare? The speculation was chiefly Mr. Montgomery’s, but he broke down, and some private trouble coming on the top of this failure probably led to his suicide. This caused the “closure” of the Theatre for four weeks, but to make amends the next “season” lasted unbroken for *twelve years*.

The engagement of Miss Ada Cavendish in a three-act comedy by Dr. Westland Marston, with Offenbach’s *Grand Duchess* as an afterpiece, gave the usual substantial and varied character to the programme, and paved the way for a new opera bouffe by M. Emile Jonas, of Paris—this time English. It was called *Cinderella the Younger*. The “book” was by Alfred Thompson. Mdlle. Clary, who spoke and sang as well in English as in French, remained in England as a member of the Gaiety Company. M. Jonas was an excitable composer, and during the rehearsal, while Herr Meyer Lutz was conducting, he ran along the front of the orchestra, watching and correcting instrumentalists, especially the kettle-drum player. The latter gentleman being nervous, and not very amiable, at last made a remark intended for everyone present, “Look here,” he shouted, “one (*adjective*) conductor at a time!”

To keep up the moving panorama of variety and promote discussion—the life-blood of advertisement—the Gaiety stage produced a version of Vanbrugh’s *Relapse*, under the title of the *Man of Quality*, and at this period a version of Congreve’s *Love for Love*. Miss E. Farren played Miss Hoyden in one case, and Miss Prue in the other. I was the daring expurgator, and in the case of the *Relapse* a surgical operation had to be effected. *Love for Love* was interesting for Mr. Stoyles “Ben,” the first sailor made a feature of on the stage, and played by Doggett, whose name has come down to us with the prize “Coat and Badge.” This was educating the public in the intervals of grinning through a horse-collar.

At such a kaleidoscopic theatre the public would have felt that something was wanting, if Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault had been omitted from the ever-changing programme. They accordingly made their appearance in several of the prolific author’s clever pieces and he again proved to appreciative audiences that he was probably the best Irish actor that had graced the stage for more than half a century. In one of the pieces, *Elfie*, a sound and natural actor, William Rignold, played a blind sailor. Twenty years afterwards he was stricken with real blindness.



CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST GILBERT AND SULLIVAN PIECE.

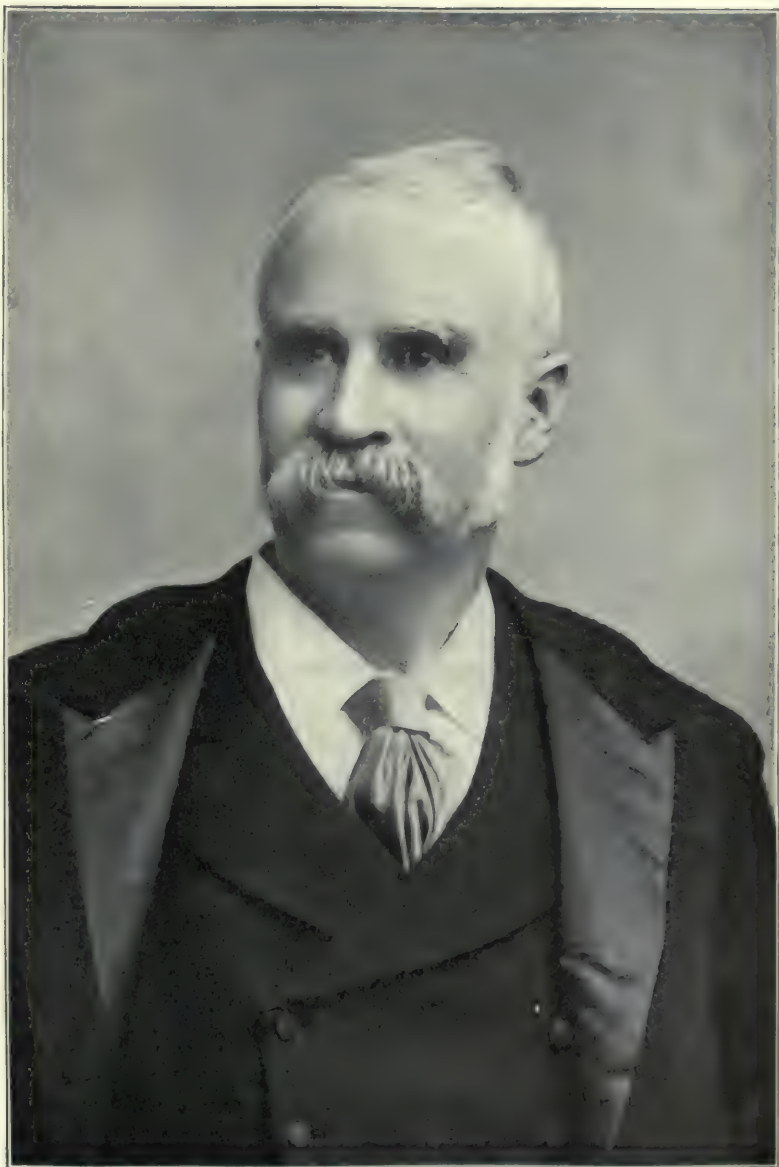


THE return of Mr. J. L. Toole at Christmas, who generally brought with him a new slight comedy-drama by Henry J. Byron, which he had "tried in the country," enabled us to put in rehearsal the first combined work of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. This was in two acts, and called *Thespis; or, the Gods Grown Old*. It was their first collaboration, and it showed, if little else, how well they could work together. Sullivan could write music to any metre; Gilbert could write songs to any tune. The company were good as actors, but they wanted a little as singers. The piece, with all these defects, started an almost life-long artistic partnership, built an elegant theatre, founded a native school of comic opera, which justified its creation by showing that it was immensely profitable.

The old Gaiety, with all its reputed frivolity and its sublime power of "fluking," did some good in its time.

The cast of *Thespis* (roughly stated) was :—

Mercury . . . . .	Miss E. Farren
Sparkeison (Apollo) . . . . .	Mdlle. Clary
Nicemis . . . . .	Miss Constance Loseby
Daphne . . . . .	Miss Tremaine
Venus . . . . .	Miss Rose Behrend
Tipscion . . . . .	Mr. Robert Soutar
Silimon . . . . .	Mr. J. G. Taylor
Mars . . . . .	Mr. F. Wood
Apollo . . . . .	Mr. F. Sullivan
	and
Thespis . . . . .	Mr. J. L. Toole



*From a Photo by Messrs. Ellis & Watery.*

*Copyright.*

MR. W. S. GILBERT.





SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN





Mrs. Leigh, Mr. Maclean, and others were in the cast, and the dancing was undertaken by the Payne family, who were then engaged to me at the Gaiety and elsewhere.

The mixed matinées at the Gaiety had now established themselves as recognised and expected functions—performances that generally differed from the night performances at the same house, and therefore constituted a “new departure” in the very conservative field of theatrical management. What with trial trips of plays, actors, actresses, amateurs, charity representations, and even conferences or lectures, the house was often open four afternoons (in addition to six nights) a week, and in one or two weeks, even more frequently. It was never closed for rehearsals. In eighteen years the thousand and one nights of the immortal Arabian story tellers were matched by the thousand and one mornings of the Gaiety treadmill. Suppé’s *Schöne Galatea*, Ibsen, many actors and actresses got an appearance at these very catholic representations, and many actors of reputation got a chance of playing a new character. The free-trade spirit presided over the selections. Companies and pieces that had made successes at other theatres which had not cultivated matinées, were encouraged to appear at the Gaiety on sharing terms, and they came. Mr. Charles Morton brought his productions from Islington; Mr. John Hare from Chelsea, and even the Strand Theatre company came across the road to try their luck in a bigger theatre. Miss Helen Barry, Miss Lingard, Mrs. Tree, and Mrs. Bernard Beere were amongst those who made their first bow at the theatre soon to produce the tragi-comedy of the *Everlasting Pickaxe*. Mr. Sims Reeves sang and acted; Mr. Joseph Jefferson came with his *Rip Van Winkle*, now an enduring classic, not only in the library, but on the stage; and I induced Mrs. Keeley to emerge from her retirement, and play for three mornings with Mr. Toole in *Betsy Baker*. I believe I could have induced her to appear in *Jack Sheppard*, a part she worshipped, but family influences prevailed, and I “dropped the subject.” She had then arrived at seventy years of age, but was as lively as Dejazet.

As I went into the Gaiety Theatre with a little literary reputation—having been a trusted contributor to *Household Words*, *Good Words*, and the *Cornhill Magazine*, under Charles Dickens, Dr. Norman, McLeod and W. M. Thackeray, to say nothing of other journals and magazines, under other editors—several of my literary friends expressed disappointment that I had not turned the theatre into a stronghold of literary drama (if such a drama exists), forgetting that the title “Gaiety” stood in the way, though it soon became popular as a theatre name in England, Ireland and Scotland, and even in India and China. They forgot that the business of a theatrical manager is to

serve the public with what they want and not to force upon them what that manager thinks is good for them. I was a licensed dealer in legs, short skirts, French adaptations, Shakespeare, Taste and the Musical Glasses, and I was quite ready to put this up over the stage-door of the theatre, though not required to do so by Act of Parliament. My scheme of "variety"—everything by times and nothing long—was broad enough to include literary plays,—or plays by literary men—not always the same thing—and I proved this early in 1872 by producing a comedy by Charles Reade, founded on a novel by Anthony Trollope, called *Ralph the Heir*, the play being named *Shilly Shally*. It was not allowed to stand alone, being preceded by Offenbach's operetta, *Les Deux Aveugles*, and followed by Hervé's comic opera, *Aladdin the Second*. The cast included Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. W. Rignold, Mr. J. Maclean, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Miss Florence Farren, and Miss E. Farren. The comedy produced ructions—present and deferred. Anthony Trollope, who was in Australia on post office business, writing books on board his steamship, there and back, when he heard of the production, asserted that it was put upon the stage without his knowledge or consent. The critics assailed the piece for certain blemishes of taste—these attacks were answered by Charles Reade with actions for libel, and I found that the literary drama was only another phrase for a "hornet's nest." I declined to be dragged into the controversy in this case, and said that as a manager I had nothing to do with the taste or even the morality of any drama produced under my management. The Government had kindly relieved me from this responsibility by appointing a reader and licenser of plays, and accepting a fee for this watch-dog work. When I had paid my one, two, or three guineas to the Lord Chamberlain's office I left him to justify the amusement he had officially sanctioned and I had provided for my public. I justified my share in the transaction to my friend, Anthony Trollope, on his return from Australia and persuaded him to accept a seat on the Royal Commission on Copyright, which I was instrumental in obtaining soon after.

On Oct. 7th, 1872, Mr. Charles Mathews made his re-appearance in London after his two years' tour round the world. The engagement was made at a ten minutes' interview in the summer, summoned by telegraph, Mathews coming from Southampton, and I from Liverpool. We arranged dates and terms without legal agreements. He went off to Baden Baden on pleasure, I started for Vienna on business, and the first of a series of re-appearances, which were to last over three years, was arranged, which produced him more money than he ever gained from his whole theatrical career. There has never been but one Charles Mathews, and



JACQUES OFFENBACH



there will never be another. Art there must have been, but it was concealed, as Horace says, with greater art. Spontaneity—spontaneity—and always spontaneity. During his engagement the great “gas-strike” occurred. We played with candles. No matter! He was a light comedian. Off the stage, he was a scholar, a gentleman, and a painter, a most clever adapter, a letter-writer of the greatest charm and distinction, a wit, a humorist, and an incomparable after-dinner-speaker. O, rare Ben Jonson!—O, rare Charles Mathews!

About this time, in a burlesque by Mr. Robert Reece, called *Ali Baba*, on the thrice immortal story of the *Forty Thieves*, two singers and dancers were introduced as an interpolated turn, called “The Dancing Quakers.” To introduce them in a good Gaiety burlesque, supported by Mr. Toole, Miss Farren, and “the whole strength of the company,” was like over-fattening the fatted calf, or piling *Pelion* on *Ossa*, but they “caught on,” to use an American phrase, and caused so much discussion, friendly and unfriendly, that the Lord Chamberlain (Lord Sydney) came officially to see the performance. The chief cause of offence was the Quaker expression—as old as the days of William Penn—the “Spirit moves us.” This was explained away, and the Lord Chamberlain, being a man of the world, refused to interfere. Miss Kate Vaughan, and her dancing quartette, made their appearance as an interpolated “turn” in the same burlesque, going through a dance sometimes called the “Carmagnole,” sometimes the “Parisian Quadrille,” but which is never objected to unless it is labelled the “Can-Can.” It raised no commotion, except in the theatre, where the principal performers thought they ought to be sufficient attraction without these extraneous barnacles.

During this period Mr. George Conquest played a star engagement in a piece called *Snae Fell*, supported by a selection from the Gaiety company. Numerous pieces were produced at night, or tried in the mornings. A “Retrospective Review,” published in 1873, gives (allowing for errors or omissions) a detailed account of the Gaiety work to that date.





## CHAPTER VII.

### TAKING STOCK—DISEASED ACTIVITY.

#### RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.



ON SATURDAY NIGHT, June 28th, Mr. CHARLES MATHEWS will close his second engagement, and with it will close the Fifth Season of the Theatre. The GAIETY THEATRE, opened December 21st, 1868, has only been closed four weeks during the period of nearly five years; and these four weeks have been more than counterbalanced by 98 Morning Performances. The Gaiety Morning Performances have introduced a new principle—that of giving an entertainment distinct from the night programme, and varying at nearly every representation. During the five seasons in question, ABOUT ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY PIECES have been produced; amongst the COMEDIES, DRAMAS, etc., may be mentioned:—

“Dreams,” “An Old Score,” “A Life Chase,” “Uncle Dick’s Darling,” “The Hunchback,” “The Man of Quality,” “Poor Nobleman,” “Wait and Hope,” “Bachelor of Arts,” “Courier of Lyons,” “Doctor Davy,” “Dot,” “Paul Pry,” “Hamlet,” “Lady of Lyons,” “Othello,” “Louis XI,” “As You Like It,” “New Way to Pay Old Debts,” “Honeymoon,” “Romeo and Juliet,” “Richard III,” “Donna Diana,” “Serious Family,” “Love for Love,” “Night and Morning,” “Elfie,” “Dearer than Life,” “Shilly Shally,” “Colleen Bawn,” “Arrah-na-Pogue,” “John Bull,” “Good News,” “The Critic,” “Used Up,” “Married for Money,” “Game of Speculation,” “Trotty Veck,” “Sweethearts and Wives” “Prisoner of War,” “The Liar.”

Amongst the BURLESQUES and OPERAS BOUFFE have been :—“Robert the Devil,” “Columbus,” “Linda of Chamouni,” “Wat Tyler,” “Princess of Trebizonde,” “Blue Beard,” “Aladdin II,” “Malala,” “Grand Duchess,” “Les Bavards,” “Chanson de Fortunio,” “Chevaliers de la Table Ronde,” “Belle Helene” (in French and English). “Canard a Trois Becs,” “Galatea,” “Cinderella,” “Thespi,” “Cox and Box,” “Ali Baba,” “Don Giovanni,” “Martha,” &c. And at the Morning Performances :—“Genevieve de Brabant,” “Fleur de Lys,” “Isaac of York,” and “Chilperic.”

Amongst the Operas (in English) have been :—“Beggars’ Opera,” “Betly,” “Zampa,” “Fra Diavolo,” “Peter the Shipwright” (first time in England); “Letty,” “Guy Mannering,” “Maritana,” “Bohemian Girl,” “Lily of Killarney,” etc.

The Musical composers represented have been :—E. Jonas, Delibes, Offenbach, Lutz Adolphe Adam, Donizetti, Herold, Auber, Hervé, Lortzing, Balfe, Arthur Sullivan, Suppée, Bishop, Wallace, Benedict, &c.

The Authors represented have been :—W. S. Gilbert, T. W. Robertson, Alfred Thompson, John Oxenford, H. J. Byron, George Augustus Sala, Sheridan Knowles, Vanbrugh, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, Albery, Planché, Gay, Dion Boucicault, Shakespeare, Lord Lytton, Sir Walter Scott, Westland Marston, Congreve, Colman, Reece, Sheridan, Charles Mathews, Douglas Jerrold, Tobin, Massinger, Delavigne, Foote, Farnie, Poole, Kenney, &c.

The Exponents of these pieces have been :—Mr. Alfred Wigan, Mr. John Clayton, Mr. S. Emery, Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. J. Eldred, Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mr. Stoye, Mr. Santley, Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. William Rignold, Mr. Dion Boucicault, Mr. Charles Mathews, Mr. H. Sinclair, Mr. Lionel Brough, Mr. R. Soutar, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Aynsley Cook, Mr. Walter Montgomery, Mr. W. Castle, Mr. George Perren, Miss Madge Robertson, Miss E. Farren, Miss C. Loseby, Miss Tremaine, Miss Rachel Sanger, Miss Henrade, Miss Rose Coghlan, Miss Neilson, Madame Florence Lancia, Miss Julia Matthews, Miss Litton, Miss Carlotta Addison, Mrs. Keeley, Miss Dolaro, Miss Blanche Cole, Miss Ada Cavendish, Mlle. Clary, Mrs. Dion Boucicault, Miss Lydia Foote, Miss Fanny Brough, Miss E. Fowler, Mrs. Billington, Miss Annie Sinclair, Miss Lucy Franklein, Mrs. Henry Leigh, Mlle. Bossi, and Mlle. Roseri. The French Company of the Fantaisies Parisiennes, MM. Mario-Widmer, Jolly, Ed. Georges, Mlle. Paolo Marie, &c. And at the Morning Performances, Miss Emily Soldene and the Philharmonic Company, and Mr. E. Righton and the Court Company, &c.

During this period the GAIETY COMPANY has played in Manchester, Sheffield, Preston, Liverpool, Bradford, Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Cambridge, Portsmouth, Norwich, Yarmouth, Colchester, Ipswich, Rochester, Lynn, Reading, Bath, Greenwich, Greenock, Sunderland, Leeds, Bolton, &c., &c. And at the London Suburban Theatres: Marylebone, Standard, East London Theatre, Elephant and Castle, Surrey, Pavilion, Crystal Palace, &c.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

In September, 1873, after Mr. J. L. Toole and Mr. Lionel Brough had appeared in Mr. John Clayton’s condensed version of the famous Palais Royal farce, *Tricoche and Cacolet*, which became almost a “quick-change” duologue between these two irrepressible comedians, although they were “assisted” by Miss E. Farren and Miss Selina Dolaro, Mr. F. C. Burnand was enlisted in the light-regiment of Gaiety burlesque writers, and his first effort was *Antony and Cleopatra*.

After Mr. Charles Mathews had come back for one of his short seasons, in which the bill was changed nearly every night, his place was taken by Mr. Charles Morton's Opera-Bouffe Company from Islington. *Genevieve de Brabant* was brought down from the Cockney mountains of Pentonville into the Thames valley, and Lecocq's *La Fille de Madame Angot* (Mr. Farnie's version, which he wrote rather unwillingly, not believing in the opera until after its abnormal success). Miss Emily Soldene was, of course, the chief attraction, and the whole performance, strengthened by a few members of the Gaiety Company, was very complete. This engagement, or short season, lasted six weeks, but was continued by Mr. Charles Morton and myself at the Opera Comique, then a kind of chapel-of-ease to the Gaiety.

An advertisement had appeared in the papers, and a few paragraphs had been inspired, stating that an important combination would be made just before Christmas to play two old comedies, Bickerstaff's *Hypocrite*, founded on Colley Cibber's *Non-Juror*, which was itself founded on Molière's *Tartuffe*, and George Colman's *John Bull*, an old time green-room piece, written to order, in which every actor was measured for his part—the stage Irishman, the stage rustic, the stage light comedian, the stage low comedian, the leading lady, in fact all the more or less wooden puppets of the *Fantoccini* "Show" which might be kept in an egg-chest in the theatrical property-room. The pieces had not much of a reputation when they were born. The critics were severe, and gave, as they had to do at that time, a reason for their severity. It was not a mere assertion by A to be supported or contradicted by B.

"Now to write plays is easy, faith enough,  
As you have seen by Cibber in *Tartuffe*,  
With how much wit he did your hearts engage,  
He stole the play, but writ the title page."

For all this the plays acquired the popularity of age, and Mr. Samuel Phelps kept them alive during his famous management at Sadler's Wells. I determined to engage Phelps and produce the plays—the one for his Dr. Cantwell, and the other for his Job Thornberry. Phelps accepted the engagement at £100 a week, but my difficulty in completing the combination arose from objections raised by Toole and Charles Mathews. The first thought the suggestion an aspersion on his individual "drawing" powers, and the second thought I was injuring my own pocket, by doing what he thought would injure his value as a "star."

"His soul was like a 'star' and dwelt apart."

Hermann Vezin and Lionel Brough raised no objection, and the chief difficulty was soon got over. Toole and Mathews had £100 a week each, making the salaries of the three chief principals £300 a week. The seats were



all bought up as soon as the box-office was declared "open," and the orchestra was turned into stalls. This was some weeks before the nine performances took place, being fixed for the dullest time of the year—the nine nights before Christmas Day—when every well-conducted theatre ought to be closed for Christmas rehearsals. If I had any doubt about the wisdom of my policy, it arose from the fact that two of my chief "stars" were seventy years of age, or close upon it. And yet the Gaiety was always associated in the public mind with youth and beauty. It reminded me of a performance of *Faust* which I once saw at the chief State theatre in Berlin, the united ages of the Faust and Marguerite being 150 years! The Gaiety was going to be turned into a subsidised theatre in which seniority was the ruling power. The cast of *John Bull* may be worth recording:—

Job Thornberry . . . . .	Mr. Phelps.
Hon. Tom Shuffleton . . . . .	Mr. Charles Mathews.
Dennis Brulgruddery . . . . .	Mr. Toole.
Peregrine . . . . .	Mr. Hermann Vezin.
Dan . . . . .	Mr. Lionel Brough.
Sir Simon Rochdale . . . . .	Mr. John Maclean.
Frank Rochdale . . . . .	Mr. Charles Neville.
John Burr . . . . .	Mr. Robert Soutar.
Mr. Pennyman . . . . .	Mr. E. Butler.
Simon . . . . .	Mr. Dalton.
Mary Thornberry . . . . .	Miss Carlisle.
Mrs. Brulgruddery . . . . .	Mrs. Leigh.
Lady Caroline Braymore . . . . .	Miss Eleanor Bufton.

The *Hypocrite* was played for a week, and *John Bull* for three nights—the three nights before Christmas Day, 1873.

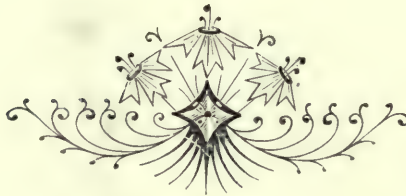
The Christmas bill in 1873 at the Gaiety comprised *The Battle of Life*, adapted by the eldest son of the late Charles Dickens, and (for a few nights) Reece's burlesque, *Don Giovanni*. Mr. Henry J. Byron made his first appearance as a burlesque writer at the Gaiety with an extravaganza on the subject of *Guy Fawkes*, when Mr. Lionel Brough became a regular member of the company.

Mr. Phelps appeared principally at matinees, in most of the old comedies he had helped to drag from obscurity, or the bookshelves, for, to tell the truth, after you have selected *The School for Scandal* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, you have very few pieces to pick from, the result of so many years of a protected drama. *The Clandestine Marriage*, *The Man of the World*, and other pieces from Shakespeare to Bulwer, gave that literary

flavour to the Great Variety Show, which many people thought it wanted. Mr. Phelps's impersonation of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant in Macklin's *Man of the World* was one of the greatest histrionic pictures of the last century. It was fitly hung in a gallery which contained Alfred Wigan's Achille Dufard of the *First Night* and Charles Mathews's Affable Hawk of the *Game of Speculation*.

The production of Mr. Dion Boucicault's Anglo-French comedy-drama, called *Led Astray*, in July, 1874, served to practically introduce Miss Helen Barry to the London stage, although, like many more people, she had appeared at a Gaiety matinée in a pastry-cook's programme. Two actors came from America to appear in this piece, one Mr. Stuart Robson, a capable New York low comedian, the other, Mr. Charles Thorne, a fine romantic actor. If I could have induced him to remain in England he would have become a second Fechter, without the French accent. He died soon after his return to America.

From drama the Gaiety went back to comic opera, producing a version of Lecocq's *Cent Vierges* by Robert Reece, called the *Island of Bachelors*. The company was strengthened by the addition of Mr. Arthur Cecil. Mr. J. L. Toole had gone to America.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### THREE THEATRES AND A SHAKESPEARIAN PRODUCTION.



THE Christmas of 1874 was a busy time. With the late lamented Holborn Amphitheatre and the Strand Opera Comique, now dead, on hand, it was necessary to do something ambitious at the Gaiety. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was selected, which is not Shakespeare's best play, and Phelps, of course, was cast for Sir John Falstaff, although it was not considered to be his best part. The Holborn Amphitheatre was throwing pearls before swine by playing Rossini's *Cenerentola* to a sixpenny gallery, and the Opera Comique was provided with the Kendals in the *Lady of Lyons*, and other pieces. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* had every justice done to it at the Gaiety. The elder Grieve, the best stage landscape painter of the time, painted the Windsor Forest scene for the Herne's Oak Revels; Arthur Sullivan composed the music; Algernon Swinburne accepted a commission to compose a song (set to music by Sullivan, and sung by Miss Furtado); Alfred Thompson designed the dresses; a special choir of children was engaged for the revels; Phelps was made comfortable by an air bag, manufactured by an anatomical expert, which weighed a few ounces instead of many pounds, and gave the "fat Knight" all the rotundity he wanted, without three hours' nightly hard labour; the cast was made as perfect as care and liberality could make it. Here it is:—

Sir John Falstaff . . . . .	Mr. Samuel Phelps.
Mr. Ford . . . . .	Mr. Hermann Vezin.
Sir Hugh Evans . . . . .	Mr. Righton.
Mr. Page . . . . .	Mr. Belford.
Fenton . . . . .	Mr. Forbes Robertson.
Dr. Caius . . . . .	Mr. Arthur Cecil.
Master Slender . . . . .	Mr. J. G. Taylor.
Justice Shallow . . . . .	Mr. J. Maclean.
Host of the Garter. . . . .	Mr. Gresham.
Pistol . . . . .	Mr. R. Soutar.
Bardolph . . . . .	Mr. Bradshaw.
Simple . . . . .	Mr. Leigh (Denny).
Robin . . . . .	Miss Maude Branscombe.
Mrs. Page . . . . .	Mrs. John Wood.
Mrs. Ford . . . . .	Miss Rose Leclercq.
Annie Page . . . . .	Miss Furtado.
Dame Quickly . . . . .	Mrs. Leigh.

This is Mr. Algernon Swinburne's interpolated song:—

Love laid his sleepless head  
On a thorny rosy bed ;  
And his eyes with tears were red,  
And pale his lips as the dead.  
And fear, and sorrow, and scorn,  
Kept watch by his head forlorn,  
Till the night was overworn,  
And the world was merry with morn.  
And Joy came up with the day,  
And kissed Love's lips as he lay ;  
And the watchers, ghostly and grey,  
Fled from his pillow away.  
And his eyes at the dawn grew bright ;  
And his lips waxed ruddy as light.—  
Sorrow may reign for a night,  
But day shall bring back delight.

The mixed matinées at this time followed each other in rapid succession, and amongst the rest a complete pantomime by Henry J. Byron on the subject of *Jack the Giant Killer*, was produced for day performances. The Payne family (Mr. W. H. Payne, Mr. Harry Payne, and Mr. Fred Payne), Messrs. Dauban and Warde, and an extraordinary pantomimist named Jones, who tried all he could to break every bone in his body, and never quite succeeded, were at my disposal, with other miscellaneous talent only to be found in a real variety theatre. Miss Rose Fox, a most graceful and clever skipping-rope

dancer, whom I picked up at a "penny gaff" at Shoreditch, while I was taking a party of friends "round the East End," revived pleasant recollections of old Madame Ramsden, the Sheffield ballet mistress, whom I brought to the Alhambra, and who was supposed to be the inventor of this effective dance; Willie Warde, and Mdle. Aenea, and her flying dance, first produced at the Gaiety, before the Grigolatis were ever heard of, with many others, of diversified ability, about which there could be no deception, as it was largely acrobatic, were all members of the Gaiety Company. The lady I selected to play, what is called in the slang of the profession, the *title-rôle* of the pantomime, was the late Jenny Hill, the one woman of real genius who ever enlivened the music-hall stage. To add to the variety of the programme, there was always the Ash-Wednesday hodge-podge which I religiously served up on that day, for several years, as a protest against the compulsory closing of theatres, as theatres, by order of the Lord Chamberlain. At last this practical *reductio ad absurdum* had the desired effect, and the late Lord Lathom, then Lord Chamberlain, did me the honour to abolish the regulation unsolicited.

The next turn of the wheel produced a large and very complete French company—one of the best on tour in France, having at their command the whole repertory of the Opera Comique in Paris. The proprietor and manager was M. Coulon, and the chief defect of his company was, especially in London, and at the Gaiety, the personal want of attraction of the female chorus. In this case youth was certainly not at the prow, whatever may have been at the helm. If M. Coulon had been challenged on this point, his answer would probably have been the same as Costa's on a similar occasion, "If I ring them up in the middle of the night, they know forty operas without rehearsing."

We went through nearly the whole of the Opera Comique works—the most charming repertory in the world,—doing as much in a few weeks as the parent establishment does in Paris in a couple of years, with a subvention of £5,000 a year. The speculation was not a success, either for M. Coulon or myself, but it was pleasant to find that I was dealing with an honest man, with no irritating French methods of business.

When Mr. Charles Mathews decided to go to India at the time the Prince of Wales (our present King) made his historic visit, the Gaiety—where the actor, who had successfully launched his last piece and clever comedy, *My Awful Dad*—gave him a splendid "send off" and was ready to welcome him enthusiastically on his return. He came back in April, 1876, and one evening we were honoured with the friendly company of Mr. Gladstone. He

came with the late Doctor Quain, and spent the whole evening on the stage. Before he enjoyed the frivolities of the theatre (it was a "Mathews' night," with no burlesque), he must have a long lesson in stage mechanism. He was conducted down stairs and then up to the flies ; he asked hundreds of questions about traps, ropes, and counterweights, and when he had collected enough of material for a *Quarterly Review* article, he selected the best looking young lady he could find in the company and sat with her in the prompt box. Gladstone in the wings, and Mathews on the boards, was a remarkable combination of age and ability.





## CHAPTER IX.

### A NEW COMBINATION.



OWARDS the close of 1876 Mr. Henry J. Byron provided the Gaiety with a farcical comedy and the first of a series of short burlesques. The comedy was called *The Bull by the Horns*, in which he elected to play himself, and the burlesque was named *Little Don Cæsar de Bazan*. The company now included Mr. Edward Terry and Miss Kate Vaughan, who, with Mr. E. W. Royce and Miss Ellen Farren, formed a quartette that soon became popular, not to say famous. Miss Marian West and Miss Alma Stanley were also members of the company. Miss Farren had always belonged to the Gaiety Company. Mr. Terry remained at the theatre, like Miss Vaughan, for several years, and Mr. E. W. Royce until he was stricken with a serious illness.

The return of Mr. J. L. Toole at Christmas, necessitated the transfer of the Gaiety programme to the Opera Comique, leaving Mr. Toole as the centre of a new company. The entertainment comprised a new comedy by James Albery, called the *Man in Possession*, but though other small pieces were played, it was not supported by a burlesque. A burlesque had soon to be found, and Mr. Robert Reece soon prepared one called *William Tell, Told Again*. Mr. Toole had for his companions Miss Kate Phillips, Miss Cavalier, Miss Louise Henderson, Mr. Charles Collette, Mr. A. Bishop, Miss Rose Fox, etc. At the Opera Comique—the “other house”—Byron gave us a new farcical comedy called *Old Chums*, in which the author appeared with Mr. Edward Terry, Miss Litton, Mr. Maclean, Mrs. Leigh, Mr. F. Charles, Mr. Soutar, etc.

About this time I engaged Miss Constance Gilchrist—a young lady who was the subject of more gossip, more paragraphs, and more discussion than Mrs. Jordan or Miss Foote received in the “palmy days of the drama.” She was a child—a mere child of twelve—when the engagement was made, and she remained under my management as long as I remained a manager. She first appeared in a juvenile pantomime, under Mr. F. B. Chatterton, at the Adelphi Theatre, playing Harlequin. She then went to the Music Halls—notably to the Oxford—and it was at the Bedford, at Camden Town, that I first saw her and engaged her. She was always intelligent, painstaking, and obliging, and, later on, when I imported the American drama, after the French drama, she got an opportunity as a juvenile actress. Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence put her into the comedy of the *Mighty Dollar*, and gave her the inestimable benefit of their advice and assistance. She made a success for many reasons, one reason being very good and very sufficient. She was a girl of fifteen playing a girl of sixteen, and not a mature woman of forty-five representing a convent stripling. Once seen in a part like this she had many offers from managers who prefer the easy work of copying to the labour of originating. She preferred to remain at the Gaiety. She is now the Countess of Orkney, well-known in the hunting field at Melton Mowbray.

The burlesque writers, Gilbert, Reece, Burnand, and Byron, were soon joined by Herman Merivale, whose great literary gifts had not smothered his wit and humour. His *Lady of Lyons Married and Settled* was a clever burlesque continuation of a popular play that often stood on the edge of the great cliff of Absurdity, only wanting a slight push to send it over. It was worthy of our mutual friend, Thackeray. Merivale’s burlesque had to fight its way like the best and the worst of them. It was a burlesque in comedy clothes, and Miss E. Farren had to play a female. Burlesque of all kinds in the seventies and eighties was the “Aunt Sally”—the recognised “cockshy”—of the critics. It took them ten or a dozen years to understand that the Gaiety was a “variety theatre.” Some descended peaceably to their graves, quite innocent of that knowledge.

The same catholic spirit presided over the French plays at the Gaiety that governed the English. Madame Chaumont, always good and clever, a woman—as M. Perrin admitted—who ought to have been at the Théâtre Français, was succeeded by the Vaudeville Company, the Palais Royal Company, the Gymnase Company, Madame Judic, Madame Granier, and even Madame Theresa. Much of this led up to the importation, in its entirety, of the Company of the Comédie Française, a project I had long been maturing, and which I was at last able to carry out, through the tact, perseverance, and diplomatic ability of Mr. M. L. Mayer, my indefatigable representative.





CONSTANCE GILCHRIST (COUNTESS OF ORKNEY)





## CHAPTER X.

### THE AMATEUR PANTOMIME.

**T**HAT the close of 1877, the Gaiety was thoroughly given over to the new combination at night, and Byron produced, what was thought to be one of his best burlesques for them, *Little Doctor Faust*. Mr. Toole, with a Gaiety contingent, went to the Globe Theatre, on his way to become a manager on his own account at the Charing Cross Theatre.

The *Little Doctor Faust* burlesque was represented by Miss E. Farren as Faust, Mr. Edward Terry as Mephistopheles, Mr. E. W. Royce as Valentine, Miss Kate Vaughan as Marguerite, Miss Amalia (who had joined the company) as Martha, and Miss West as Siebel. Mr. Soutar and Miss Wadman were also in the cast. It was soon added to by a version of *La Cigale*, adapted from the great and versatile French authors, MM. Meilhac and Halévy, to whom the world owes a debt of gratitude. The English version was called *The Grasshopper*. I say nothing about its merits, as I was the adapter. I put the real authors' names in the bill, which was considered to be a radical breach of the etiquette of play-writing, and I sold the American rights, what they were at that time, and sent the French authors part of the money. I got Signor Pellegrini, the great caricaturist, to paint a fancy picture of "Jim" Whistler for the piece.

The members of a club to which I belonged—the "Beefsteak Club"—thought the time had arrived for another amateur pantomime, and I quite agreed with them. There had been two in about twenty-five years, and this would make the third. *The Forty Thieves* was chosen as a subject, and the programme will explain the details:—

# GAIETY THEATRE.

Wednesday Afternoon, February 13, 1878.

## THE FORTY THIEVES,

PANTOMIME BURLESQUE,

Written by

Messrs. R. Reece, W. S. Gilbert, F. C. Burnand, & Henry J. Byron,

And Performed (excepting the Ladies) by Amateurs.

PRODUCED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MR. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

The Costumes by M. and M<sup>me</sup>. ALIAS, 20, Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London.

### CHARACTERS.

Ali Baba ( <i>a Woodcutter</i> ).....	Captain GOOCH
Ganem ( <i>his Son</i> ).....	Mr W. F. QUINTIN
Cassim ( <i>his Brother</i> ).....	Mr ALGERNON BASTARD
Hassarac ( <i>Captain of the Forty Thieves</i> ).....	Mr JOS. MACLEAN
Abdallah ( <i>his Lieutenant</i> ).....	Mr COLNAGHI
Mesroul .....	Mr F. H. MCCALMONT
Benridden .....	} Gentlemen of "The Forty" ( <i>The Deserving Hanging Committee</i> )
Mustapha .....	
Saad .....	
Beder .....	
Noureddin .....	
Assad.....	
The Trumpeter )	
	Mr W. WYE (William Yardley)
	..... Mr LESLIE WARD
	... Mr GILBERT FARQUHAR
	..... Hon. F. PARKER
	..... Mr W. HIGGINS
	..... Major ROLLS
	... Mr A. STUART WORTLEY

The remainder of the Forty Thieves represented by Messieurs E. DARELL, W. WYE, J. WESTROPP, J. CUMMING, C. RINGROSE, C. DALY, HUGH DRUMMOND, J. GRAHAM, CECIL CHAPMAN, A. B. COOK, BENSON, and AMPHLETT; Hon. C. VIVIAN, &c.; also Twenty Young Ladies, who have kindly given their services, by permission of the Manager and Directors of the ALHAMBRA.

Morgiana .....	Miss LYDIA THOMPSON
Cogia.....	Miss ELEANOR BUFTON
The Good Fairy.....	Miss LUCY BUCKSTONE

Scene 1.—Written by Mr. R. Reece. EXTERIOR OF ALI BABA'S HOUSE.

Scene 2.—Written by Mr. W. S. Gilbert. THE WOOD.

Scene 3.—Written by Mr. F. C. Burnand. INTERIOR OF ALI BABA'S HOUSE.

Scene 4.—Written by Mr. Henry J. Byron. THE CAVE.

### THE TRANSFORMATION.

### CHARACTERS IN THE HARLEQUINADE.

Clown.....	Mr W. YARDLEY	Harlequin.....	Mr W. S. GILBERT
Pantaloone.....	Mr T. KNOX HOLMES	Policeman.....	Captain H. E. COLVILLE
Swell.....	Lord DE CLIFFORD	Artist.....	Mr LESLIE WARD
Tailor .....	Mr W. F. QUINTIN	Bricklayer.. ..	Mr J. GRAHAM
Butterman .....	Mr C. RINGROSE	Butcher.....	Mr C. CHAPMAN
Baker.....	Mr L. WARD Sweep.....	Waiter.....	Mr J. WESTROPP
Ung Mossoo .....	Mr A. BASTARD	A Gent.....	Mr A. B. COOK
Columbine .....	M <sup>lle</sup> . ROSA	Old Woman.....	Mr F. H. MCCALMONT

Scene 1.—A QUIET STREET.

Scene 2.—AN EQUALLY QUIET BEDROOM.



"We are a Merry Family"  
Edward Terry

E. H. Royce  
Kate Vaughan

E. Ferris



Early in August of this year (Aug. 2nd, 1878), six arc electric lights were lighted outside the Gaiety. This was the first introduction to England and London of the electric light as we have it to-day. When the "incandescent lamp" was invented a little later, it was first used on the Gaiety stage to illuminate Miss E. Farren as Ariel in Burnand's burlesque of *The Tempest*, called *Ariel*. This is a plain statement of fact—take it for what it is worth. It was an experiment in the High Art of Advertising. It produced discussion for a few weeks and months, and well repaid me for the cost of installation and trouble, which were considerable. The corner gin-shops and cheap tailors followed after a little interval, as they are always an important factor in street lighting. Parochial lighting would be a poor thing without them. I was not a reformer. I was simply a tradesman looking for a "sensation" and I found it. My light was the "Lontin light"—the only light that was never taken up by company-mongers and stock-jobbers, who kept back electric lighting for many years.

It was a real pleasure to me to give house-room at this time to a comedy by Burnand, embodying Thackeray's *Jeames's Diary*. My relations with Thackeray, both as editor and friend, had always been most pleasant and amiable. I knew his almost childish love for the stage, and I always regretted that he died without seeing Robertson's *Caste* or Merivale's "skit" on the *Lady of Lyons*.

*Jeames* was produced many years after his death (August, 1878), and Edward Terry was an admirable representative of the character. Miss E. Farren, Mr. Royce, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Elton, Mrs. Leigh, Mr. Fawcett, Miss Emily Muir, Miss Evelyn Rayne, Mr. T. Squire, and Mr. Soutar attempted to do justice to England's great author. The *Little Faust* burlesque, which had attained a "run" in a theatre that almost discouraged runs, was the afterpiece.

The New Gaiety Restaurant, reconstructed by Messrs. Spiers and Pond at an immense cost, was opened November 18, 1878—the leading feature, the communications direct with the theatre, designed for the accommodation of the public, being destroyed by Act of Parliament. As we had just emerged from a most unreasoning panic raised by the danger of fire in theatres, the wisdom of this legislative action must have been apparent to the meanest capacity. No Act of Parliament ever passed could prevent ingenuity and determination finding a sneaking, roundabout method of undermining its provisions, and the communication between the theatre and restaurant, without visitors going into the muddy street, was made by putting the outer-gate—the street-door of the theatre—a few feet further up the hall inwards,

and making two side doors that tapped the tavern, on each side of the passage, being technically outside the playhouse, but practically in it.

During the remainder of 1878 and the early part of 1879, Mr. H. J. Byron kept the Gaiety well supplied with farcical comedies and burlesques, amongst the former *Uncle*, and amongst the latter, *Fra Diavolo*, *Esmeralda*, and several others. Mr. Burnand helped with *Boulogne*, a version of *Niniche*. The mornings were busy with many things—new and old comic operas, Mr. Arthur Sketchley's representation of Falstaff, which, like Mark Lemon's performance, was unctuous and apoplectic.

Monday, the 2nd of June, 1879, was famous for the long-promised and eagerly-expected six weeks' season of the whole of the Comédie Française. I say advisedly the "whole of the celebrated company," for their hurried visit to the Opera Comique in 1871, when they were driven out of Paris by the Commune, and the fear of the Commune, did not comprise the entire company, and Sarah Bernhardt was not then a member of the protected association. My previous attempts to secure what the "high-falutors" call "this galaxy of stars" were not successful. The late Sir Campbell Clarke tried M. Thiers, who was obdurate, and very wrath about their unauthorised flight to England. He possessed, in its fullest development, the "official mind" (he showed that with the Commune), and he considered that the Comédie Française was a Parisian, not to say a parochial, institution, and ought never to be allowed to leave the country.

I was patient, obstinate, and determined; and my representative, Mr. M. L. Mayer, was equally determined, and much more watchful. He knew the people he was dealing with, and the Parisian market, better than I did, and seizing the year, after six years' waiting, in which the historic house (since nearly burnt down and restored) had to be put in decorative repair, he succeeded in obtaining a contract. The company arrived, watched over by the late Francisque Sarcey, the great critic. You never know what may happen in a country that gave birth to Shakespeare—a savage, according to Voltaire. There is this to be said in defence of the French, that the London stage has been disgraced many times by outbreaks of Protectionist and narrow-minded ignorance, leading to mob violence and the destruction of property.

In this costly and speculative importation, I had no encouragement. My landlord, a much more "practical" man than ever I was, thought I was mad. "Old" Mr. Mitchell, the "librarian" and great French play importer, advised me as "a father" to avoid the business; eminent actors and managers took the same view, and I was left face to face with my friends, the public.



They relieved my mind, if it wanted relieving, in twenty-four hours. They planked their money.

What the company did, has gone into the domain of stage history. They came over as a body without "stars." No one member, according to their unwritten laws, was allowed to stand above another. The British public, however, had something to say on this point. They selected Sarah Bernhardt, and made her more than a star—a planet. There could be no question of this idolatry. The box-office proved it. The whole repertory of the Théâtre Français was drawn upon, and during the six weeks of nights and six Saturday mornings—making forty-three performances—all the chief works played at the great theatre in Paris, were represented at the Gaiety. The financial result proved the fact, if it needed proving, that big attractions produce big rewards.

Sarah Bernhardt having acquired a knowledge of her commercial value, soon made her arrangements to quit the Comédie Française, and the elder Coquelin also soon became discontented. M. Perrin died, and a new director took his place, who had to suffer for this great administrative mistake of 1879.

After the successful season of the Comédie Française—a season that covered 43 performances, seven of them matinées, and produced gross receipts of £19,685 19s. 6d., an average of £468 10s. a performance—the Gaiety swallows returned homewards. High Art was put on one side, and romps began. Mr. Byron was still almost the "stock author," but I increased my literary staff, although I disclaimed being a patron of literature. Mr. Henry S. Leigh, the popular and clever author of the *Carols of Cocaigne*, tried his hand at an adaptation of *Le Grand Casimir*, but Mr. Henry Leigh wanted the tact and experience of Mr. Byron or Mr. Burnand, and his right of entry to the Gaiety Walhalla was disputed by his friends, the dramatic critics, and not warmly advocated by the public.





## CHAPTER XI.

### A DEATH, BUT NO CHANGE.



WHILE I was in Paris arranging an engagement with the Hanlon-Lees—the most perfect acrobatic and dramatic pantomimists then in Europe—I received news of the sudden death of my friend and landlord, Mr. Lionel Lawson. I was much shocked and grieved, and returned to London at once. Though Mr. Lawson was never, in any sense, my backer, and his regretted death made no difference in my tenancy, I lost a supporter who never wavered in his belief that his tenant, allowances being made for eccentricities, was a good tenant. He never had the slightest cause to alter this opinion, or to regret his Gaiety investment.

At Christmas, 1879, the longest piece ever produced at the Gaiety, called *Gulliver*—a combination of pantomime (without the conventional clown) and spectacular burlesque—was the holiday entertainment. It was in five acts and several “pictures,” and it involved the services of nearly four hundred people—men, women, children (at least 100), and workmen. As the Gaiety was originally built as a comedy theatre, it required some ingenuity to house and dress this small army. The author was Mr. Byron, the arranger was myself. The piece was a success, long as it was, by reason of its variety, but I gave it a shorter life than it ought to have had. There was no question about its vitality. The theatre smelt of humanity.



SARAH BERNHARDT



At Easter, 1880, the Hanlon-Lees made their appearance at the Gaiety in *Le Voyage-en-Suisse*—a combination of pantomime and speaking farce (before alluded to), which was perfect and amusing in its representation. It was aided by the most elaborate machinery, and effects were produced that the old pantomimists never dreamed of. The acting was humorous and refined, commendably free from “horse play,” and it had had the advantage of at least two years’ rehearsal. This would even have satisfied Mr. W. S. Gilbert, or any other stage martinet.

The piece was adapted by Mr. R. Reece (it wanted very little adaptation), and the cast comprised (for speaking parts), Messrs. E. Righton, F. Charles, W. Penley, J. L. Shine, T. Squire, W. Warde; Misses Roberts, Kate Lawler, Maud Hobson, etc. Messrs. Fred and William Hanlon were the chief “dumb-show” actors, and M. Agoust the chief French actor.

The “palmy-day” performances for the instruction of dramatic critics and students of dramatic art formed some of the matinées in the early part of 1880. We never got further than *George Barnwell* and *The Castle Spectre*. The latter piece alone was sufficient to justify the joke, and to expose the rottenness of protected and patent theatres, and theatrical monopoly supported by the State. Hitting the patent theatres when they were down, was, perhaps, not very heroic, but a quarter of a century ago these houses, which had existed far too long, had many supporters in a profession which is more trade unionist, in the worst sense, than the Bar or the Church. The revival, if only for a few hours, of a class of play, that had degraded a fine race of actors and actresses, was a good object lesson for many ladies and gentlemen who talked glibly about the “decline of the drama.” These Wardour-street plays had neither the elegance of Sheraton nor the solidity of Chippendale. They were supported by cultivated ignorance and natural stupidity, and were worshipped because they bore the hallmark of Covent Garden or Drury Lane.

The production of *Gulliver*, in five acts and several tableaux, naturally paved the way for three-act burlesques, the first of which was the *Forty Thieves*—a story that the stage will cling to till the crack of doom. The stage is right. The three-act form had been used for years for operabouffes and kindred productions, with not one-tenth of the fictional backbone possessed by the immortal stories of the *Arabian Nights*. The most successful of this new Gaiety series, after the *Forty Thieves*, was Burnand’s *Blue Beard*, founded on the French comic piece, and represented by a very strong cast. The least successful were *Camaralzaman* (which made a short appearance at the Empire) and *Mazepa*. At this time the

theatre had Miss E. Farren, Miss Kate Vaughan, Miss Constance Gilchrist, Miss Phyllis Broughton, and many other attractive ladies, besides Mrs. Leigh, Mr. Maclean and others. In what are called "low comedians," it possessed the largest list ever gathered in one theatre. These were : Mr. Edward Terry, Mr. E. W. Royce, Mr. John Dallas, Mr. W. Elton, Mr. Willie Warde, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. H. Monkhouse, Mr. E. J. Henley, Mr. W. H. Wyatt, Mr. T. Squire, and Mr. Robert Brough. There was no scarcity of understudies.

The so-called American season introduced *The Mighty Dollar*, with Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Florence, as I have mentioned before ; and afterwards Mr. J. T. Raymond in Mark Twain's *Gilded Age*, in which he represented a character called Colonel Sellars. He was a very amusing comedian and character actor, but the piece belonged to the antediluvian period of the drama. The same may be said of Henry Dixey and *Adonis*.





W. J. FLORENCE







## CHAPTER XII.

### A NEW DEPARTURE.



UR burlesque writers had now been increased by William Yardley and Pottinger Stephens, and, after several efforts, they combined at my suggestion, and wrote the last burlesque on the old lines on the subject of *Jack Sheppard*. I made several special engagements for this piece: Mr. David James, Miss Marion Hood, Mr. Fred Leslie, and others, and the piece was produced as the first and last of the Hollingshead-Edwardes partnership ventures. Mr. Fred Leslie remained with my friend and successor, Mr. George Edwardes, who took over the theatre. To show the catholicity of my taste, one of my last acts, as an individual manager, was a short engagement of a Parsee company, who played, amongst other things in Hindustani, an act of *Saküntala* by Kalidasa—the oldest drama in the world. This was in 1886. During the eighteen years that I was “sole lessee and manager”—words of fearful autocratic import—the house was only closed eighteen weeks, or one week a year, and as a set-off to this, there had been 959 matinées—a number equal to over three years of nightly work. According to Cocker, this made twenty-one years’ curtain raising in eighteen years. The pieces represented, large and small, numbered about 500 (burlesques formed eight per cent. of the total), and “the profession” were rewarded with over a million sterling, for which they gave the fullest value. The English “profession,” of course, preponderated, but they were slightly mixed with French, German, and even Parsee comedians.

After *Little Jack Sheppard*, the first and the last burlesque of the old Gaiety type and series (produced under the partnership of Mr. George Edwardes and myself), Mr. George Edwardes acquired my interest in the theatre, and, with the advice and assistance of the late H. J. Leslie (no relation of the lamented Fred Leslie), he turned his attention to a work which certainly came within the range of pure English comic opera. This was *Dorothy*, a very creditable effort by the late Alfred Cellier and Mr. B. C. Stephenson. A new company was practically engaged for this opera, which included Miss Marion Hood, Mr. Redfern Hollins, Mr. Hayden Coffin, the late Mr. Furneaux Cook, Mr. Arthur Williams, the late Miss Harriet Coveney, and others. It was called a "comedy-opera" in the bills, and it had much of the character of *Martha*. The "book" was founded on an old play by the free and easy Mrs. Aphra Behn, one of the rushlights of the Restoration. As a play it was bright and cheerful, and had the unusual merit of having a good third act. The music possessed all the charm and melody which Alfred Cellier put into all his works. If he had had better health he would have easily won a place by the side of Sir Arthur Sullivan. The success of the piece was secured eventually by the chance introduction of a song, discovered by Mr. George Edwardes, which was lying comparatively idle on the shelves of the publishers of the opera—Messrs. Chappell—called "Queen of my Heart," which, luckily for Mr. Hayden Coffin, was a light baritone song, and fell to his share in a telling situation. This confirmed the impression which the young singer had already made upon the public, when Mr. H. Osborne O. Hagan and myself gave him his first engagement in the *Lady of the Locket* at the Empire (then a theatre) in Leicester square, the music of which was by the late Mr. Fullerton, a young American composer.

As Mr. George Edwardes passed his apprenticeship at the Savoy Theatre, Strand (I passed mine at the Alhambra, Leicester square), and his first production was *Dorothy*, it was assumed that he was a disciple of the late Mr. D'Oyly Carte, and that the Gaiety was to become a second Savoy. Mr. George Edwardes was a practical man. If the great God Momus had presented him with a pair of artistic twins like Gilbert and Sullivan, who had both worked at and for the Gaiety, before they discovered that they were like the oil and vinegar of the perfect salad, destined to mix harmoniously, for many a year, he would have been content with the Golconda at his doors and the two Aladdins who had placed him in possession. He was and is a "commercial manager" like I was, and with probably as few theories and as few prejudices. Savoy burlesque in long clothes would have been as agreeable to him as



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MR. GEORGE EDWARDES.



Gaiety burlesque in short clothes, and far less costly and troublesome. He had the books of the theatre and knew what their figures proved. One burlesque by Burnand (*Blue Beard*), produced exactly three years before I left the theatre, realised a *profit*—a profit, not receipts only—of ten thousand pounds in ten weeks, until it had to be withdrawn for the French plays.

Such a result was not likely to make Mr. George Edwardes pay much heed to the funeral dirges of triumph sung loudly in so many quarters over the supposed "death of burlesque." As a matter of fact, the Gaiety was no more an exclusive burlesque house than John Wilkes was an exclusive Wilkesite, as he told H. M. George the Third. Out of its 500 pieces produced in 18 years, only eight per cent. of them were Gaiety burlesques, properly so-called. The cleverness of the authors and the actors gave them a prominence and importance in the varied and incessant labours of a house which used supernatural industry to make the idle hours of the public pleasant. Such audiences are compelled by their dinner-hour to seek for an after-dinner entertainment, call it by what name you will. Burlesque is never dead in any theatre, and never will be as long as the stage exists. It may be dormant for a time, but it has the vitality of the Commandant in *Don Juan*, or the King in *Bombastes Furioso*.

Mr. George Edwardes soon sold his interest in *Dorothy*, after he had moved it to the Prince of Wales's in Coventry street, to Mr. H. J. Leslie, where, in another home that had yet to acquire a distinctive character, it began a new and prosperous career. The cast was strengthened by the engagement of Miss Marie Tempest and Mr. Ben Davies, and Miss Marion Hood, released by this arrangement, returned to the Gaiety to join her old playmates, Mr. Fred Leslie and Miss Ellen Farren, who were just finishing a successful tour in the country with *Little Jack Sheppard*.

At Christmas, 1886-7, almost before the "funeral-baked meats," provided by the chief burlesquophobists, had been decently removed from the Gaiety table, preparations were made for the presentation of a new "burlesque-melodrama," as it was called, in three acts, written by the two mysterious authors who have always preferred to write from behind a newspaper screen, although they never had anything to be ashamed of. It was on the subject of *Monte Cristo*, and the newspapers could never make up their minds, whether the second name should be spelt Christo or Cristo. The authors will give themselves no other title but "Richard-Henry,"—a compound name, and never, as far as I can ascertain, have published their photographs. They are too modest, even for the Gaiety. They were fortunate in having the late Charles Harris as stage manager. The piece was produced

December 23rd, 1886, and was called *Monte Cristo Junr.*—not *Little Monte Cristo*. The company was a strong one:—

Edmund Dantes . . . . .	Miss Nelly Farren.
Fernand . . . . .	Miss Fay Templeton.
Mercedes . . . . .	Miss Agnes Delaporte.
Albert . . . . .	Miss Jenny McNulty.
Valentine. . . . .	Miss Birdie Irving.
Babette . . . . .	Miss Lizzie Wilson.
Carconte . . . . .	Miss Billee Barlow.
Mariette . . . . .	Miss Lottie Collins.
Victorine . . . . .	Miss Sylvia Grey.
Noirtier . . . . .	Mr. Fred Leslie.
De Villefort . . . . .	Mr. E. J. Lonnen.
Danglars . . . . .	Mr. George Honey.
Caderouse . . . . .	Mr. George Stone.
Morel . . . . .	Mr. W. Guise.
Old Dantes . . . . .	Mr. Alfred Balfour.
Boy at the Wheel . . . . .	Charlie Ross.
Captain of Hussars . . . . .	Miss Florence Beale.

With scenery by the veteran William Beverley, William Telbin, Banks, and others, and dresses designed by Mr. Percy Anderson, the hundredth night was easily reached, and celebrated with a ball and supper, at which the following address was delivered, written by Mr. Cunningham Bridgman:—

My patrons and good friends, let me beseech  
 To be excused a managerial speech.  
 Tho' curtain lectures are the fashion now,  
 I much prefer to make a silent bow,  
 Trusting my pen, in this inscribed address,  
 To yield the thanks my tongue might worse express—  
 My thanks to you whose suffrages alone  
 Permit me in this place to hold my own—  
 To you whose constant favour and goodwill  
 Encourage me to greater efforts still,  
 And aid me with more confidence to tread  
 The far-famed footsteps of John Hollingshead.  
 The sacred lamp lit long ago by him,  
 I'll try my utmost worthily to trim,  
 That it may shine memorial to the end  
 Of him, my one-time colleague, all-time friend.



MR. CHARLES HARRIS.





Another Hero of our merry stage,  
Young Monte Cristo, is now come of age.  
A hundred nights ago, 'twixt hopes and fears,  
He came to be warm welcomed by your cheers.  
Though captive in the gloomy Château d'If,  
With song and dance he laughs away all grief;  
Escaping thence he seeks the Jewell'd Isles,  
Where thousand gems reflect your thousand smiles :  
Led boldly on by his burlesque Papas,  
Young Cristo—borrowed from the great Dumas—  
Like other heroes, finds in Farren parts,  
Fame, fortune, and that better prize—your hearts.

One Hundred Nights! 'Tis not a sorry run,  
Yet Monte Cristo, Junior's, not yet done—  
Done! nay, indeed—he's only just begun ;  
His friends increase and multiply each day ;  
Each night we turn an overflow away.  
It is a triumph, and I must confess  
I'm very, very proud of our success,  
And very grateful to my clever crew,  
Each one and all most loyal, staunch, and true.  
And so, whilst wishing to present to-day  
Some small memento of our favour'd play,  
I beg you take this offering, intent  
To be a souvenir of past merriment,  
And token of the gratitude we owe  
To Monte Cristo, Junior, and Co.

The success of *Monte Cristo, Junior*, was stimulated by "new editions," in which new songs, dances, etc., were introduced. These new editions were practically an invention of Mr. George Edwardes. The legal squabble between the management and Miss Fay Templeton did the piece no harm. Miss Templeton was a young American lady who came to England about the same time as Mr. Henry Dixey. This gentleman, a clever variety actor and wonderful mimic, from whom Mr. Fred Leslie learnt much in America, appeared in *Adonis*—an American burlesque, imported from New York during my partnership with Mr. George Edwardes. It was "boomed" with a big banquet at the Criterion Restaurant, at which I took the chair, and the American Minister (the Honourable Mr. Phelps) was present. Miss Lillie

Grubb, who appeared in *Adonis*, even then showed that American burlesque had not the puritanical modesty of New England and the immigrants of the *Mayflower*, and this liberty of costume was not fettered by her experience of London in general, and of the Gaiety in particular. The Lord Chamberlain of 1887 thought Miss Fay's "mode of wearing" her dress was *contra bonos mores*, and Mr. George Edwardes agreed with him. The lady objected to be interfered with, and was therefore taken out of the cast, and sued the manager by trying to obtain an injunction. In this case all parties were right, the Lord Chamberlain, the manager, and the lady. She did not obtain her injunction, and did not sue for damages. The Gaiety was still the Gaiety, although its action savoured of the Savoy.

The company was strengthened at Easter, 1887, by the engagement of Miss Letty Lind, a young lady of varied talent, who was a very successful disciple of Miss Kate Vaughan as a dancer. Miss Vaughan (next, of course, to herself) considered Miss Lind to be the most graceful theatrical drawing-room dancer of her time, and was one of her greatest admirers.





*From a Photo by W. & D. Downey.*

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MISS MARION HOOD.





*From a Photo by Messrs. Ellis & Watery.*

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MR. ALFRED CELLIER.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE GAIETY GLOBE TROTTERS.



**M**R. GEORGE EDWARDES had resolved to send his Gaiety Company, properly so-called, on a tour round the world in 1888, and in the meantime *Monte Cristo Junior* went to the provinces. The remainder of the year 1887, up to October, was devoted to a "patchwork season," in which Mrs. Brown Potter and Mr. Kyrle Bellew went through a number of comedies and dramas. Mrs. Brown Potter had great physical endowments for the stage, and was always a favourite with Royalty—particularly with our present Queen—then Princess of Wales. When I was in America in 1887, I went to Tuxedo Park. I was asked by the late Pierre Lorillard, what progress Mrs. Potter had made in England. She had then (under advice) only appeared at the Haymarket. I felt that I could only make one reply:—"She appeared at the wrong theatre, at the wrong time, in the wrong piece."

Mrs. Potter's Gaiety season was an advance on what she had done before, though it was not much. When she left the Gaiety her place was occupied for a short time by a knockabout, though amusing, piece, first performed at the Olympic, called *Fun on the Bristol*. This filled up the time till the "melodramatic burlesque," No. 2, this time in two acts, called *Miss Esmeralda*, was ready. The authors were Messrs. "A. C. Torr" and Horace Mills—the latter being understood to be "connected with the city," and "A. C. Torr" being another name (actor) for Mr. F. Leslie. The cast did not contain the

names of the author and Miss Farren, as they were both "on tour," but it was ample. Here it is:—

Clopin . . . . .	Mr. Leo Stormont
Claude Frollo . . . . .	Mr. E. J. Lonnen
Quasimodo . . . . .	Mr. Frank Thornton
Corporal Gringoire . . . . .	Mr. George Stone
Belvigne . . . . .	Mr. E. W. Colman
Captain Phœbus . . . . .	Miss Fannie Leslie
Ernest . . . . .	Miss Ada Blanche
Esmeralda . . . . .	Miss Marion Hood
Madame Gondelarieur . . . . .	Miss Emily Miller
Fleur-de-Lis . . . . .	Miss Letty Lind
Zillah . . . . .	Miss Addie Blanche
Female Warders . . . . .	{ Miss Maud Richardson and Miss Marie de Braham

*Miss Esmeralda* had a short career, as the return of Fred Leslie and Miss Ellen Farren, from their American and Australian trip, necessitated the production of a strong bill for Christmas, 1887-8. This was melodramatic, and a return to the three-act form—a form which I had the credit of originating. I give the full announcement and company:—

### "FRANKENSTEIN."

A Melodramatic Burlesque, in 3 acts, by RICHARD-HENRY.

Produced at the Gaiety Theatre, December 24, 1887.

Frankenstein . . . . .	Miss Nellie Farren
Tartina . . . . .	Miss Marion Hood
Il Capitano Maraschino . . . . .	Miss Camille D'Arville
Mary Ann . . . . .	Miss Emily Cross
Stephano . . . . .	Miss Jenny Rogers
Risotto . . . . .	Miss Jenny M'Nulty
Tamburina } . . . . .	Miss Sylvia Grey
Goddess of the Sun } . . . . .	
Caramella . . . . .	Miss Emma Gwynne
Vanilla . . . . .	Miss Sybil Grey
The Monster . . . . .	Mr. Fred Leslie
Visconti . . . . .	Mr. E. J. Lonnen
The Model . . . . .	Mr. George Stone
Demonico . . . . .	Mr. John D'Auban
Mondelico . . . . .	Mr. Cyril Maude
Schwank . . . . .	Mr. Frank Thornton
Dotto . . . . .	Mr. Charlie Ross





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MR. C. HAYDEN-COFFIN.





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MR. ARTHUR WILLIAMS.



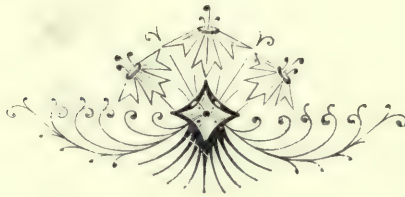
*Frankenstein* was founded on the old Adelphi drama in which actors of distinction like T. P. Cooke, O. Smith and others played the "Monster," as this drama was founded on Mrs. Shelley's not very thrilling novel. It was as good a subject as many others for burlesque purposes, and the phantom twins ("Richard-Henry") were as good as any other author or authors to give it its new dramatic form. The burlesque-melodrama, however, was not destined to be judged upon its merits, either by the "first-night" press or the "first-night" public. It was a question of pit and privilege—privilege and pit. Mr. George Edwardes had defied theatrical history, and had copied the example of John Kemble-cum-Squire Bancroft in dealing with the pit. The Gaiety theatre was never famous for a large pit, and this had been reduced considerably in favour of the stalls, sometimes called fauteuils. Demos was infuriated, or pretended to be, and there is nothing so infectious as that disease of the lungs which begins and ends in noise, occasionally varied by a flying brickbat. In such "popular" outbursts it is as difficult to get a correct report of facts as it was in the days of Herodotus, according to his own testimony. The storm blew over, like all storms, and it was probably the last attempt of a theatrical audience to dictate to a theatrical manager how he shall manage his business. John Kemble was the first victim with the O.P. riots, Squire Bancroft was the second (opening of the Haymarket), and George Edwardes was the third.

The prosperity of the burlesque was not injured by the "first-night" protest, and the financial results were greater than those arrived at by previous Gaiety productions.

The years 1888-9 saw the introduction of two new authors, both attracted like moths to the Gaiety candle, I ought to say "lamp," but I prefer to write candle. These were Mr. George R. Sims and Mr. Henry Pettitt. Mr. Pettitt was a most successful author of stirring melodramas, and Mr. Sims, poet, dramatist, novelist and journalist, is a man who ought to have written for the Gaiety Theatre long before. Their joint effort was a burlesque called *Faust Up to Date*, another variation on the French *Le Petit Faust* of Hervé, and the *Little Dr. Faust* of H. J. Byron. Miss Florence St. John, the most sympathetic singer on the London dramatic stage, was the Marguerite, Miss Violet Cameron was the Faust, Mr. George Stone the Valentine, and Mr. E. J. Lonnen the Mephisto. Miss Fanny Robina, Miss Grace Pedley, Miss Florence Levey, Miss Lilian Price, and Miss Maud Hobson, were now active members of the company. Mr. Willie Warde had continued at the Gaiety, and might be considered as part of the "fixtures and goodwill." While the London Gaiety Company were working hard above, the original Gaiety Company were equally busy below, and Sydney and Melbourne, having

the Strand brought to their doors, had every cause to be grateful. At that time the Antipodes had no very decided taste of their own, like the Americans, and whether they liked a performance or not, they were ready to pay for it.

*Faust Up to Date* was not allowed to take its place as a highly successful burlesque of the old type, judging by the length of its "run," without the question being raised as to the propriety and decency of taking the world's literary masterpieces for Gaiety horse-collar treatment. The question had often been raised before in my time—notably with regard to Burnand's *Ariel*. I was saved the trouble of much controversy in this case by Dr. Furnivall, the great Shakespearian authority, who saw no irreverence in the way the *Tempest* was treated by author and manager. In Germany, North and South, Goëthe's immortal work is very popular in a burlesque form. *Faustling and Margerittle*, as it was done years ago at the Carl Theatre in Vienna, was as popular in Berlin, when it was taken on tour, as it was in the city of origin. I am not a good judge of burlesque, but when I saw it in 1866 at the Freidrich Wilhelm Theatre, in Berlin, I thought it would have been funny enough for the St. James's, the Strand, and the Olympic, which were then burlesque houses. The Gaiety was not built.





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MISS NELLIE FARREN.







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MR. FRED LESLIE.





CHAPTER XIV.

A STORM.



**N** 1889 (September 21), after a season of French plays with Madame Jane Hading, the chief Gaiety circum-navigators returned from their missionary voyage, and a new burlesque, in three acts, by "A. C. Torr" and H. F. Clarke, called RUY BLAS ; OR, THE BLASÉ ROUE, was produced. The company were strengthened by Mr. Charles Danby, Mr. Fred Storey, and Mr. Ben

Nathan. The following is the cast :—

Ruy Blas . . . . .	Miss Nellie Farren.
Don Cæsar de Bazan . . . . .	Mr. Fred Leslie.
Queen of Spain . . . . .	Miss Marion Hood.
Donna Elto . . . . .	Miss Letty Lind.
Donna Christina . . . . .	Miss Sylvia Grey.
Duchess Agio Uncertanti . . . . .	Miss Linda Verner.
Trumpeter . . . . .	Miss Blanche Massey.
Officer . . . . .	Miss Alice Young.
Don Salluste . . . . .	Mr. Charles Danby.
Major Domo . . . . .	Mr. Ben Nathan.
Court Physician . . . . .	Mr. Fred Storey.

This burlesque was full of grotesque "business," but the *pas de quatre* in which F. Leslie, C. Danby, Ben Nathan, and F. Storey dressed as ballet girls, with head and shoulders made up to represent Henry Irving, J. L. Toole, E. Terry and Wilson Barrett, gave offence to Henry Irving, and led

to a little theatrical friction. Irving protested, and his protest had weight. He had often been caricatured before on the Gaiety stage—the first time by Royce in the *Corsican Brothers, Limited*, the second time by Henley in *Blue Beard*, and the third time by Dixey in *Adonis*. None of these caricatures gave offence, probably because they were not supported by a ballet-girl's conventional costume!

As it forms an important incident in Mr. George Edwardes's management, we may deal with it mostly in his own words.

A *Herald* man called on Mr. Edwardes and Mr. Leslie at the Gaiety Theatre, to elicit their ideas regarding the Lord Chamberlain's injunction, forbidding the latter gentleman's burlesque of Mr. Irving in the last act of *Ruy Blas*.

"What I complain of," said Mr. Edwardes in effect, "is the high-handed fashion in which the thing has been done. The Lord Chamberlain is out of town. He has never seen the piece, and has merely acted on an *ex parte* statement by a prejudiced party. He telegraphed to his clerk that if the burlesque of Mr. Irving was not at once eliminated, my yearly licence, which is to be renewed next Monday, could not be granted. The clerk called here to-day with that message. If Mr. Irving had spoken to me about the matter, I would have asked him to come and see the show, and, if he objected to the burlesque of himself, would have cut it out at once. Nothing could be further from my wishes than to wound any man, least of all a brother manager, and an artist of Mr. Irving's position in the profession."

"I suppose, Mr. Edwardes, that the Lord Chamberlain had some legal grounds for his action?"

"Well, he has an obscure clause in the licence to go on, which forbids caricatures of any well-known person; but if that were not practically a dead letter, where would burlesque be? It's the very essence of burlesque. But I complain much less of the interdict itself than of the fashion in which it was obtained. Lord Lathom is appointed to judge pieces produced in theatres, and to judge them he must see them. He is guilty of a breach of his duty in accepting a mere hearsay statement. Mr. Irving is a personal friend of his, and that is the explanation of the whole matter."

"Have I your authority, Mr. Edwardes, to state your view as you have expressed it?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Edwardes emphatically. "I meant you to state it so. I object to the manner in which the whole thing has been done. Mr. Irving, in the first place, should have written to me to state his objection and not to Mr. Leslie. I am the manager of this theatre, and am perfectly willing to take the responsibility of anything done on my own stage."



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MISS PHYLLIS BROUGHTON.





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MR. HARRY MONKHOUSE.





Mr. Leslie entering the room at this moment, having performed his nightly "quick change" from the last of his innumerable stage disguises to his street attire, gave his views on the occurrence.

"I think Mr. Irving might have made his letter to me a little less peremptory. It is pleasanter to yield to a request than to a command, and I own that I can't understand his irritation. Why, he has been burlesqued times out of number, and has never objected before. The man who first travestied him, Edward Righton, in a piece called *Christabel* at the Court Theatre, is now a member of his company, and opens with him to-morrow night in *The Dead Heart*. Henry Dixey burlesqued him on this very stage, and he took it with perfect good humour; in fact, I believe that he and Dixey are rather warm friends. Mr. Henley burlesqued him at the Gaiety. It's supposed that he objects to the petticoats. You know that it is in my ballet-girls' scene that I introduce the travesty; but I am told that Dixey, who also made up as a coryphée, worked in a bit of him in that scene. When I was playing here in *Frankenstein*, I got a perfect pile of letters asking me to 'do Irving.' People like imitations of him, it's one of the penalties of his fame, and not a very heavy one. I am sure," continued Mr. Leslie, with that sudden solemnity of visage which with him heralds the delivery of a joke, "that if ever I should rise to the heights of tragedy, and Mr. Irving should sink to my position, I shan't have the faintest objection to his burlesquing me. Will you kindly state that? I should like it to be known!"

"You have cut out the travesty, I see. I saw the performance to-night."

"Yes, I imitate myself now; and if my opinion is worth anything, Leslie went better than Irving. I wonder if the Lord Chamberlain will object to that! The crowning absurdity of the whole affair is that Mr. Irving was a burlesque actor himself once."

"The incident was closed" by the withdrawal of the "make up" as in the case of the *Happy Land*, at the old *Court Theatre*. I could not act as mediator at the time, as I was busily employed in Paris with a *replica* of the Niagara Panorama at Westminster. I merely record the friction to show that a theatrical manager's life is not all "beer and skittles," as my Whitechapel friends put it.





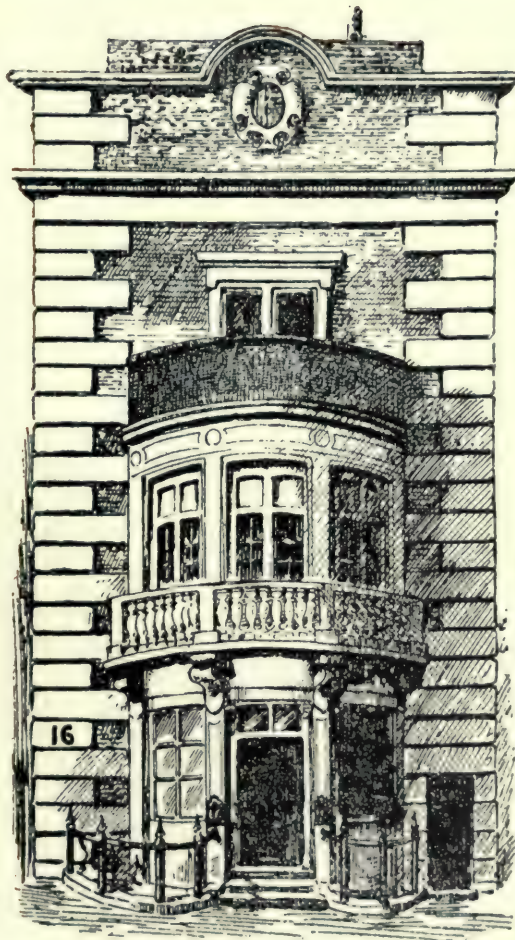
## CHAPTER XV.

### NEW MOTHS ROUND THE CANDLE.



THE Gaiety auditory was re-decorated more than once during this period. The electric-light was installed, the ventilation improved, and more stage-room and dressing-room accommodation obtained by the absorption of the old *Household Words* Office at the corner of Exeter street east—Charles Dickens's first workshop when he started as an editor and a publisher. The frontage still remains as it was, though the interior has been modified for the requirements of the theatre. This small but important building would have been part of the Gaiety in my time, but the *Army and Navy Gazette* price was considered to be a little excessive. When Dickens quarrelled with the Bradbury and Evans firm, and started *All the Year Round*, he moved higher up the street, and the celebrated corner fell into the hands of Sir William Howard Russell. The trustees of Lionel Lawson afterwards bought it, and it was incorporated in the new lease granted to Mr. George Edwardes's Gaiety Company (Limited).

Near the close of 1890 Mr. G. R. Sims and Mr. Henry Pettitt produced a new burlesque, entitled—



"HOUSEHOLD WORDS" OFFICE, CHARLES DICKENS  
FIRST WORKSHOP





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MR. G. R. SIMS.



## CARMEN UP TO DATA.

Carmen . . . . .	Miss Florence St. John
Escamillo . . . . .	Miss Jenny Dawson
Frasquita . . . . .	Miss Florence Levey
Michaela . . . . .	Miss Maria Jones
Alphonze . . . . .	Miss Katie Barry
Juanita . . . . .	Miss Maude Wilmot
Inez . . . . .	Miss Eva Greville
Zorah . . . . .	Miss Alice Gilbert
Morales . . . . .	Miss Blanche Massey
Intimidado . . . . .	Miss Maud Hobson
Partagas . . . . .	Miss Hetty Hamer
Larranaga . . . . .	Miss Grace Wixon
Mercedes . . . . .	Miss Letty Lind
	Miss Flo Henderson
Hidalgos . . . . .	Miss E. Robina
	Miss Minnie Ross
	Miss Madge Mildren
José . . . . .	Mr. E. J. Lonnen
Dancairo . . . . .	Mr. E. H. Haslem
Remendado . . . . .	Mr. Horace Mills
Lillius Pastia . . . . .	Mr. G. T. Minshull
Captain Zuniga . . . . .	Mr. Arthur Williams

The piece was very successful, and ran into "souvenir nights" and "second editions." Bizet's music could not be used, although Miss Florence St. John would have done justice to it, but Herr Meyer Lutz, who was still at the Gaiety (his twenty-second year), was quite equal to the occasion.

The production of this piece was the first real warning the Gaiety had of the approaching break-down of Miss Ellen Farren and Mr. Fred Leslie. Miss Farren, as early as 1871, had shown serious symptoms of a spinal complaint.

Early in May they sailed for Australia to complete their second engagement, "down under."

Miss Louie Fuller, on the road to become a "celebrity" and a "draw"—a lady with ambitions in dancing, not then developed, who wished to

throw a little light on the "Eleusinian mysteries"—joined the Gaiety company, which was further strengthened by Miss Alice Lethbridge. After the "structural alterations" and re-decorations of the house were finished, the latter giving Phipps's somewhat ecclesiastical architecture a coating of Cockney-Moorish art, as understood in England, a new burlesque and almost a new company, transferred from the Opera Comique, in which Mr. George Edwardes at that time had an interest, enlivened the new temple. In this burlesque Mr. Arthur Roberts made his appearance for the second time at the Gaiety. The piece was called *Joan of Arc*.

On Wednesday, Sept. 30th, 1891,

the Second Edition of the Burlesque,

by J. L. Shine and Adrian Ross, entitled

#### JOAN OF ARC.

Arthur de Richemont . . . . .	Mr. Arthur Roberts
Charles VII. . . . .	Mons. Marius
Jacques Darc . . . . .	Mr. F. Emney
Talbot . . . . .	Miss Alma Stanley
Fill-up the Good . . . . .	Mr. E. Bantock
The Bishop of Bovril . . . . .	Mr. W. Warde
Village Schoolmaster . . . . .	Mr. E. D. Wardes
New York Herald . . . . .	Miss Agness Hewitt
Mayor of Orleans . . . . .	Mr. A. Rolph
Joan of Arc . . . . .	Miss Marion Hood
Marie . . . . .	Miss Florence Dysart
Yalande of Bar . . . . .	Miss Linda Verner
Catherine of Rochelle . . . . .	Miss Alice Lethbridge
Duchess d'Alençon . . . . .	Miss Day Ford
Aline . . . . .	Miss Violet Monckton
Isabelle Darc . . . . .	Miss Louise Gourlay
Blanche Darc . . . . .	Miss Katie Seymour
French Officer . . . . .	Miss Lily Harold

The burlesque was very popular, and the prohibition of one song by the Lord Chamberlain increased its popularity. This referred to Lord





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MISS LILLIE BELMORE.





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MISS SYLVIA GREY.



Randolph Churchill, and the chorus was "Regular Randy Dandy O!" At the same time, "down under," the new burlesque destined for the Gaiety Theatre, London, at Christmas, was being "tried upon" the Australians, and not found wanting. I quote from the *Daily News*, October 5th, 1891:—

"The production of a Gaiety burlesque on the other side of the world is worth noting as a token of the wide field now open to the talents of English actors. *Cinder Ellen Up Too Late* is the title of this production—in playful allusion to the name of Miss E. Farren, who plays the leading part, much apparently to the satisfaction of audiences at the Princess's Theatre, Melbourne, where this novelty was produced 'with great scenic magnificence' on the 22nd of August. With this great favourite of Gaiety audiences was Mr. Fred Leslie, Miss Grey, Mr. Danby, and other well-known members of the company, who are looking forward to reappearing at their old quarters in the Strand in this piece at Christmas. We must not omit to note that Mr. Meyer Lutz, who is responsible for the incidental music, original and selected, presided in the orchestra of the Melbourne Theatre. The author of the burlesque is 'Mr. A. C. Torr,' that is Mr. Fred Leslie, who under this signature, which may be read as 'Actor' by anyone who is so disposed, chooses to disguise himself."

The year 1892 was a black year for the Gaiety—as black as any year that has ever fallen on a popular London theatre—especially a theatre dealing in the lighter forms of the drama. It began at Christmas, 1891, when Miss Ellen Farren was seized with an illness which compelled her to withdraw (probably for ever) from the stage, on the eve of the production of a burlesque which she had started on a career of success in Australia, and it ended close upon the next Christmas (1892), when her dear friend and comrade, who had helped her to make this success, Mr. Fred Leslie, died rather suddenly on December 7th of typhoid fever. Few theatrical deaths ever caused a more painful sensation. He was universally regretted. The theatre was closed on the night of his funeral.

The burlesque, *Cinder Ellen*, was in full rehearsal—the manager, hoping against hope, was daily expecting her to skip on to a stage which she had made her own, and take her place amongst her friends and companions. Miss Kate James, at last, pluckily entered the breach. Miss Farren had said in Australia that *Cinder Ellen* would be her last burlesque, as she intended to devote the remainder of her career to comedy. She should have forecasted tragedy.

“CINDER-ELLEN.”

(A burlesque, in three acts, by A. C. Torr and W. T. Vincent. Music by Meyer Lutz.) Christmas Eve, 1891.

Cinder-Ellen . . . . .	Miss Kate James
Linconzina . . . . .	Miss Sylvia Grey
Fettalana . . . . .	Miss Florence Levey
Mrs. Kensington Gore . . . . .	Miss Emily Miller
Lord Taplow . . . . .	Miss Maud Hobson
Lord Eastbourne . . . . .	Miss Blanche Massey
Lord Soho . . . . .	Miss Hetty Hamer
Lord Whitefriars . . . . .	Miss Dunville
Sir Peterborough Court . . . . .	Miss Maud Boyd
Sir Waterloo Bridge . . . . .	Miss Norton
Catherina . . . . .	Miss Lillian Price
Grazina . . . . .	Miss Maud Wilmot
Furnivalzina . . . . .	Miss Violet Monckton
Griffina . . . . .	Miss Eva Greville
Templina . . . . .	Miss Adelaide Astor
Victorina . . . . .	Miss Lily M'Intyre
Prince Belgravia . . . . .	Mr. E. J. Lonnen
Sir Ludgate Hill . . . . .	Mr. Arthur Williams
Peckham and } . . . . .	{ Mr. Harris
Gnorwood } . . . . .	{ Mr. Walker
Footman . . . . .	Mr. Hill
A Servant . . . . .	Mr. Fred Leslie

The three acts of the burlesque were afterwards reduced to two, and Miss Lottie Collins, who had been a member of the Gaiety Company when *Faust up to Date* was being played, was engaged to sing nightly, as a “turn,” her wildly popular song of “Ta-ra-boom-de-ay.” It was received with frantic enthusiasm. Mr. George Edwardes at this time knew that Fred Leslie was seized with the usual actor’s ambition to become a manager. His relations with Fred Leslie were always of the most friendly kind, and he sympathised with his designs, but made “other arrangements” in self-defence. He engaged Mr. Arthur Roberts to open at Christmas, 1892.

The *Gaiety Chronicles*, as I have just shown, are not always a record of comedy and burlesque. They have their sad and sober side, as every theatre must have, even in so short a period as thirty-four years, which has changed its company and pieces with more rapidity than a South American State changes its Government. The list of those who have “gone before” is long and distinguished, and it is a consolation to know that their work was fully appreciated, and that they live honoured in the memory of those they have left behind.



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MR. E. J. LONNEN.







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**MR. ARTHUR ROBERTS.**





CHAPTER XVI.

IN MEMORIAM.

**In Memoriam.**

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND, 1868-1903.

- Lionel Lawson, *Founder.*  
C. J. Phipps, *Architect.*  
H. Stacey Marks, *R.A.*  
George Gordon, *Scenic Artist.*  
Alfred Thompson, *Artist and Author.*  
Alfred Wigan, *Actor and Manager.*  
Charles Mathews, *Actor and Manager.*  
Samuel Phelps, *Actor and Manager.*  
Marie Litton, *Actress and Manageress.*  
Adelaide Neilson, *Actress.*  
Ada Cavendish, *Actress.*  
Harry Monkhouse, *Actor.*  
Sims Reeves, *Vocalist and Actor.*  
Florence Farren, *Actress.*  
George Moore, *A faithful Servant.*

Thomas Grieve, *Scenic Artist*.  
M. Hervé, *Composer*.  
Jenny Hill, *Variety Artiste*.  
Arthur Sullivan, *Composer*.  
M. Humbert, *Manager*.  
M. Emile Perrin, *Manager*.  
Henry S. Leigh, *Author*.  
Julia Matthews, *Operatic Singer*.  
Walter Montgomery, *Actor and Manager*.  
Charles Reade, *Author*.  
Tillie Wadman, *Actress*.  
Emily Duncan, *Actress*.  
Kate Munro, *Actress and Vocalist*.  
Rose Leclercq, *Actress*.  
Joseph Eldred, *Actor*.  
T. Squire, *Actor*.  
J. W. Henley, *Actor*.  
Dion Boucicault, *Author and Actor*.  
Robert Reece, *Author*.  
Henry J. Byron, *Author and Actor*.  
W. Yardley, *Author*.  
W. J. Florence, *Actor*.  
Offenbach, *Composer*.  
Harriett Coveney, *Actress*.  
Edward Solomon, *Composer*.  
John Clayton, *Actor and Manager*.  
Arthur Cecil, *Actor and Manager*.  
David James, *Actor and Manager*.  
Sir Campbell Clarke, *Author*.  
George Conquest, *Actor and Manager*.  
Arthur Dacre, *Actor*.  
Amy Roselle, *Actress*.  
Selina Dolaro, *Actress and Vocalist*.

Samuel Emery, *Actor*.  
H. B. Farnie, *Author*.  
Edward Righton, *Actor*.  
J. T. Raymond, *Actor*.  
G. A. Sala, *Author*.  
Anthony Trollope, *Author*.  
Signor Pellegrini, *Artist*.  
George Stone, *Actor*.  
E. J. Lonnen, *Actor*.  
Charles Harris, *Stage Manager*.  
Fred Leslie, *Actor and Author*.  
George Honey, *Actor*.  
W. H. Pettitt, *Author*.  
Christopher Pond, *Caterer*.  
Therese Furtado, *Actress*.  
W. Belford, *Actor*.  
Louise Henderson, *Actress*.  
Meyer Lutz, *Conductor*.  
Kate Vaughan, *Dancer and Actress*.  
Furieux Cook, *Singer and Actor*.  
William Elton, *Actor*.  
Pottinger Stephens, *Author*.  
Alma Egerton, *Actress*.  
John Maclean, *Actor*.  
Emily Muir, *Singer and Actress*.  
Minnie Ross, *Actress*.  
Stuart Robson, *American Actor*.  
Charles Thorne, *American Actor*.  
Lillie Belmore, *Actress*.  
Charles Ryley, *Actor*.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE FARREN DEMONSTRATION.



ORTUNATELY Miss Ellen Farren has not to be added to this sad list, but an attack of rheumatic fever on her return voyage from Australia developed locomotor-ataxy. The theatre to which she had devoted the best part of her life at that time—eighteen years with me and five years with George Edwardes—"variety show" as it always was—felt her compulsory withdrawal from the stage almost as much as if the black curtain had fallen on her unceasing, inspiriting and never vulgar efforts. Though impelled to play "burlesque boys," as much as Grimaldi was impelled to play clowns, and Robert Burns was impelled to write convivial songs, Nature had given her some portion of that genius which ages before had inspired and directed Aristophanes.

The estimation in which she was held (I am quoting from *Gaiety Chronicles*), and the broad sympathy expressed for her in her illness, took a fitting and substantial form on the 17th of March, 1898, in a gigantic benefit at Drury Lane Theatre, organised by Mr. George Edwardes. Every member of the dramatic world took part in the stage entertainment, and Mr. Arthur Collins not only gave the free use of the theatre, but also his most valuable services. The General Committee was headed by the Duke of Beaufort, the Duke of Fife, the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Hardwicke, the Earl of Durham, the Earl of Londesborough, the Earl of Kilmorey, Lord Alington, Lord Archibald Campbell, Lord Rothschild, Lord Russell



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MR. WILLIE WARDE.







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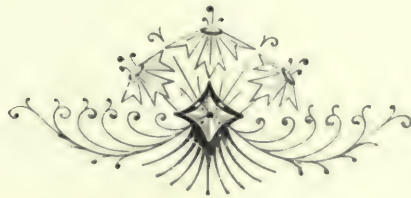
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MISS CISSIE LOFTUS.



(the late Lord Chief Justice), Lord Farquhar, Sir Edward Lawson, Sir Blundell Maple, Sir Henry Irving, Sir Edward Clarke, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir Douglas Straight, and every theatrical manager in London. The benefit was under the special patronage of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and both these Royal patrons sent substantial subscriptions. The receipts and subscriptions were over £7,000, and such an enthusiastic demonstration has probably never been equalled in a Metropolitan theatre. This triumph of organisation and sympathy with a popular favourite, not old, but incapacitated by illness, apart from Mr. George Edwardes's initiative action, owed nearly everything to the exertions of Mr. Walter Pallant, Mr. Horace Lennard, and Mr. Arthur Cohen, who were really the acting Executive Committee. The only scene that approached it was Charles Mathews's reappearance in London at the Gaiety Theatre after his long voyage round the world in 1871-2.

The Farren demonstration may or may not have been meant as a vote of admiration for that form of burlesque associated with the dying Gaiety (No. 1)—which, in 1898, was in a state of suspended animation, but it was so regarded by, at least, one eminent and accepted dramatic critic, of the academic order, who at last gave the galvanised corpse its due. He was moved to assert that Gaiety burlesque is the national drama of modern England, forgetting that the two vampyres who had fed upon it for thirty-four years at the same theatre—(the only instance, probably, of one playhouse being carried on so long with only two managers)—were standing modestly at the wings, leaving the triumphant proceedings to the willing army of camp-followers.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ADVENT OF MUSICAL COMEDY.



RED LESLIE'S regretted death and Miss Farren's obstinate illness stopped the production of *Don Juan*, a burlesque he had prepared for the Gaiety, and Mr. George Edwardes, with his great resources, was able to supply his wants from one of his "chapel-of-ease" theatres. *In Town* was transferred from the Prince of Wales's Theatre, with Mr. Arthur Roberts and Miss Florence St. John as the chief attractions. This transfer marked the introduction at the Gaiety of Mr. George Edwardes's distinct invention, the so-called and immensely popular "musical comedy." The authors of *In Town* were Mr. Adrian Ross and Mr. Branscombe, and the composer was Mr. Osmond Carr. It must not be supposed that the Gaiety company was starving under its misfortunes. Arthur Roberts, with Mr. Arthur Playfair as understudy, Miss Maud Boyd, a capable vocalist, to draw upon, if necessary, Miss Florence Lloyd, Miss Kate Cutler, Mr. Edmund Payne (the son of Harry Payne), Mr. Eric Lewis, Miss Phyllis Broughton, Mr. E. Bantock, Miss Sylvia Grey, Mr. Fritz-Rimma, Miss Maria Davis, Miss Topsy Sinden, Miss Bob Robina, Miss Maud Hobson, Mr. Louis Bradfield, Miss Florence St. John, and many others, showed no diminution of strength and attractiveness. Two hundred and fifty nights, and "second editions," proved that the new bridge between old burlesque, burlesque "up-to-date" and musical farce or comedy, had safely carried George Edwardes and his legions over. Miss Cissie Loftus joined the *In Town* cast, with Miss Louie Fuller as a dancer, and several extraneous attractions, French and American, were introduced.

After a short season of French comic opera in English, Miss Florence



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MISS FLORENCE ST. JOHN.





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MISS LETTY LIND.







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MISS ELLALINE TERRISS.



St. John playing the chief part in the *Mascotte*, Mr. George Edwardes re-crossed the bridge and reverted to burlesque, producing a three-act piece of this type, called *Don Juan*. The responsible author was Mr. J. T. Tanner, and in it Mr. Arthur Roberts played half-a-dozen characters. Miss Millie Hylton and Miss Cissie Loftus played the two chief parts—Don Juan and Haidée, and the rest of the cast comprised: Miss Sylvia Grey, Miss Katie Seymour, Willie Warde, George Mudie, Edmund Payne, E. W. Royce (of Gaiety Quartette fame), Robert Pateman, Topsy Sinden, Maria Davis, and Louise Montague. The lyrics were by Mr. Adrian Ross, not so well-known as he is now, and the music by Herr Meyer Lutz, E. Solomon and Sidney Jones. The burlesque was no doubt founded on the work which Fred Leslie, at the time of his death, was preparing for Christmas. The burlesque was a great success—partly owing to two “brushes” with the Lord Chamberlain—one concerning the Sultan of Turkey, and the other the Khedive of Egypt. It finished its two hundredth night and more triumphantly, and then gave place to Madame Rejane (the Parisian genius who began her career in burlesque), who appeared in Sardou’s *Madame Sans Gêne*. Early in August, the last burlesque of the early Gaiety period, *Little Jack Sheppard*, was revived with the following necessarily altered cast:—

Jack Sheppard . . . . .	Miss Jessie Preston.
Jonathan Wild . . . . .	Mr. Seymour Hicks.
Blueskin . . . . .	Mr. Charles Danby.
Thames Darrell . . . . .	Miss Amy Augarde.
Mr. Wood . . . . .	Mr. E. W. Royce.
Kneebone . . . . .	Mr. Willie Warde.
Sir Roland Trenchard . . . . .	Mr. Cheesman.
Abraham Mendez . . . . .	Mr. Frank Wood.
Ireton . . . . .	Miss Violet Monckton.
Quilt Arnold . . . . .	Miss Kate Cannon.
Shotbolt . . . . .	Miss Carrie Benton.
Marvel . . . . .	Miss Flo Henderson.
Captain Cuff . . . . .	Miss Ethel Earle.
Winifred Wood . . . . .	Miss Ellaline Terriss.
Mrs. Sheppard . . . . .	Miss Lizzie Collier.
Edgworth Bess . . . . .	Miss Maude Hill.
Poll Stanmore . . . . .	Miss Florence Levey.
Kitty Kettleby . . . . .	Miss Georgina Preston.

Since the burlesque was written, one of the authors died, Mr. William Yardley; and Miss Wadman, who was in the original cast as Thames Darrell, died before the revival.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### A RECORD RUN.



THE invention or discovery of Musical Comedy was a happy inspiration of Mr. George Edwardes's. It provided a new form of entertainment for playgoers who go to a theatre for amusement and recreation, which was more elastic in plot or story than the old burlesques. These were generally tied to some well-known tale or legend. This new turn of the dramatic kaleidoscope exhibited a little of the old burletta and the old vaudeville, most of the best elements of farce, a dash of the *French revue*—a stage compound that has never been very fashionable in this country,—and much that would not have been out of place in Parisian opera-bouffe. The frame-work would allow of anything being taken out or anything put in, differing in this very little from the Gaiety burlesque, and the term “variety show,” applied to many of these productions, had obviously been “lifted” from their predecessors.

The first of these productions originally given at the Gaiety, and certainly the most successful judging from its length of life, was *The Shop Girl* which introduced a new author to the Gaiety—Mr. H. J. Dam. The music was by Mr. Ivan Caryll, the successor to Herr Meyer Lutz. It achieved its 300th performance in October 1895,—its 500th performance in June 1896, and its two years of existence before it was withdrawn in the November of that year. The dresses were modern and fashionable, and the cast was perfect and varied. I give the play-bill *in extenso* :—



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MISS MAUD HILL.





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MISS KATIE SEYMOUR.







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MR. IVAN CARYLL.



# Gaiety Theatre.

LESSEE AND MANAGER

GEORGE EDWARDES.

TO-NIGHT, AND EVERY EVENING AT 8,

DOORS OPEN AT 7.40.

## THE SHOP GIRL,

A MUSICAL FARCE,

By **H. J. W. DAM.** Music by **IVAN CARYLL.**

Additional Numbers by **ADRIAN ROSS & LIONEL MONCKTON.**

Mr. Hooley	...	(Proprietor of the Royal Stores)	Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAMS
Charles Appleby	...	(a Medical Student)	Mr. SEYMOUR HICKS
Bertie Boyd	...	(One of the Boys)	Mr. GEORGE GROSSMITH, Junr.
John Brown	...	(a Millionaire)	Mr. COLIN COOP
Sir George Appleby	...	(a Solicitor)	Mr. CAIRNS JAMES
Col. Singleton	...	(Retired)	Mr. FRANK WHEELER
Count St. Vaurien	...	(Secretary to Mr. Brown)	Mr. ROBERT NAINBY
Mr. Tweets	...	(Financial Secretary to Lady Appleby)	Mr. WILLIE WARDE
Mr. Miggles	...	(Shopwalker at the Royal Stores)	Mr. EDMUND PAYNE
Lady Dodo Singleton	...	(Charlie's Cousin)	Miss HELEN LEE
Miss Robinson	...	(Fitter at the Royal Stores)	Miss KATIE SEYMOUR
Lady Appleby	...	(Charlie's Mother, Wife of Sir George)	Miss MARIA DAVIS
Ada Smith	...	(an Apprentice at the Royal Stores)	Miss LILLIE BELMORE
Faith	}	... (Lady Appleby's Daughters)	Miss LILLIE DICKINSON
Hope			Miss AGATHA ROZE
Charity			Miss LILY JOHNSON
Maud Plantagenet	}	... (of the Syndicate Theatre)	Miss ADELAIDE ASTOR
Eva Tudor			Miss FANNY WARD
Lillie Stuart			Miss MAUD SUTHERLAND
Ada Harrison			Miss LILLIE HENSHAW
Mabel Beresford			Miss VIOLET MONCKTON
Florence White			Miss ADA BELTON
Sylvia Perry			Miss MAUD HOPPE
Agnes Howard	Miss LOUIE COOTE		
Maggie Jocelyn	Miss MAGGIE RIPLEY		
Violet Deveney	Miss TOPSY SINDEN		
Bessie Brent	...	("The Shop Girl")	Miss ADA REEVE

**Act I.—The Royal Stores** (*W. Johnstone*). **Act II.—Fancy Bazaar at Kensington** (*W. Hann*).

PAS SEUL, in the Second Act, by Miss TOPSY SINDEN.

Dances arranged by WILLIE WARDE. Costumes designed by WILHELM, and executed by Miss FISHER. Madame AUGUSTE, HARRISONS Limited, MORRIS ANGEL and "VANITE."

Wigs by C. H. FOX. Furniture, &c., by OETZMANN & Co., Hampstead Road, N.W.

Electric Lighting and Effects by G. POYNTON.

**Produced under the direction of J. T. TANNER.**

The Music conducted by the Composer, Mr. IVAN CARYLL.

Acting Manager ... .. EDWARD MARSHALL.

Its successor was a piece of the same type, in two acts, called eventually, *My Girl*, written by Mr. J. T. Tanner, with songs by Mr. Adrian Ross. The music was by Mr. F. Osman Carr. The costumes again were modern. The cast was a strong one, although Mr. Seymour Hicks did not appear in it with Mrs. Hicks (Miss Ellaline Terriss).

The Rev. Arthur Mildreth	(Vicar of Stoke Barum, Somerset)	Mr. CHARLES RYLEY
Theo	(his son, a lieutenant in the Guards)	Mr. PAUL ARTHUR
Alexander McGregor	(of the Mulet in Parvo Stock Exchange)	Mr. JOHN LE HAY
Dr. Tertius Huxtable	...	Mr. FRED KAYE
Lord Barum	...	Mr. LAWRENCE D'ORSAY
Leopold Van Fontein	(A Financier)	Mr. W. H. RAWLINS
Saunders	(Fontein's Valet)	Mr. LESLIE HOLLAND
Weeks	...	Mr. WILLIE WARDE
The Mayor of Porthampton	...	Mr. COLIN COOP
John Fahee	(of Bashangoland)	Mr. W. DOWNES
Lady Bargrave	...	Miss MARIA DAVIS
Beatrice	(Barum's Sister)	Miss ETHEL HAYDON
Rebecca	(Fontein's Daughter)	Miss MARIE MONTROSE
Phoebe Toodge	(May's Maid)	Miss KATIE SEYMOUR
Melissa Banks	(Fontein's Private Secretary)	Miss ETHEL SYDNEY
Mayoress	...	Miss CONNIE EDISS
Dorothy	(Her Daughters)	Miss KATE ADAMS
Mary		Miss ADA MAITLAND
Miss Veriner	...	Miss FLORENCE LLOYD
Mrs. Parkinson	...	Miss GRACE PALOTTA
AND		
May	(The Vicar's Daughter)	Miss ELLALINE TERRISS

This was called a "Domestic Musical Play." The cast was long enough and strong enough to carry any comedy.

The next venture was a play of German origin, first represented in Vienna, which ultimately assumed at the Gaiety the title of *The Circus Girl*. It had six godfathers, without the manager, Mr. George Edwardes, who, like all good managers, always counts a good deal in all his productions. Mr. Edwardes has never been known to leave a piece after its production, if by judicious "editing" he could cut out the faulty parts, and insert new attractions. "Musical comedy" is too costly a theatrical product to be allowed to drift without the watchful care of competent management. Ten to twenty thousand pounds placed on the stage is very different from a domestic comedy, the original cost of which may be fifty pounds, and the weekly cost of "running" about forty pounds a night. The critical attention too often bestowed upon these costly efforts to amuse the public is on a par with the action of the "licensing authorities." A theatre that costs seventy or eighty thousand pounds to build and open with decency, theoretical safety, and artistic taste, gets exactly the same license (neither more nor less) as playhouses costing one-tenth of the amount, and perpetuating the vices of the old provincial theatres. Mr. J. T. Tanner and Mr. W. Palings were responsible for the "words," Mr. Ivan Caryll and Mr. Lionel



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MR. EDMUND PAYNE.





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MR. G. GROSSMITH, JUN.







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MISS CONNIE EDISS.



Monckton for the "music," and Mr. Harry Greenbank and Mr. Adrian Ross for the "lyrics." Here is another cast of exceptional strength and variety :—

Dick Capel	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. SEYMOUR HICKS
Sir Titus Wemyss	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. HARRY MONKHOUSE
Drivelli	...	...	(Proprietor of Circus)	...	...	Mr. ARTHUR WILLIAMS
Hon. Reginald Gower	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. LIONEL MACKINDER
Auguste	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. WILLIE WARDE
Adolphe	...	...	...	...	(Clowns)	Mr. BERTIE WRIGHT
Albertoni	...	...	...	...	(Ring Master)	Mr. COLIN COOP
Commissaire of Police	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. ROBERT NAINBY
Vicomte Gaston	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. MAURICE FARKOA
Toothick Pasha	...	...	(The Terrible Turk)	...	...	Mr. ARTHUR HOPE
Rudolph	...	...	(The Cannon King)	...	...	Mr. E. D. WARDES
Proprietor of the Café de la Régence	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. LESLIE HOLLAND
Flobert	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. ROBERT SELBY
Cocher	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. W. F. BROOKE
Sergent de Ville	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. FRED RING
Valliard	...	...	...	...	...	Mr. W. H. POWELL
AND						
Biggs	...	...	(An American Bar Tender)	...	...	Mr. EDMUND PAYNE
Lucille	...	...	(A Slack Wire Walker)	...	...	Miss KATIE SEYMOUR
"La Favorita"	...	...	...	...	...	Miss ETHEL HAYDON
Mrs. Drivelli	...	...	...	...	...	Miss CONNIE EDISS
Lady Diana Wemyss	...	...	...	...	...	Miss MARIA DAVIS
Marie	...	...	...	...	...	Miss GRACE PALOTTA
Louise	...	...	...	...	...	Miss LILY JOHNSTON
Liane	...	...	...	...	...	Miss LOUIE COOTE
Emilie	...	...	...	...	...	Miss ALICE BETELLE
Juliette	...	...	...	...	...	Miss MAIDIE HOPE
Comtesse d'Épérnay	...	...	...	...	...	Miss ADA MAITLAND
Marquise de Millefleurs	...	...	...	...	...	Miss KATHLEEN FRANCIS
Mdlle. Gompson	...	...	...	...	...	Miss ALICE NEILSON
AND						
Dora Wemyss	...	...	...	...	...	Miss ELLALINE TERRISS

Dancers—Mdlles. MAGGIE FRAZER, ETHEL NIELD,  
LOTTIE WILLIAMS, AND MADGE GREET.

The records of the Theatre since Musical-Comedy took the place of Burlesque, Old and New, are marvellous, as showing how much has been done with very few pieces. This is the list:—

<i>In Town</i>	...	produced	December 26th, 1892.
<i>La Mascotte</i>	...	"	September 9th, 1893.
<i>Don Juan</i>	...	"	October 28th, 1893.
<i>Madame Sans Gêne</i>	...	"	June 23rd, 1894.
<i>Little Jack Sheppard</i>	...	"	August 11th, 1894.
<i>The Shop Girl</i>	...	"	November 24th, 1894.
<i>My Girl</i>	...	"	July 13th, 1896.
<i>The Circus Girl</i>	...	"	December 5th, 1896.
<i>A Runaway Girl</i>	...	"	May 21st, 1898.
<i>The Messenger Boy</i>	...	"	February 3rd, 1900.
<i>The Torcador</i>	...	"	June 17th, 1901.

The first piece, *In Town*, was a Prince of Wales's Theatre production transferred. *The Mascotte* represented an intermediate opera season. *Don Juan* was a burlesque. *Madame Sans Gêne* opened another inter-

mediate season in French, with Madame Rejane, and *Little Jack Sheppard* was a burlesque revival. This leaves only seven musical comedies or farces, two of which, *The Shop Girl* and *The Toreador*, have achieved the longest recorded runs in this class of entertainment. The introduction of *The Linkman* as a supplement or postscript was a happy idea, cleverly carried out. Its Gaiety "memories" enlightened the young and pleased the old. The author is Mr. George Grossmith, junior,—a clever member of a clever family, who are actors, musicians and artists. *The Linkman* brings *The Toreador* to a triumphant conclusion. To have achieved such large results with so few pieces, and, at the same time, to have encouraged and almost founded a new market in theatrical talent, is a proof, if any were needed, of Mr. George Edwardes's great capacity as a manager.

The number of actors and actresses, who have, so to speak, graduated at the old Gaiety, from the earliest days, is probably greater than at any other theatre. Amongst the managers it sent forth into the theatrical world were Henry Irving and J. L. Toole, Forbes Robertson, W. S. Penley, Norman Robertson, Mr. Edward Terry, a comedian of quaint and original humour, and of world-wide celebrity; Mr. John Clayton and Mr. Arthur Cecil, neither of whom had quite the managerial instinct, although they both tried management, John Clayton being a sound and varied actor, who died too early to show his full power; Miss Fowler and Miss Litton, Cyril Maude, Weedon Grossmith, and Miss Mary Moore. Amongst the actors and actresses who came to it young and ambitious and soon made a name were Miss Cissie Loftus, who after an important career in America, became a leading lady of Sir Henry Irving's Company, through the strong recommendation of Miss Ellen Terry; Miss Constance Collier, who is a member of Mr. Beerbohm Tree's distinguished company; Miss Ellaline Terriss, who in her husband's (Mr. Seymour Hicks's) clever piece of *Blue Bell*, gave a performance having a phenomenal "run" which has not been equalled for grace and charm since the juvenile days of Miss Lydia Thompson; Mr. George Grossmith, junior, whom I have alluded to before in well-deserved terms of appreciation; Mr. Edward Payne, the worthy and talented member of a respected family who were the greatest English pantomimists of the last half of the nineteenth century; Miss Letty Lind, who was regarded by Kate Vaughan as her one legitimate successor, and who left the Gaiety to brighten Mr. George Edwardes's Company at Daly's; Miss Lettice Fairfax, who has made a reputation as a comedienne, both in England and America; and Miss Rosie Boote, who left the Gaiety, to its loss, when she became the Marchioness of Headfort.



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MISS ETHEL SYDNEY.





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MR. LIONEL MONCKTON.







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MISS ROSIE BOOTE (MARCHIONESS OF HEADFORT).





### MY LAST MANIFESTO.



THE "Good Old Gaiety" has been carried on by two men for nearly thirty-five years, a fact unequalled in theatrical history. It has been, amongst many other things, which some of its critics have remembered to forget, the acknowledged home of advanced burlesque. Whether burlesque is art, or art is burlesque, it is not necessary, in this booklet, to attempt to determine. It is the most costly, and the most troublesome form of dramatic entertainment that any manager can select for his speciality. Its profits are precarious, and its reputation is not much above the level of the *posés plastiques*. It is licensed, as every other entertainment, high or low, is licensed. Any theatre devoted to its performance is at once stamped as the "house of call" for fools and idiots. Its stage is supposed to copy the manners and morals of the vilest dens described in Pierce Egan's *Life in London*.

This is a lie, of course, and there is no other word for it. It sustained the Olympic and the great genius of Robson; the Haymarket, with Buckstone and Webster, in the intervals of vulgar farce, Shakespeare, and the Musical Glasses; the Lyceum in the tasteful and impecunious days of Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris; the old Strand Theatre and the new; the Adelphi when Benjamin Webster was boxing the theatrical compass; and even the St. James's, where "Jemmy" Rogers almost died upon the stage in a burlesque by Mr. W. S. Gilbert.

The Gaiety burlesque, when first started, was simply old burlesque writ large, and produced with elegance and completeness. It relieved the monotony of the ill-paid labours of the critics or reporters, by providing them with an undefeated cockshy. As an outcome of this critical survey:

for more than a quarter of a century, the world has been enriched with one word, "masher"—not worth a tinker's blessing. No one knows the origin of this word, nor is there much occasion to seek for information. It has not even the rude force of Coster English. I wrote to Dr. Murray, the great dictionary maker of Mill Hill, and he could throw no light upon the subject. I have had to arrive at my own definition. The masher of to-day is the statesman of to-morrow, and the bulk of the mashers who graduated at the "Good Old Gaiety" are now helping to govern this vast empire in every direction.

A few "vulgar errors" have to be dissipated in connection with the "Good Old Gaiety." I was never Mr. Lionel Lawson's manager, and he was never, as I have said before, in any sense, my "backer." I was his tenant from the first, and paid my rent. He was always a good and loyal friend. When he died he owed me £1,100, on adjustment of accounts, which was punctually paid by the trustees.

The Gaiety was successful, and burlesque was never a failure. It was sometimes a great success. I sold my interest in the theatre to Mr. George Edwardes, to help to pay my debts—debts incurred in outside theatrical speculations. This was the result of being "practical," and being called "Practical John." No one is more rejoiced at Mr. George Edwardes's success than I am, as it shows that, given a certain amount of business ability and organising powers—one man is as good as another, and often better.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.





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MR. ADRIAN ROSS.



*In compiling this little book I have to thank the London Stereoscopic Co., Mr. Bassano, Messrs. Downey & Son, William Whiteley, the Successors of the late Samuel Walker, the Proprietors of the "Entr'acte," "Vanity Fair," "Graphic," "Sporting and Dramatic News," M. Nada (of Paris), and Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston & Co., for the use of Illustrations and Quotations from my "Autobiography" and "Gaiety Chronicles."*

*J. H.*











