

## No. 1 *Iolanthe* Company 1883

26 Feb. – 10 Mar. Manchester

### THEATRE ROYAL.

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan have achieved so many perfectly legitimate successes, and in doing so have provided the theatre-going public with so much genuine and innocent enjoyment, that it is inevitable that any new production of theirs should be awaited with feelings of pleased interest. Between them they may be said to have hit upon an entirely new vein of dramatic and musical ore. Cynics may tell us that the vein is of the thinnest, and that it is being remorselessly overworked, but that is an ill-natured view of the situation which the great majority of people will very properly decline to entertain. It may be, indeed it is, true that both author and composer repeat themselves not infrequently, and that "*Iolanthe*" is only a further development of "*Pinafore*" and "*Patience*," and that musicians who have a clear and distinct knowledge of "*Cox and Box*" are able to put their fingers on the germ of almost every number of the latest of Mr. Sullivan's compositions. But there is nothing in all this to spoil our enjoyment of "*Iolanthe*." It may be judged on its own merits with most satisfactory results. It in no sense spoils our pleasure in listening to the charming nonsense of "*Iolanthe*" to be reminded that the idea of the amorous Lord Chancellor has been worked up in "*Trial by Jury*," or that the fairies of the former piece are the sisters, cousins, and aunts of "*Pinafore*," with the single addition of wings. This is all true enough, but we nevertheless altogether decline to spoil our enjoyment of the amazing story which Mr. Gilbert has put into words and Mr. Sullivan has set to music in "*Iolanthe*."

The story is, in truth, a marvellous one. Mr. Gilbert is never so happy as when in the region of Topsey-turveydom, and he has his fling to his heart's content in his latest work. *Iolanthe* is the fairy mother of Strephon, who for her crime in marrying a mortal has suffered Romeo's punishment—banishment—at the hands of the Queen of the Fairies. Her offspring Strephon combines in his physique the fairy and the human elements. He is immortal down to the waistcoat, but his legs are human, and therefore perishable. He is in love with and about to be married to Phyllis, a shepherdess, who is a ward in Chancery. It goes without saying that her guardian, the Lord Chancellor, is fathoms deep in love with the charming shepherdess, and he has for his rivals not merely the favoured Strephon but the whole of the House of Lords. Strephon's suit, in spite of the Lord Chancellor's unwillingness to consent to it, is going on admirably, when unfortunately he is discovered embracing his mother *Iolanthe*. That lady has all the appearance of a maid of seventeen, and seeing that Strephon admits to twenty-five, Phyllis entirely declines to accept his explanation or to believe his story that the "lady has been his mother from his birth," and the injured girl at once declares herself willing to marry any peer who may be selected for the purpose. But here the Fairy Queen steps in and threatens their lordships with a terrible vengeance. Strephon shall go into Parliament, she says, and shall shake the very foundations of the British constitution. Even the exalted rank of duke is to be open to competitive examination. Everybody implores Strephon to relent, but in vain, and the curtain falls as he casts Phyllis off. All this takes place in that delicious realm *Arcadee*. The second act brings us to the Palace Yard at Westminster, and here we learn the tremendous things which Strephon, now in Parliament, is doing. In this same Palace Yard the plot gradually works up to a denouement of a satisfactory sort. The fairies and the members of the House of Lords once more meet. The remarkable revelation is made that the too susceptible Lord Chancellor is *Iolanthe's* husband, and Strephon's father. Phyllis at

last forgives her lover, satisfied that he has not deceived her, and the indignation of the Fairy Queen is overcome by the consideration that if she kills Iolanthe she will also have to slay all her fairy company, each of whom has married a peer. As she cannot slaughter the whole of them she forgives them, satisfying her conscience by the aid of the Lord Chancellor, who finds a flaw in the original decree, and rushes into the arms of a god-like sentry on duty in the yard. The peers, overwhelmed with the consciousness that their House is to be recruited entirely from persons of intelligence admit that they can be of no use whatever "down here." Wings sprout from their shoulders, and they change "House of Peers" for "House of Peris."

All this is of course from one point of view wild nonsense, but it is nonsense of so innocent and harmless and withal so clever a sort that it would be foolish to attempt to do anything with it but enjoy it. The interest of the piece to some extent suffers from the lack of any very distinct object for Mr. Gilbert's satire. Such an object is present both in "Pinafore" and in "Patience." Such vein of satire as the opera contains is apparently aimed at the House of Lords, but, on the whole, it is very good natured sarcasm. Here and there there are bits which go slowly, and it may perhaps be questioned whether "Iolanthe" will ever achieve the popularity of some of its immediate predecessors. But it is a pleasant piece of fooling very cleverly worked out, which is like nothing in the world except some of Mr. Gilbert's own productions. It goes without saying that Mr. Sullivan has done his share of the work delightfully. It may be questioned whether any record exists of such complete sympathy between librettist and composer as that which obtains between Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan. Some of the author's numbers could, we imagine, scarcely be handled at all by any one else than Sullivan. The general impression will be that in no previous effort has Mr. Sullivan so carefully elaborated his work. His graceful and appropriate instrumentation is never lost sight of, whilst his wonderful faculty for the production of pleasing melodies finds abundant room for exercise. The Fairy music is perhaps the only really disappointing thing in the production. The capital opportunity thus offered has not been utilised to the full. We need not particularise all the pretty things which the opera contains. Iolanthe's ballad, "He loves;" the duet between Strephon and Phyllis, "If we're weak enough to tarry;" the Fairy Queen's song, "Oh, foolish fay;" the duet between Leila and Celia, "In vain to us you plead," are all in various ways charming. The whole of the finale to the first act is admirable, and the instrumentation to the Lord Chancellor's patter song is in Sullivan's very best form. The performance itself was by no means perfect. The humour as well as the beauty of such a production is of that subtle, delicate sort which requires the most refined handling. We are putting the matter very mildly when we say that there is a good deal of room for improvement both amongst the principals and in the orchestra. Mr. Frank Thornton is amusing as the Lord Chancellor and has the invaluable art of speaking his words distinctly. Miss Fanny Harrison is an impressive Fairy Queen, and Mr. G. W. Marler was very funny as Private Willis. The Earl of Mountararat was capitally rendered by Mr. Walter Greyling. Miss Beatrice Young played Iolanthe, Miss McAlpine Phyllis, and Mr. Federici Strephon. The two scenes in which the action of the play takes place were exceptionally effective. [*Manchester Evening News*, 27 Feb. 1883]

THEATRE ROYAL.  
"IOLANTHE."

The Theatre Royal was well filled on Monday night to welcome the first production in the provinces of the new opera which is now being performed at the Savoy Theatre in London. "Iolanthe; or, the Peer and the Peri," is the latest result of that happy combination of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan which has so strikingly

hit the taste of the English-speaking world during the last few years. "Pinafore," "Pirates," and "Patience," have all been prodigiously successful. Mr. Gilbert supplies a framework of quaint and extravagant fancy mixed with amusing satire and genial cynicism, but probably his satire and his cynicism are less appreciated than his ingenious and unexpected rhymes, the exceeding neatness of some of his phrases, and his happy working up of commonplace expressions. Mr. Sullivan brings his well-known powers to bear upon Mr. Gilbert's work, and his melodies are at once caught up and become public property. It may be said by severe critics that Mr. Sullivan's facility and certainty of success occasionally lead him into trivialities that are unworthy of the good work that he has previously done as a composer. Mr. Sullivan may point triumphantly to the fact that millions of people are familiar with the airs from these operas who have never so much as heard of the "Tempest" music. He might also boast that they make the best possible dance music and have been a godsend to the military bands of this country. Nor are we disposed to deny that they deserve their success, for some of the melodies are of great beauty, and all are easy of comprehension. The composer's individuality is never altogether absent, though he has partially effaced himself in favour of his coadjutor, whose words often seem to supply the inspiration. And of "Iolanthe" we may say that it is very much what might have been expected from the authors of its predecessors. There are no new musical effects, there is no straining for a new departure, but we have an opera built on the lines that have pleased before, and which are therefore likely to please again. Instead of a First Lord or a Major General we find: the Lord Chancellor in all his glory, supported by a chorus of Peers, who take the place of the gallant Dragoons in "Patience." Then, of course, there must be a chorus of ladies, and here, by an innovation, we find no mere mortals, "sisters and cousins and aunts," but fairies, supernatural beings with wings, the traditional fairies of fairy tale. No less extraordinary beings would suffice to match an hereditary House of Lords.. Then, of course, there must be Phyllis and Strephon, a pair of lovers to sing love songs, the former being a ward in Chancery, and the latter being the son of Iolanthe the fairy, by a mortal father. The plot of the play is simple. Strephon and Phyllis are to be married, but the unfortunate shepherd is detected embracing his mother, who, being a fairy, looks, of course, not more than seventeen years old. On this the marriage is broken off by the Lord Chancellor, and Phyllis agrees to marry either Lord Mountararat or Lord Tolloller, "she 'doesn't care which." But the fairies come to the rescue of their friend Strephon, and send him to Parliament, where he is irresistible and passes his bills for the annoyance of the Peers. However, Iolanthe reveals that the Lord Chancellor is Strephon's father. So all ends happily, the fairies and the noble lords pairing off in the orthodox manner. It is easy to see that there is scope for fun in all this extravagance. The extravagance is sometimes more prominent than the fun, but those who were in a humour to laugh had several chances of doing so. The appearance of the Peers in their gorgeous robes and coronets was in itself exceedingly grotesque, and they were not more out of place in the Arcadian landscape in the first act than were the fairies in Palace Yard, Westminster, in the second act. The performance went on Monday night with tolerable smoothness, though the band was by no means all that could be desired.

It is, perhaps, rash to express a definite opinion on a first hearing; but we are not inclined to believe that the music of "Iolanthe" will make as much impression as that of "Patience." There seems but little freshness, and one perhaps should not be surprised that a certain repetition of the old situations should have caused some falling away of inspiration. Nevertheless, "Iolanthe" is well worth seeing, and even if it is not

Gilbert and Sullivan's best work, we recommend our readers to go and form their own opinion on this point. [*Manchester Times*, 3 Mar. 1883]

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Captain R. Bainbridge.—The production of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest operatic success, *Iolanthe*, has naturally attracted very large audiences to this house during the past week. The work has had an enthusiastic reception. Mr. Frank Thornton is an excellent exponent of the part of the Lord Chancellor, singing his lines in a rapid and yet perfectly articulate manner, and, we venture to think, giving as satisfactory a rendering of the rôle as could be desired. Mr. F. Federici both sings and acts excellently in the part of Strephon, whilst Mr. G. W. Marler as Private Willis, Mr. Walter Greyling as the Earl of Mountarat, and Mr. L. Cadwaladr as the Earl of Tolloller are all fairly satisfactory in their respective characters. Miss Beatrix Young as Iolanthe and Miss Fanny Harrison as the Queen of the Fairies are excellent representatives of the rôles intrusted to them. The piece is excellently put upon the stage, both the Arcadian Landscape of the first act, and the Westminster Palace-yard of the second, being magnificent specimens of stage-mounting. The costumes are very chaste and pretty, and altogether the production is exceedingly satisfactory. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, March 3, 1883; Issue 2319.]

### 12 – 24 Mar. Liverpool

#### PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.

With the exception, perhaps, of MM. Erckman and Chatrian, whose stories of France are models of construction and incident, there is no modern instance of success in collaboration equal to that from which has sprung the admirable series of works which began with "Trial by Jury," and of which the latest is "Iolanthe." Between these in order of date occurred "The-Sorcerer," "H.M.S. Pinafore," "The Prates of Penzance," and "Patience," each full of satirical purpose strengthened by music charged with a keen comic spirit. Of the group just enumerated, "The Sorcerer" is the best in literary and musical design, and there need be little hesitation in conceding the next position to an "Iolanthe," which, thanks to the watchful enterprise of Mr. Frank Emery, was introduced to a Liverpool audience at the Prince of Wales Theatre last night. It is impossible to class these works of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan with any particular school, for they possess few or none of the characteristics which separate Auber from Lecocq, and Lecocq from Offenbach. Strikingly original in conception, and similarly remarkable for the individuality which distinguishes their execution, they cannot be imitated with any degree of fidelity. When Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan cease to write for the stage, the series of pieces which have delighted and continue to delight the people of England and America will come to an end; but, happily, their agreeable literary flavour, bright music, and general purity of tone will sustain them for many a day. "Iolanthe" exhibits Mr. Gilbert in his most whimsical vein, and the commingling of mortals and immortals would create confusion were the movements of the peers, the peris, the Lord Chancellor, the guardsman, and the shepherd and the shepherdess who unfold the fairy-legal story, not directed by a hand which is nothing if not orderly. It is evident that Mr. Gilbert has a very low opinion of the legislative capacity of the gentlemen who constitute the Second Estate of the Realm, for in "Iolanthe" he assails them with many a sharply-pointed sarcasm. "Iolanthe" is less significant than the alternative title of the piece, which is the "Peer and the Peri," but the name, resembling one of those which, based on Greek originals, were common in France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is very pretty and attractive; hence, probably, Mr. Gilbert's choice. The most clearly defined character

in "Iolanthe" is the *Lord Chancellor*, whose judicial gravity is admirably sustained by Mr. Frank Thornton; in fact, this and the *Earl of Mount Ararat* [sic] (Mr. Walter Greyling) are played with greater distinction than any of the other parts in the piece. Miss Ethel McAlpine, who has had considerable experience in the portrayal of Gilbertian heroines, is excellent, both vocally and histrionically, as *Phyllis*; Miss Fanny Harrison forcibly asserts the dignity of the *Fairy Queen* in speech and song; and Mr. G. Marler illustrates the British soldier on sentry duty with becoming stolidity, and sings his solitary song with appreciation of its quaint humour. As "Iolanthe," Miss Beatrice Young is overweighted, and the song in which the Peri plaintively appeals to the susceptibilities of her mortal husband, the *Lord Chancellor*, is deprived of much of its beauty. Mr. L. Cadwaladr, who has a tenor voice powerful within a limited range and fairly under control, offers an acceptable impersonation of *Mount Ararat's* friend *Tollollor*. With singular lack of judgment, Mr. F. Federici shows that he is too conscious of the importance of the place he holds in the piece as *Strephon*. The three more prominent fairies, *Leila*, *Celia*, and *Fleta*, are prettily rendered by Miss Butler, Miss Duggan, and Miss Carstairs. The music of "Iolanthe" is built on the lines with which Dr. Sullivan has made us familiar. In it are conspicuous the same sense of humour and the same ingenuity of construction. Both in vocal and instrumental writing his workmanship is invariably that of a master, and it would not be an easy matter to discover a loose joint in the musical structure of the latest work the honour of whose production he shares with Mr. Gilbert. The chorus are a numerous and well-trained body, and the resident orchestra of the theatre justify their reputation by their treatment of Dr. Sullivan's instrumentation, though their numbers are not sufficient to obtain all the fine effects he has devised in the score. Mr. Ralph Horner conducts. It should be added that the piece is put on the stage with every attention to scenic detail, and that the large audience last night received "Iolanthe" with the utmost favour. [*Liverpool Mercury*, 13 Mar 1883]

**26 Mar. – 7 Apr. Dublin**

#### THE GAIETY THEATRE

Last evening "Iolanthe," the latest comic opera by Sullivan and Gilbert was produced at the Gaiety Theatre before a densely crowded audience. It need hardly be added that the occasion was regarded with very considerable interest. There is no place where the merits of musicians and authors have found more ready recognition than in Dublin, and the observation has a peculiar bearing upon the composers of the work under notice, for their productions have here found an intelligent and encouraging appreciation that did much to establish their world wide fame. Since the days of Auber and Scribe there has been no such wonderful combination as that of Sullivan and Gilbert, and the secret of their success is to be found mainly in the extraordinary sympathy that appears to have existed between the two. The author of the "Bab Ballads," "Pygmalion," and "The Palace of Truth" struck a vein of humour that had hitherto been underdeveloped, if not altogether untouched, and when such a man as Sullivan lent his powers to form the materials that have since been worked up with such extraordinary success, the result seemed almost a foregone conclusion. They both possessed in their respective spheres gifts that lay in precisely the same direction. Few writers of our day have so effectively and so humorously caricatured personages and institutions as Mr. Gilbert, and no modern composer possesses in the same degree the versatility and the power of musical expression of Mr. Sullivan. The strange whimsical imagination of the literary partner has found a musical counterpart — one who reproduces the same ideas through a different medium, and hence the

wonderful and fascinating effect of everything they have jointly composed. It is doubtful if they are ever likely to produce anything that will quite equal the popularity of "Pinafore," though at the same time, the "Pirates of Penzance," the "Sorcerer," and "Patience" contain much that has won universal acceptance and admiration. That there is a certain family likeness in all their works is an undoubted fact. The "patter song" of one is to be found slightly disguised, but still recognisable in the other, and frequent parallels, musical and verbal, are to be discovered in each succeeding effort. Although this applies undoubtedly to "Iolanthe"—although the airs and words now and then suggest old familiar friends, there is sufficient novelty in the work to give it an interest peculiarly its own. It would be a misnomer to describe the incidents that make up the story of "Iolanthe" as a plot. As in the case of "Patience" and "The Sorcerer," the humour of the thing turns to a very large extent upon the absolute absurdity of the situations, and the keynote struck in "Trial by Jury" has been followed up with striking effect in this most amusing production. It is not easy to give intelligibly and satisfactorily and within reasonable limits a notion of the "argument." In the first scene we are presented with an Arcadian landscape, through which a river flows; fairies are found bewailing the absence of Iolanthe, who arises from the water, clad in leaves, and who, being pardoned, resumes the appearance and status of a fairy. When asked why she had withdrawn to the river, she explains that it was to be near her son Strephon, an Arcadian shepherd, who is described as a fairy down to the waist, but whose legs are mortal. He enters playing a clarionet [sic], and states that he is to be married to Phyllis, who combines the double attractions of an Arcadian and a Ward in Chancery. The entry of Phyllis leads to a love duet, in which the pair vow eternal constancy. A military march here introduces a procession of Peers, in their robes of state, followed by the Lord Chancellor and train bearers. This is one of the most amusing scenes, and gave rise to unbounded merriment. The Lord Chancellor is followed by coroneted Peers, whose pompous gestures, attitudes, and exaggerated looks and stilted language offer a successful satire upon the pretentious demeanour of so many of the aristocracy. The Lord Chancellor seizes the first opportunity of singing a characteristic song in praise of law, and alluding to the difficulties of his office as the guardian of pretty young Wards in Chancery, as none are under [sic] the age of 21 — a pleasant position for a "highly susceptible Chancellor." In this scene his lordship sings a most amusing song with the refrain, "Said I to myself, said I." Strephon seeks counsel with Iolanthe, and is suddenly confronted by Phyllis, who, not knowing their relationship, grows desperately jealous, rejects her lover, and signifies her determination to marry one of the Peers. The Queen of the Fairies makes herself known to the Lord Chancellor, and directs Strephon to enter Parliament. He explains that he is a Tory of the most determined description, but his legs are a "couple of confounded Radicals, and on a division they would be sure to take him into the wrong lobby." The Lord Chancellor points out that the feelings of one in his position, who is in love with a ward of court, are not to be envied, and he adds—"Can he marry his own ward without his own consent? And if he marries his own ward without his own consent, can he commit himself for contempt of his own court? And if he commit himself for contempt of his own court, can he appear by counsel before himself, to move for arrest of his own judgement?—Ah, my lords, it is indeed painful to have to sit upon a woolsack which is stuffed with such thorns as those!" The act winds up with consternation among the Peers and exultation among the fairies. Act 2 introduces us to Palace Yard, Westminster, with Private Willis as sentry, who sings a song touching Members of Parliament. A chorus of fairies and Peers announces that Strephon is now an M.P. and carries every bill he chooses, and one noble lord

complains that the gentle shepherd is playing the very deuce with everything—that tonight he is to move the second reading of a bill to throw the peerage open to competitive examination. There is then a pretty air sung by the Queen with a choral refrain, and a quartet for the Earls, Phyllis and the sentry. Then comes the "patter song"—a trio in the buffo style for the Chancellor and the two Earls. It now appears that the reason Strephon's marriage with Phyllis is prohibited is that death is the penalty for any fairy who marries a mortal; but the Lord Chancellor, good easy man, makes this all right. He is an "old equity draughtsman," and suggests the emendation of the legal document, by which it is made to read that "every fairy shall die who shall *not* marry a mortal." A general and harmonious union follows between fairies and mortals, the Queen marries Private Willis, the Lord Chancellor it seems is married to Iolanthe, and expresses his pleasure at the happy exchange—"a house of peers for a house of peris," and all ends merrily. It is impossible to exaggerate the comical effect produced by the ludicrous mixing up of the fairy element with the Lord Chancellor and the Peers, and the words are full of the oddest combinations of droll absurdities. A good deal of the text taken by itself may seem ridiculous, and perhaps unmeaning enough, but when the object of the work, the keen satire that pervades it and the indescribably comical character of the situations are taken into consideration, no one with the slightest sense of the ludicrous can fail to enjoy it and to recognise its merits. The music is all good. Some of it quaintly suggests the "music of the masters" in some of the burlesque sentimental situations, and a few of the numbers are delightfully descriptive, and have a charm of melody all their own. Many of the concerted passages have a tender grace worthy of more serious associations. The opening chorus for the fairies, "Tripping hither," is very clever, and the choruses for the Peers have a pompous, inflated character, admirably appropriate to the persons who sing them and the words to which they are wedded. The duet for Strephon and Phyllis, "None shall part us," is one of the best pieces in the first act, and the Lord Chancellor's song, "The law is the true embodiment," is irresistibly amusing. The airs for Lord Tolloller and the Earl of Mountararat, with choral refrain, in the same scene, are capitally written, and Lord Tolloller's ballad, "Spurn not the nobly born," is marked by much originality. There is some delightfully fresh and skilful music in the close of the first act, the choral effects being managed with remarkable power. In the second act the Queen of the Fairies sings "Oh, foolish Fay," a very beautiful number, and the chorus, "On fire that glows," is strikingly effective. The quartet for the two lords and Phyllis and Willis, "Though perhaps I may incur your blame," was encored, as was also the trio by the Lord Chancellor and Lords Mountararat and Tolloller. The dance of their lordships in this scene is one of the most amusing incidents of the act. Amongst the most attractive airs in the second act is the duet for Strephon and Phyllis, "If we're weak enough to tarry." The performance throughout was uncommonly good. The company is an excellent one. To Mr. Frank Thornton is due the credit of presenting the most perfect and at the same time the most amusing portrait of the Lord Chancellor—as Gilbert has drawn that eminent personage. His face is a study—a model of judicial earnestness and pompous propriety, and his gestures are singularly in keeping with what we would expect from such a distinguished legal luminary. He gave his songs capitally, and won the chief laurels of the evening. Miss Fanny Harrison was a suitably substantial Phyllis [sic], and Miss Duggan deserves a special word of praise for her singing and acting as Celia, and as Iolanthe Miss Young acted gracefully and sang very well. The Earl of Tolloller found in Mr. Cadwaladr a most excellent representative. He is well known to Dublin audiences. His fine tenor voice has much improved in power and sweetness and he was frequently deservedly

applauded. Mr. Greyling and Mr. Marler, the former as the Earl and the latter as Private Willis, filled their respective parts most capably. The orchestral department was satisfactory, and the opera was put upon the stage, as far as scenery and dresses are concerned, with great elaboration. In conclusion, the production of "Iolanthe" may be described as having been a decided success.

The theatre, during the short recess, has been very tastefully re-decorated. [*Freeman's Journal*, 27 Mar 1883]

### 9 – 21 Apr. Birmingham

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.—Sole Proprietor, Mr. James Rogers.—Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* is being carried over a second week, and has met with unqualified success. Mr. Thornton may be said, so far as Birmingham is concerned, to have raised the character of the Lord Chancellor into one of the most amusing travesties of high personages which the ingenious librettist has conceived. The best proof of the general excellence of the company is the unvaried run of good houses which the performance has attracted, and the only regret felt by the patrons of the house is that it is to terminate at the end of the week. [*Era*, 21 Apr. 1883]

### 23 – 28 Apr. Leeds

#### "IOLANTHE."

Last night Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company presented Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new fairy opera "Iolanthe" for the first time to the people of Leeds in the Grand Theatre; and the large number of persons who witnessed the performance bore ample testimony to the general interest excited by the event. "Iolanthe," which is the latest achievement of the two gentlemen whose co-operation has done so much to alter the character of comic opera in England, is a work of conspicuous merit. Even those who have grown somewhat weary of the sameness to be found in all productions of this class will admit that in the new opera there are nearly all the qualities which are needed to secure a legitimate stage success. The plot, of course, is absurd, for that "goes without saying" in a work written by Mr. Gilbert and set to music by Mr. Sullivan. But the action is rapid and vigorous, the dialogues are bright and witty, full of sparkling comments upon current events and of sharp satires upon the social institutions dearest to the British Philistine; the dresses and scenery are costly and beautiful, and, above all, the music has all the striking qualities which distinguish Mr. Sullivan's compositions. It is full of melody and sweetness, intermingled at times with a little of that Offenbachian smartness which our great English composer thinks it his duty to affect when writing for the stage. We have said that the plot is absurd, and there is no need to occupy space in giving any account of it. Suffice it to say that it deals with a gentleman, Strephon (Mr. F. Federici), who has the inestimable advantage of being the son of a fairy by a mortal father, and who is consequently able at pleasure to summon his mother Iolanthe (Miss Beatrix Young) and the whole force of the fairies to his assistance. This gentleman is the lover of Phyllis (Miss Laura Clement), who has the misfortune to be not only a ward in Chancery, but a damsel so charming that more than a score of Peers are sighing in vain at her feet, the leader of this band of amorous nobles being the Lord Chancellor himself. There is no need to say what good use is made by Mr. Gilbert of such materials as we have here. The contrast between the fairies and the magnificent members of the House of Lords, who appear upon the scene, clad in the gorgeous robes of their order; and the tribulations of a Lord Chancellor who is small and wizened, and who finds it to be his hard lot to dispense on all sides the beautiful



wards, with whom he is much inclined to fall in love on his own account, are made the most of by a writer who revels in impossible materials of this description, and innocent laughter is excited by the piece from the rising of the curtain to its fall. The speeches of two of the noble band of lovers, Lord Mountararat (Mr. Walter Grayling) and Lord Tolloller (Mr. L. Cadwaladr) furnish an admirable specimen of Mr. Gilbert's style at his best. The solemnity with which they confess their respect for "brains," and deplore their own lack of that commodity; the overwhelming courtesy with which each insists upon, killing the other—a duel being apparently inevitable—in order that his friend may be spared the pangs of remorse, and the pathos of their declaration that "hearts as pure and fair may beat in Belgrave-square, as in the lowly air of Seven Dials," are all inimitable. The Lord Chancellor (Mr. Frank Thornton) occupies in *Iolanthe* the position assigned to the First Lord of the Admiralty in *Pinafore*, and to Bunthorne in *Patience*. His duty is to burlesque, in the neatest and brightest fashion, the character he is supposed to represent. In doing this he has to deliver himself, in that curious recitative of which Mr. Grossmith is the acknowledged master, and in which he has no unworthy follower in Mr. Thornton, of a number of drily humorous comments upon his functions and attributes. The part played by the ladies in the piece need not be told. Their chief business is to look picturesque and to sing a number of very charming ballads and songs. In performing this duty, Phyllis, the Queen of the Fairies (Miss Fanny Harrison), and Iolanthe were conspicuous. A word, too, must be said for Private Willis (Mr. George Marler), who, in a voice of funereal depth and solemnity, sings a remarkable song descriptive of his opinions and sentiments as "an intellectual chap." The music, upon the whole, is quite as attractive as that to be found in any of the previous operas of Mr. Sullivan, and some of the airs are certain to become as widely popular as any in *Patience* or *Pinafore*. The whole performance was received with something like enthusiasm last night, whilst general admiration was excited by the singularly beautiful and effective scenery, especially in the second act. [*The Leeds Mercury* (Leeds, England), Tuesday, April 24, 1883; Issue 14053.]

THE GRAND THEATRE.—Lessee, Mr. Wilson Barrett; Acting-Manager Mr. Lee Anderson.—Good audiences have been the rule here during the past week, attracted by the production of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest success, *Iolanthe*. The two scenes, the Arcadian Landscape, by Louis Edouard, and the Palace Yard, Westminster, by Stafford Hall, were most artistic and effective, and elicited the heartiest applause from the audience, while the costly and beautiful dresses and the general appliances were no less warmly commended. We have seldom heard any of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas go better, the quick action and pointed and witty dialogue being keenly relished, while the melodious and sweet music received ample justice at the hands of the company, who, besides possessing vocal abilities of a high order, entered with great spirit into the comical situations. Mr. Frank Thornton was drily humorous as, and made a capital Lord Chancellor; and Mr. F. Federici, vocally and otherwise was excellent as Strephon. Mr. Walter Grayling and Mr. L. Cadwaladr were capital as Lords Mountararat and Tolloller. Mr. George Marler, well known in Leeds, was the Private Willis and sang his music effectively. Miss Laura Clement has a voice exactly suited to the music of the part of Phyllis and Miss Beatrix Young as Iolanthe acted with discretion and sang the music intrusted to her with care and finish, an example successfully followed by Miss Fanny Harrison as the Queen of the Fairies. Misses Kate Forster, M. Duggan, and Evelyn Carstairs, all trained vocalists, in the parts of Lela, Celia, and Fleta, completed the cast. The chorus was both numerous and efficient, and the large and effective band of the theatre, most admirably conducted by Mr. Ralph Horner, got through their important share of the

opera with flying colours, and were much applauded for their performance of the overture. The opera was preceded by Mr. George Grossmith's musical sketch of *Cups and Saucers*, in which Misses M. Duggan and Vincent and Mr. E. Vernon appeared. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, April 28, 1883; Issue 2327.]

### 30 Apr. – 5 May. Hull

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE HULL THEATRE ROYAL.

The fairy opera of "Iolanthe," which is being played this week at the Hull Theatre Royal, having achieved throughout the moral victory of large attendances and general well-speaking, it would be an ungenial task, if considered a necessary one, to view it from a lower plane of appreciation. But, in truth, the character of the libretto and of the music is one which only a hypochondriac could altogether cavil at. To say that the opera is sparkling is to use a much hackneyed term, which in this instance does not express enough. From the beginning till the fall of the curtain the stage is literally a circle of glancing light. It takes captive the senses at once, and even those most disposed to be critical feel inclined to waive all indulgence of it in presence of so much scenic richness and movement. The conception is certainly a fanciful one, and the way in which mortal jostles with immortal recalls by a mental juxtaposition of ideas the brilliance of life and freshness of colour which moves over the imaginary stage of the Arthurian legends, though here all further comparison ends. Iolanthe, a fairy, marries a mortal, who subsequently becomes Lord Chancellor, and there is issue Strephon, a fairy above the waist and human below it. He is an Arcadian shepherd, in love with Phyllis, a shepherdess, but a ward in Chancery, and also beloved of the Lord Chancellor, and peers of the realm. Opposition arises to the suit of Strephon, and ultimately his mother induces the Queen and her band of fairies to have the youth appointed to the House of Lords [sic], where he has the power to control all the votes. Meantime Phyllis is jealous of Iolanthe, whom she is not aware is a fairy, and mother to Strephon, and who looks seventeen while her son is twenty-five, and the match is broken off. Ultimately all is made to end happily, with the peers and others taking part in the piece being translated into fairies. This outline gives no indication of the consummate drollery of some of the scenes, and there is a particularly whimsical portion given by the Lord Chancellor, before recognising Iolanthe, who is condemned to sequestration at the bottom of a lake by the indignant Queen of the Fairies, for allying herself to a mortal. Space will not permit us to enter into further particulars, but it may be added in a general way that all the parts were excellently taken, the singing being attractive and pleasing in an unusual degree, and the acting just as good. The opera is preceded by a satirical musical sketch, "Cups and Saucers." [*The Hull Packet and East Riding Times* (Hull, England), Friday, May 4, 1883; Issue 5142.]

#### CRICKET

##### HULL TOWN v. "IOLANTHE" OPERA COMPANY.

A match between the Hull Town Club and an eleven from the "Iolanthe" Company was played yesterday afternoon on the Argyle-street ground, and resulted in an easy victory for the home team. The following are the scores:—

#### "IOLANTHE"

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| C. Cubitt ht wkt b Moon          | 2  |
| H. Fountain b Hearfield          | 2  |
| C Ryley b Moon                   | 4  |
| J. A. Punnett c Hearfield b Moon | 4  |
| G. F. Marler not out             | 14 |
| E. Faulkner b Hearfield          | 0  |

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| G. Coventry b Moon         | 6  |
| L. Cadwaladr c and b Moon  | 0  |
| J. Wilbraham b Moon        | 0  |
| E. Vernon c Bowes b Cooper | 6  |
| F. Leon c and b Hearsfield | 0  |
| Extras                     | 4  |
| Total                      | 46 |

#### HULL TOWN

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| — Cooper c Vernon b Punnett        | 0  |
| — Ibiley b Ryley                   | 7  |
| C. Eormstidt c Coventry b Punnett  | 5  |
| P. Moon b Punnett                  | 15 |
| D. Hearfiled b Cubitt              | 17 |
| C. B. Summers c Punnett b Fountain | 11 |
| J. C. Josh b Faulkner              | 16 |
| — Bowes not out                    | 19 |
| Extras                             | 9  |
| Total                              | 99 |

Three wickets to fall.

[*The Hull Packet*, 4 May 1883]

#### 7 – 19 May. Sheffield

##### "IOLANTHE" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

The latest of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's productions in the way of comedy opera was heard in Sheffield last for the first time, when it was performed at the Theatre Royal one of the companies organised for the purpose by Mr. D'Oyly Carte. "Iolanthe" was produced originally at the London Savoy Theatre, in November last, and judging from the interest manifested in the work in the metropolis, its success there at least promises to be quite as marked as that of "Pinafore" or "Patience." In the provinces too the opera has been invariably received most heartily, and so far Mr. D'Oyly Carte has had no reason to regret his venture. The audience—an exceedingly numerous one—last night gave no cause to make Sheffield an exception to the rule, and no town has given the new work a better or more cordial welcome. The libretto of the opera is as funny and fanciful as anything Mr. Gilbert has written. Having resolved upon a band of fairies it became the author's care to associate with them a set of mortals as little incongruous as possible. He, therefore, hit the peers of England and the connection of those robed and coronetted personages with the aerial denizens of woods and streams is the basis upon which the structure is erected. We see the growth of the idea when in the first act the peers hold an informal session by "daisy bank and babbling brook," and when in the second the fairies gambol in Old Palace Yard, under the eyes of Private Willis, of the Grenadiers. This inversion of habit has its complement, not so much when the peers lay down their coronets at the feet of Phyllis, the shepherdess, as when they each and all take a fairy to wife, and suddenly developing wings, become fairies themselves. Moreover, the Lord Chancellor has already married a fairy, Iolanthe, and it is their son Strephon, who is only down to the waist that carries off Phyllis against his own father and the entire Lords. Still further developing the odd idea, Mr. Gilbert places the peers under a spell, condemning them to become the slaves of Strephon, M.P. Upon such incongruities the play rests; the details are in keeping. The Lords enter the Arcadian meadow, headed by heralds; the Chancellor and two peers dance in the moonlit Old Palace

Yard; Phyllis' noble suitors beseech her not to "treat with virtuous scorn the well connected," since "high rank involves no shame;" and the most exalted of her lovers puzzles his legal mind with doubts whether a Chancellor can obtain his own consent to marry his own ward, and if he marry his own ward without his own consent, whether can commit himself for contempt his own court. Mr. Gilbert mingles something of grave satire with his grotesque treatment of the aristocrats, those "paragons of legislation, pillars of the British nation;" they are the one British institution "not susceptible any improvement." Though the satire is smart it takes second place to the quaint conceits in prose and verse that attend the development of the plot. The first act, which may be said to the better of the two, is a procession of laughter moving oddities. Here the Fairy Queen—one of the massive kind—asks "who taught to dive into a dewdrop—to nestle in a nutshell—to gambol upon gossamer," thinking of Iolanthe, then doing penal servitude "on her head" and at the bottom of the river for marrying a mortal. Then Strephon speaks of trying to "placate" the Lord Chancellor by songs of arcade sung in court with flageolet accompaniment, and objects to going into Parliament because his fairy half being Conservative, and his mortal legs Radical, a majority of two to one would take him into the wrong lobby. Mr. Sullivan's part of the work displays an acute sense of the humour of the librettist, and for Iolanthe he has written music in all respects equal to anything he has before composed during his alliance with Mr. Gilbert, though the opera contains nothing that can carried away by the ordinary hearer and hummed, as are the airs from "Pinafore" and "Patience." It is into the choral and instrumental parts that the composer has thrown his entire strength, and the result is worthy of the scholarly and popular writer. The choruses for the peers are particularly good, and the *finale* to the first act strikingly clever and effective. The concerted music is exceedingly beautiful, and in the quartette for the principal male voices in the second act the effect most charming. The Lord Chancellor is played by Mr. Frank Thornton, and a more humorous rendering of the part it would be difficult to conceive. His singing of the "nightmare" song was clever in the extreme, and called forth a hearty encore. Mr. George Marler, who will be remembered as the sergeant of police in "The Pirates of Penzance," was highly successful as Private Willis, and sang the sentry's song in an irresistible manner. Mr. F. Federici as Strephon played ably, and Messrs. W. Grayling and L. Cadwaladr represented the Earls of Tolloller and Mountararat capitally, both singing with taste and skill. The music assigned to Phyllis was charmingly sung by Miss Laura Clement, and a similar compliment may be paid to Miss Beatrix Young, who appeared as Iolanthe; her ballad in the last act "He loves" was very tastefully sung. As the stalwart Fairy Queen, Miss Fanny Harrison acted and sang well. There are a host of other characters in the opera, all of them efficiently sustained. The opera is splendidly mounted upon the stage, the dresses of the peers are superb, and when the entire "crowd" of peers and fairies is gathered the spectacle is highly effective. [*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 8 May 1883]

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

The latest product of that happy combination between Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Dr. (presently Sir Arthur) Sullivan which has given to modern playgoers the tuneful melodies and smart *libretti* of "Trial by Jury," "Sorcerer," "Pinafore," "Pirates," and "Patience," is a sixth comic opera of the same school called "Iolanthe, or the Peers and the Peris," [*sic*] which was produced in Sheffield for the first time last night at the Theatre Royal. Mr. Gilbert has not inaptly been termed the "poet of paradoxes and incongruities," and in "Iolanthe" he has given us a story, probably more wildly incongruous and more mirth provokingly paradoxical than any of his previous efforts

in this direction, or even in "Bab Ballads" themselves. His heroine Phyllis, is a shepherdess in Arcadia, and an orphan, under the guardianship of the Lord Chancellor. Strephon, the son of this high legal dignitary, who, when a Chancery barrister, wedded a fairy, Iolanthe, is partly immortal and partly human, but he loves Phyllis with an undivided love. They would marry, but the Lord Chancellor, (who is ignorant of the fact that Strephon is his son), being smitten with the charms of Phyllis himself, withholds his consent. The whole House of Peers also is at her feet, but she remains true to the Arcadian shepherd. He, fearful of the punishment consequent upon marrying a ward of Court without the permission of the Lord Chancellor, appeals for help to his mother, Iolanthe, who has been punished by the Fairy Queen for marrying a mortal by being condemned to pass 25 years of her life standing on her head at the bottom of a stream, but is graciously pardoned at the commencement of the opera. Iolanthe secures for her son the help of the fairies, by whose influence he is returned to Parliament for a fairy borough, and (thanks to their spells) succeeds in getting passed a number of revolutionary measures, which have the effect of virtually abolishing the House of Lords. Unfortunately for Strephon, his mother, by reason of her fairy origin, grows no older in appearance, with the result that although he is aged 25, his mother retains the juvenility of 17. She is fond of her son, and upon the pair, mother and son, being discovered by Phyllis in an affectionate situation, the shepherdess will not believe that Iolanthe is her lover's mother, but regards her as a rival and dismisses him. Two peers become engaged to her, and are beseeching her to make her choice between them, when Iolanthe reveals herself to the Lord Chancellor as his wife. Phyllis becomes satisfied that Iolanthe is really the mother of Strephon, and the shepherd and shepherdess are reunited. The peers consent to be immortalised, and wings sprouting from their shoulders betoken their transformation to fairies, in which capacity they become the husbands of the Peris, who throughout the action of the opera have formed the body guard of the fairy Queen. This lady, who, like the Lady Jane of "Patience," is "massive," finds a congenial partner in the person of a Grenadier Guardsman, Private Willis, and Mr. Gilbert's story is finished. In the limited space at our disposal we have been able to give but a base and prosaic outline of the piece. It is a most whimsical and absurdly funny idea, full of smart things and laughter, raising contrasts and comparisons. It is like nothing else the librettist has ever written, and can scarcely fail to please. The music will probably be admitted to be the best Dr. Sullivan has scored to illustrate Mr. Gilbert's words. It is not so "catching" as "Bunthorne's Bride," and contains fewer numbers standing out conspicuously from the rest; nor is it so distinctive as "Pirates," but from beginning to end it is tuneful, charming, and masterly. In "Iolanthe" the composer has shown to what an extent he possesses the rare gift of expressing wit in music. The fairy strains with which the opera commences are beautifully sweet, and Strephon's opening song is a light and fantastic melody which will be popular. A duet between the Arcadian shepherd and shepherdess is another choice "bit;" Lord Tolloller's song, "Spurn not the nobly born," is striking, and the *finale* to the first act is brimful of melody. The Lord Chancellor has several songs of the "patter" order, which are excellently done, and the air, "Young Strephon is the King of lout," [*sic*] in gallop time, is a very taking number. To the Fairy Queen some good music is allotted, and Lord Mountarat sings a very effective song of the "patriotic" kind, beginning "When Britain really ruled the waves." As a spectacle Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest effort is far and away superior to anything that has preceded it. The gossamer garments of the fairies are designed in exquisite taste, and when the members of the House of Lords make their appearance, the stage is one mass of glowing colour and metallic glitter, Their

lordships have evidently come straight from the Royal presence on some superlatively grand occasion. They are fully robed, and it is said of their costumes that they are "correct to a ribbon." There are Knights of the Garter, of the Bath, of SS. Michael and George, of the Thistle, of St. Patrick, and of the Star of India, wearing their orders and "collars." The Lord Chancellor has got his full "war paint" on, and the procession of peers is preceded by Beefeaters and heralds in costumes most gloriously gorgeous. "Iolanthe" is in two acts. The first set representing a scene in Arcadia, with a rustic bridge crossing a stream on which float water lilies, is a very effective stage picture. The second set shows Palace yard, Westminster, with the clock tower and legislative chambers illuminated, the electric light gleaming from the top of the tower betokening that the House is not yet up." This, also, is very well put on, and the way the piece is mounted reflects no little credit upon Mr. Keith and the management of the Theatre Royal. The dances, by Mr. J. D'Auban, are well arranged, and the orchestration is excellent, and the whole « reduction is most creditable and satisfactory. Last night, notwithstanding the miserable weather which prevailed, there was a full "house," which showed marked appreciation of the efforts of the company. Mr. Frank Thornton, the Lord Chancellor, enunciated his "lines" with commendable clearness, and entered fully into the grotesque humour of an arduous part. As Earl of Tolloller and the Earl of Mountararat Mr. L. Cadwaladr and Mr. Walter Greyling left nothing to be desired. The latter has a rich baritone voice, which was used with fine effect in the patriotic song before referred to, and Mr. Greyling's tenor organ [*sic*] was fully equal to the music demanded of it. Mr. F. Frederici [*sic*] was a thoroughly capable Strephon, singing, dancing, and acting excellently, and what Mr. Geo. Marler (of "Pirates" memory) was called upon to do in the role of Private Willis he performed extremely well. Miss Laura Clement proved a charming Phyllis, both histrionically and vocally, but she was not the "only joy" of the piece, for Miss Beatrice Young's impersonation of "Iolanthe" was thoroughly artistic, painstaking, and pleasing. Miss Fanny Harrison, a very substantial fairy, queened it grandly; and Miss Kate Forster, Miss M. Duggan, and Miss Evelyn Carstaires, three of the leading immortals, were cordially received. The principals were all "called" at the close of the first act, and the first performance of "Iolanthe" in this town was a marked success. [*Sheffield Independent*, 8 May 1883]

#### PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS

THE THEATRE ROYAL.—During last week Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new comic opera has attracted crowded and delighted audiences to the Theatre Royal, the "fashionable" parts of the "house" being particularly well patronised. Last night the lower priced divisions of the Theatre were again crowded, but Whit-Monday is never a "dress circle" night, and that part of the auditorium, together with the boxes, might have been better filled. After our lengthy criticism of "Iolanthe" last week it is unnecessary to do more than restate our previously expressed opinion that the opera is worthy of the reputation of librettist and composer alike. The "book" is one of Mr. Gilbert's most extravagant conceptions, and is brimful of paradoxical fun, comical situations, and humorous absurdities. The music is charming, but cannot be thoroughly appreciated at the first hearing. It is probably the best work Dr. Sullivan has done in this particular line since he composed the "Sorcerer," and though the airs, which are capable of being "picked up" and hummed afterwards are few, a vein of rich melody runs through the opera which cannot fail to be appreciated. As a stage spectacle "Iolanthe" is remarkably fine. More gorgeous dresses are rarely seen on any stage than those of the peers of the realm when they walk into fairy land, apparently straight from the Royal presence on "collar day," and at the *finale* of each of the two

acts the boards are occupied by one mass of glitter and colour. The company now at the Theatre Royal is in every respect capable of most adequately presenting the opera, which will be performed until the end of the current week, and return to Sheffield at the close of the summer season. [*Sheffield Independent*, 15 May 1883]

THEATRE ROYAL—Lessee, Mr. E Romaine Callender. This week Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte's company is appearing in Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new fairy opera *Iolanthe*. Many of the artists have become familiar to Sheffield audiences through their appearance here in *Pinafore*, *The Pirates*, &c., notably Mr. Geo. Marler, Private Willis; Mr. F. Federici, Strephon; &c. The opera is mounted in admirable style, and is attracting large audiences, who appear to be delighted with the quaint fancifulness of Mr. Gilbert's libretto and the undoubted beauty of the music. The dresses too are magnificent, and the lessee (Mr. Callender) is to be heartily congratulated on the manner in which he has done his part towards ensuring the success of the visit. Miss Beatrix Young as Iolanthe, Miss Laura Clement as Phyllis, and Miss Fanny Harrison as the Fairy Queen, are all admirably suited for their respective parts, and Mr. Frank Thornton is winning golden opinions for his picture of the Lord Chancellor. The opera is preceded each evening by *Cups and Saucers*. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, May 12, 1883; Issue 2329.]

### 21 – 26 May. Bradford

THE THEATRE ROYAL.—The long announced visit of "Iolanthe" takes place this week, and the result must be most gratifying to Mrs. Rice. It is a long time since such good houses were witnessed. The potency of the power of the united genius of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan seems to be unabated. The place of merit of "Iolanthe" is, we think, higher than the "Pirates of Penzance," though scarcely so high as "Patience." The music is most taking and pleasant, and the dialogue and songs have the true Gilbertian ring. Mr. Frank Thornton, as the highly susceptible Chancellor, is a capital exponent of the part. His rendering of the songs allotted to him brought down the house—"Said I to myself, said I," and the "Nightmare song" being immensely successful. Miss Beatrix Young is a capable Iolanthe, and Miss Laura Clement looks the part of Phyllis, the Arcadian shepherdess to perfection. Miss Fanny Harrison is a most substantial Queen of Fairies, and Mr. George Marler is equally so as Private Willis. The two scenes in the piece—and Arcadian landscape and Palace-yard, Westminster—are splendid sets. They are the work of Mr. Charles Brew. Each evening "Iolanthe" is preceded by Mr. George Grossmith's satirical musical three part sketch, "Cups and Saucers," which has evoked roars of laughter. During "Iolanthe's" stay in Bradford the composer of its bright music, and of much other bright music, will have become Sir Arthur Sullivan, that honour having been bestowed on him by Her Majesty the Queen on Tuesday last. [*Leeds Times*, 26 May 1883]

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Mrs C. Rice.—*Iolanthe* was performed for the first time here on Monday evening last to a crowded and most enthusiastic audience. The male chorus is one of the best that has ever visited the town, and the scenery and costumes are indeed superb. Miss Laura Clement as Phyllis sings artistically, and her acting is easy and natural Miss Fanny Harrison is undoubtedly great as the Queen of the Fairies; the little Miss B. Young has to do as Iolanthe is well done; Mr. Frank Thornton's rendering of the Lord Chancellor is quaint in the extreme, eliciting roars of laughter; Mr. L. Cadwaladr, who has a splendid tenor voice, exhibits a fine appreciation of the humorous as the Earl Tolloller; Mr. Walter Greyling plays Mountararat capitally; Mr. F. Federici is too vigorous as Strephon, but he has a fine

voice, and can use it; and as Private Willis Mr. George Marler is irresistibly funny. The houses are crowded nightly, and the encores are numerous. [*Era*, 26 May 1883]

#### 28 May – 2 Jun. Leicester

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE.—Sole Lessee and Manager, Mr. Elliot Galer.—*Iolanthe* made a welcome first appearance here on Monday evening last, and, as Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company is one of all round excellence, the performance was a delightful one, Mr. Frank Thornton making a great hit as the very droll Lord Chancellor. Mr. Walter Greyling and Mr. L. Cadwaladr were most excellent as the Earls Mountararat and Tolloller. Mr. George Marler played Private Willis most effectively, and Mr. F. Federici was most successful vocally and artistically as Strephon. As Queen of the Fairies Miss Fanny Harrison sang well, as did Misses Duggan and Forster in the parts of Alice [*sic*] and Lilia [*sic*]. Miss Beatrix Young was a graceful *Iolanthe*, and received an encore for her song in the second act. Miss Laura Clement was the charming Phyllis, singing with all her well known artistic grace and execution. The chorus is one of the best heard here for a long time past. The sets were good, the first being a picture most exquisitely painted by Mr. Charles Frampton. The band, as usual, was perfection, under the *baton* of Mr. Ralph Horner. The house now closes for a long summer vacation. [*Era*, 2 Jun. 1883]

#### 4 – 9 Jun. Bristol

##### GILBERT AND SULLIVAN'S "IOLANTHE" AT THE NEW THEATRE ROYAL.

Messrs. Chute seem determined that their patrons shall have no ground of complaint for lack of variety, for scarcely have they had time to dry their eyes after weeping over the hapless fates of the young Veronese lovers, Romeo and Juliet, than they find themselves called upon to indulge in boisterous laughter at the humour and absurdities of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera, "*Iolanthe*." The latest triumph of the authors of the "*Pinafore*," the "*Pirates of Penzance*," and "*Patience*," was introduced to Bristol playgoers last night, and will be repeated during the remaining evenings of the week and at a day performance on Saturday. Opinions may differ, and indeed we know do differ, respecting the relative merits of the four operas named, some according the palm to one and some to another. For ourselves we think there are respects in which "*Iolanthe*," musically considered, hardly reaches the mark of the "*Pirates*" or "*Patience*," There are, however, others in which, as an opera, it boasts advantages over its predecessors. Its association with fairy lore, and its strange blending of the material with the ethereal, has afforded too free scope for the flow of Mr. Gilbert's whimsical fancy, whilst the story admits in the arrangement of its scenes of picturesque situations and effective display. There can be no question, we think, with any one conversant with the two popular writers' previous works of "*Iolanthe*'s" paternity. We note the originality and comic conceits and the witty and sparkling dialogue of Mr. Gilbert in the libretto, whilst the music boasts the flow of melody, the well-attuned harmonies, and quite as much as either the distinctive mastery of orchestral combination which are to be noted oven in the lightest of Mr. Sullivan's compositions. Some of the numbers are remindful of others we have met with in Mr. Sullivan's writings, just as the lines upon which the plot is shaped and the characters by which it is developed recall memories of Mr. Gilbert. We are unaware, however, of any law against men of genius gathering ideas from themselves, and, despite all this, "*Iolanthe*" is an amusing, mirthful, and musically charming work, and well deserves the popularity it has won. Of course Mr. Gilbert has not forgotten to have a few hits at matters political, and many of the topics of the day are referred to in the dialogue. His



satire, however, is always neat and good-tempered, so that "it breathes no offence." The plot of the opera may be thus briefly sketched. Twenty-five years before the action commences, Iolanthe, the fairy from whom the piece derives its title, has sinned against the laws of Fairyland by marrying a mortal. The punishment for this is death, but the Queen has commuted her sentence to one of penal servitude for life. The marriage of the fairy has resulted in the birth of "a bouncing boy," and the desire of Iolanthe to be near him condemns her to stand on her head at the bottom of a stream. When the curtain rises it discloses a scene replete with fairylike beauties, in which the fairies are found bewailing Iolanthe's doom—a doom, however, from which she is rescued, as the Fairy Queen recalls and pardons her upon condition that she will never see her husband again. Upon her recall she introduces to the fairy sisterhood her son Strephon, who is in the very prime of early manhood. Strephon has been smitten by the charms Phyllis, a shepherdess, who happens also to be a ward in Chancery, and whose powers of fascination may be judged of by the fact that she ranks amongst her admirers not only a brace of peers, Lord Mountararat and Lord Tolloller, but in fact the entire House of Lords. Iolanthe, being of fairy mould, is impervious to the effects of time, and ever retaining her youthful beauties, Strephon's conduct in holding affectionate converse with her is misinterpreted by Phyllis, who casts him off. The youth, in despair, summons to his aid the fairy band, and they resolve that he shall go to Parliament, eclipse the labours of the House of Peers, carry by fairy aid all which he proposes, and throw the peerage open to competitive examination. The first act, which is brought to a termination at this point of the story, closes with a really spirited and tuneful finale. In the second act we exchange the Acadian regions in which fairies disport themselves for the more prosaic neighbourhood of Palace-yard, Westminster. The two smitten lords finding that they are unable to adjust their rival claims to Phyllis's hand, urge the Lord Chancellor to overcome his scruples in the matter, and marry the girl himself, and this he is about to do when Iolanthe, who has vainly endeavoured to win his consent for Strephon, breaks her fairy vow, and declares herself to be his long lost wife. The Fairies are at once summoned and the Queen is about to doom the offending Iolanthe to death, when they all declare that they must suffer too, as they are all duchesses, marchionesses, viscountesses, and baroness. It should be stated, in further illustration of the whimsical nature of the story, that Strephon is half fairy and half mortal, being immortal in the upper half of his body and mortal in his legs. This state he much complains of, remarking that although the fairy part of his person can get through a key hole, the mortality of his nether limbs bars his progress. There is also introduced the obvious absurdity of the Queen of the Fairies falling in love with one of the sentries in Palace-yard, out of which conceit much fun is produced. In the end, however, matters are made happy by the resolution of the Lord Chancellor and all the peers to become fairies, and as the curtain descends their wings begin to sprout, and they are supposed to be flying off to Fairyland. We find that we were in error in saying that the company now entrusted with the representation of the opera is the same as appeared in it at Bath. Two or three of the most successful amongst that *troupe* are here, but the company as a whole is a much stronger one. It loses indeed nothing, we think, in comparison with that at the London house. The important part of the Queen of the Fairies is held by Miss Fanny Harrison, who must be favourably remembered as Ruth in the "Pirates of Penzance," and Lady Jane in "Patience." Her singing and acting last night left nothing to desire. Her fine voice and impressive style told in all the music, whilst in "Oh, foolish fay," her vocalisation was so perfect and her rich contralto notes were brought out so artistically that an encore was inevitable. She also evoked a redemand for the lively

aria, "Into Parliament he shall go." Those who remember her commanding presence will not be surprised to learn that she gave rise to much merriment when speaking of Iolanthe as having taught her how to curl herself up inside a buttercup, swing upon a cobweb, and dive into a dewdrop. Miss Laura Clement, who won high favour at former engagements in Bristol, both in the "Pirates" and in "Pinafore," was the Phyllis. She acted naïvely and sang all the music with so much sweetness that we could not help feeling regret that Mr. Sullivan had not assigned to the character some more important solo. Iolanthe found a very pretty and very competent representative in Miss Beatrix Young. She won deserved applause for all which she did, and the minor characters of Celia and Leila in the hands of Miss M. Duggan and Miss Kate Forster received an importance well in harmony with the general excellence of the representation. The part of the shepherd Strephon was effectively rendered by Mr. F. Federici, who not only acquitted himself very satisfactorily in the singing, but infused into the part a vein of quiet humour which was very acceptable. Mr. Cadwaladr, whose fine tenor voice has gained much in volume since he was here in "Pinafore," was heard to great advantage as the Earl of Tolloller. Mr. Walter Greyling was also excellent as the Earl of Mountararat, and gave the song, "When Briton really ruled the wave," [sic] in a manner which won a vociferous redemand. In the character of the grenadier guardsman we recognised Mr. Marler, whose sergeant of police in the "Pirates" always proved so immensely popular. The music assigned to the red-coat is not so catching as that which was allotted to the man in blue, but Mr. Marler both sang and acted like a true artist. The part of the Lord Chancellor, filled by Mr. Frank Thornton, forms, of course, a central figure in the action. The character is drawn somewhat on the lines of Sir Joseph Porter in "Pinafore" and the Major-General in the "Pirates," and has its character and patter songs; "The land is the true embodiment," [sic] and "When you're lying awake," both of which were encored. There is something intensely witty in the utterances of the love-sick judge, when endeavouring to realise his exact position as a Lord Chancellor in love with his own ward, and they were given with a quaint humour which proved provocative of a great deal of merriment. Probably "Iolanthe" depends more than either of the other pieces we have named upon the richness and elaboration of its concerted and orchestral music, and the way in which all the difficult points were taken last night, especially considering that it was a first representation, was more than creditable to the company, the orchestra, and all concerned. The finale to the first act is as trying a composition as can be found in many operas, and it went with an amount of spirit which quite exhilarated the large audience. The scenery reflected great credit on Mr. Barraud's pencil, Palace-yard on a moonlight night being a wonderfully realistic set. The costumes and properties also were exceedingly beautiful, and the performance as a whole was so satisfactory and evoked so much enthusiasm that we shall expect to see the house crowded nightly. [*The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* (Bristol, England), Tuesday, June 5, 1883; Issue 10938.]

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE NEW THEATRE.

Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan's fairy opera, "Iolanthe, or the Peer and the Peri," was produced last evening as the New Theatre by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Company. The piece was introduced to the public on the 25th of November last at the Savoy Theatre, and it must be gratifying to the author composer to know that the success met with the metropolis, evidenced by its very long run at the Savoy, has been fully maintained in the provinces. The story the opera is rather complicated, but Mr. Gilbert has treated his subject with characteristic ability and humour; and the music to which the libretto has been wedded is worthy of Dr. Sullivan, although there may not be so many

catching airs as in some the gifted composer's earlier works. The scene of the first act is an Arcadian landscape, where the chorus fairies, led Leila, Celia, and Fleta, are grouped together. It is shown that Iolanthe has been banished from Fairyland for a quarter of a century because she was injudicious enough to marry a mortal. By the fairy law she should have expiated her crime by death, but the Fairy Queen commuted her sentence to one of penal servitude for life, on condition that she left her husband and never communicated with him again. That sentence she is now working out, standing on her head at the bottom of a neighbouring stream; but at the urgent petition of the fairy band she is recalled by the Queen. Iolanthe has a son, called Strephon, who is an Arcadian shepherd, and is in part mortal and part fairy. Strephon is in love with Phyllis, a ward Chancery, and the pair are to be married without the Lord Chancellor's consent, for all the peers, and even the Lord Chancellor himself, are also in love with Phyllis. Unfortunately, however, Strephon is found embracing Iolanthe, who, although his mother, looks much younger than he, for the fairies never age. Strephon is obliged keep secret the fact that his mother a fairy, and Phyllis breaks off the match. The Palace Yard at Westminster is the scene the second act, and Strephon is found carrying everything before him in the Houses of Parliament. Phyllis is betrothed to two the peers, but after arguing with himself the Lord Chancellor grants his own consent to his own marriage with the Chancery ward. But Iolanthe is entreated to plead with him on her son's behalf and she is compelled to reveal herself to the Lord Chancellor as his long lost wife. Having by this disclosure incurred penalty of death, Iolanthe is doomed die, but she is saved by the intervention of her sister fairies, who have incurred the same penalty by having married the Peers. The Fairy Queen cannot slaughter the whole company, and the suggestion the Lord Chancellor the law altered and made to read that any fairy shall die who does not marry a mortal. The massive Fairy Queen is for a time left out the cold, and to save herself from death she takes to her heart one Private Willis, a gigantic guardsman. Wings spring upon the shoulders of all those who have hitherto been only mortal, every one is now fairy, and the opera concludes with a dance and chorus, preparatory for a flight "sky high," where noble lords are to "exchange House Peers for House Peris."

A large audience assembled witness the first representation of the opera in Bristol, and the reception accorded it was not more hearty than the quality of the work and the merit of the performance demanded. The libretto is one of Mr. Gilbert's most successful efforts, and although has perhaps been a little too severe in his satire upon the British House of Peers, the audience last night showed no inclination to do otherwise than laugh at the smartness of Mr Gilbert's wit. With regard to the music, it is true there are few airs which are likely to become popular the ordinary sense, but the opera abounds in charming melodies, many them of a very refined type, and the orchestral music is also of an unusually high order. The music is sure to improve upon acquaintance, but taking the first night's reception, one has seldom seen so much enthusiasm as was displayed the audience last evening. The encores were numerous, and at the close of the first act the applause was maintained while all the members of the company appeared before the curtain. Mr Frank Thornton was exceedingly good as the Lord Chancellor. Both his songs were encored, and his rendering of the part will stand the test of comparison. Mr. Walter Greyling and Mr. L. Cadwaladr impersonated the Earls of Mountararat and Tolloller, and the former deservedly encored for his rendering the song, "When Britain really ruled the waves," while a pretty ballad, "Spurn not the nobly born," was effectively sung by the latter, and very warmly applauded. Mr. George Marler, who gained much popularity as the Sergeant

of Police in "The Pirates," made the most the small part of Private Willis, and Mr. F. Federici did justice to the part of Strephon, the Arcadian shepherd. Miss Fanny Harrison, who will be remembered as the "Little Buttercup" of one the Pinafore companies, made a capital Queen the Fairies, and the three fays—Leila, Celia, and Fleta—were impersonated by the Misses Kate Forster, M. Duggan, and Evelyn Carstairs. Miss Beatrix Young, who has previously visited Bristol, with Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, was pleasing as Iolanthe, and Miss Laura Element, who was last here as Mabel in "The Pirates Penzance," filled the role of Phyllis a manner that left nothing to be desired both as regarded acting and vocalisation. The choruses, generally, were good, and credit should be given the orchestra for the manner in which they fulfilled their part of the programme, which was by no means an easy one. The fairy choruses in the first act were rather deficient in spirit, but those the second act showed an improvement. The choruses of the peers were uniformly good, and mention should be made of the gorgeous costumes worn these representatives of England's nobility. The mounting of the opera, as well as the performance generally, was highly creditable, and the "Westminster Palace Yard," which had been prepared specially for the Bristol production, was a very effective set. If, therefore, first impressions may be taken as a guide, "Iolanthe" has yet a very successful run before it, and its performance by so excellent a company as that now appearing at the New Theatre should ensure large audiences during the week. The opera is preceded by a capital musical sketch by Mr. George Grossmith, entitled "Cups and Saucers," and it is announced that a morning performance of "Iolanthe" will be given by desire on Saturday next, at two o'clock. [*Western Daily Press*, 5 Jun 1883]

### 11 – 16 Jun. Brighton

THEATRE ROYAL.—Proprietress, Mrs. H. Nye-Chart. At length Brightonians have had the opportunity of judging the merits of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest production. *Iolanthe* has in town enjoyed such high popularity that the advent of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's provincial company was eagerly looked for, and we have great pleasure in stating that the expectations of playgoers have in no wise been disappointed; indeed, we might go further, and say that the present company performing at Brighton is in every respect equal to the London original. In Mr. Frank Thornton Mr. Grossmith has an able imitator, if not a rival; and Mr. Walter Greyling as the Earl of Mountararat is inimitable. Miss Fanny Harrison as Queen of the Fairies sings well and acts with great skill. As Iolanthe Miss Beatrix Young is the most perfect embodiment of a charming fairy. Mr. F. Federici, though a good actor, is a trifle too robust in style. The other characters were well sustained, notably that of Private Willis (Mr. George Marler); and the mounting of the piece reflects the greatest credit upon the management. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, June 16, 1883; Issue 2334.]

### 18 – 23 Jun. Nottingham

#### "IOLANTHE" THE THEATRE ROYAL.

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's work in comic opera has established standard excellence which the artists themselves may at times find difficult to preserve. In "Iolanthe," the newest of their productions, some spectators may deem that the broadly attractive qualities of some of the previous productions of the brilliant series are not so apparent as they could desire, but, if this be the case, it must be admitted, on the other hand, that the new piece possesses charms of its own, and these of no inferior order. To Nottingham playgoers the numbers have certainly proved most

attractive, for at the first presentation of "Iolanthe" at the Theatre Royal last night the encores were numerous, and, what is of equal importance as measuring the success of the work, the applause was almost continuous, whilst of the many touches of exquisite fun or keen irony very few missed their mark. The success of "Iolanthe" certainly does not depend upon its dramatic qualities, for these are decidedly inferior to some of Mr. Gilbert's previous productions. The libretto, however, as we have suggested, abounds refined humour, and, as regards literary grace and merit, it can claim equality with the best known of its predecessors. Moreover, the music is so happily and admirably adapted to the words that the charm of the one often contents us with a poverty in the other, and it has, we suppose, rarely happened that labour has been more aptly combined than in the present opera. As regards the plot, it may be mentioned that the story turns upon a law of Fairyland that a fairy, who marries mortal, becomes herself mortal also, Against this harsh law three susceptible fairies, Leila, Celia, and Fleta, warmly protest. Twenty-five years before it robbed them of the leader of their fairy circle, the charming Iolanthe, whose death-sentence, however, was considerably commuted to banishment for life, which she is doing, we are told, "on her head at the bottom of a stream," and it threatens now to interfere considerably with the gratification of their own matrimonial predilections. Yielding at length to the importunities of her subjects, the Fairy Queen releases the erring Iolanthe from her watery dungeon and restores her to her companions, to whom she appears answer to their invocation, clad in water weeds, and followed by her son Strephon, of whose existence the fairy sisters are unaware. As the offspring of the "mixed marriage" Strephon suffers the inconvenience of being fairy down to his waist, although his legs are mortal—a peculiarity which imposes on him sundry disabilities. Thus we find him objecting at first to go into Parliament, because his fairy-half being Conservative and his mortal legs Radical, he would be carried by a majority two to one into the wrong lobby, and when he wishes to marry the fair Phyllis, a shepherdess and ward in Chancery, whose charms have captivated the hearts of the entire House of Lords, including the lady's legal guardian, the Lord Chancellor, that dignitary refuses the young shepherd's suit on account of his incongruous anatomy. After a tender duet by Strephon and Phyllis, "None shall part us from each other," the pair being still ignorant of his lordship's stern resolve, we have gorgeous procession of peers. Headed a brass band they chant, to the strains of lively march, the words:—

Bow, bow, ye lower middle classes!  
Bow, ye tradesmen, bow ye masses!"

The entrance the Lord Chancellor preceded on this and every other occasion by a fugue from the orchestra, and is soon followed by a song explaining his character and dignity. Thus we learn:

The law is the true embodiment  
Of everything that's excellent.  
It has no kind of fault or flaw,  
And I, my lords, embody the law.

The constitutional guardian I  
Of pretty young wards in Chancery,  
All very agreeable girls—and none  
Are over the age of twenty-one.  
A pleasant occupation for  
A highly susceptible Chancellor!"

The difficulty of his office is further dwelt by the Chancellor in the following rather involved problem:—"Can he give his own consent to his own marriage with his own

ward? Can marry his own ward without his own consent? And if he marries his own ward without his own consent, can commit himself for contempt of his own court? And if he commit himself for contempt his own court, can appear by counsel before himself to move for arrest of his own judgment?" Phyllis's faith in Strephon is shaken when she finds him in affectionate conversation with his mother, who, as a pardoned fairy, has, of course, resumed the gift of eternal youth and beauty. The offended maiden declares herself willing to marry any peer who may be selected, but, to counteract this step, the fairy aunts of the lover get their Queen to threaten send Strephon into Parliament for one of her "rotten boroughs." She vows that he shall shake the foundations, not merely of the British Constitution, but of the House of Lords, and that even the rank of duke shall be thrown open to competitive examination. In the second act Strephon is found fulfilling these terrible threats, but, after a variety of amusing incidents, Phyllis ends the dilemma by returning to her old love. This step is not taken a moment too soon, for besides other lords the Chancellor himself has resolved to overcome his scruples and marry the heroine, a step which causes Iolanthe, in a fit of despair, to brave the wrath of the Fairy Queen by revealing herself to him as his long lost wife. The Lord Chancellor folds his wife in his arms, and of course withdraws his interdict upon the marriage of Phyllis with his son Strephon. The Fairy Queen is prevented from pronouncing sentence death upon Iolanthe for her second indiscretion by the discovery that all the other fairies have incurred the same penalty by secretly marrying the peers, and, as she pertinently observes, she cannot slaughter the whole company. The Lord Chancellor comes to her assistance by construing the law to them that any fairy who does not marry a mortal shall suffer death, and the Queen hastens to avail herself of this construction by choosing for her mate, Private Willis, of the Grenadier Guards, whose back at once puts forth two red wings, whilst similar excrescences of various colours make the transformation of the peers into fairies. As regards the music, there is much refined grace and skill in the details of Mr. Sullivan's work. Although some of the songs possess qualities which justly render them popular, the composer probably displays his powers most adequately in the concerted pieces, some of which are handled in an extremely able manner. On the whole the rendering of the music by Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company is highly satisfactory, and the audience, as stated, was not slow to mark its appreciation of their efforts. Thus the exquisite between Strephon (Mr. F. Federici) and Phyllis (Miss Laura Clement) was deservedly encored, and many subsequent numbers received similar honour. Among these it is hardly necessary to mention was the taking song of the Lord Chancellor (Mr. F. Thornton), "When I went to the Bar as a very young man," and the later song for the same character "When you're lying awake, with dismal headache." Mr. Thornton's impersonation was full of humour, but unexaggerated, and his vocalisation was distinct as well as tuneful. Miss Beatrix Young was quite successful as Iolanthe, and as the Queen of the Fairies Miss Fanny Harrison evidently realised the author's ideal. Miss Clement's voice, though by no means powerful, has a sweetness of tone which rendered it very acceptable, whilst the minor parts were filled very satisfactorily by Miss Kate Forster, Miss M. Duggan, and Miss Evelyn Carstairs (as the Fairy Sisters), Mr. G. Marler (Private Willis), Mr. Walter Greyling (Earl of Mountararat), and Mr. L. Cadwaladr (Earl of Tolloller). The chorus and instrumental accompanists were very fairly equal to their work, and the costumes, scenery, and general stage management were thoroughly up to the usual high standard maintained by Mr. D'Oyly Carte. It is but fair to mention that Mr. Potts obtained a deserved call for the scenery of the second act, which is an admirable view of Palace-yard. The large audience last night fully demonstrated the local appreciation of

"Iolanthe," which is quite certain to have a very successful week's run. The opera is preceded by the agreeable musical farce of "Cups and Saucers," in which Mr. Vernon and Miss Duggan take the chief parts. [*Nottingham Evening Post*, 19 Jun 1883]

"Iolanthe" bids fair to score the greatest success in Nottingham since the withdrawal of the pantomime. Opinion appears, so far as I can judge, to be pretty evenly divided as to the comparative merits of the new Gilbert-Sullivan opera and its predecessors, but I am quite certain that neither "Patience" nor "The Pirates" nor "Pinafore" was more heartily received on its first performance here. In London, "Iolanthe" still maintains its hold in public favour. The Princess of Wales has, I notice, been to see it four times.

#### "IOLANTHE" IN NOTTINGHAM.

Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan's latest opera, which was performed in Derby on the 11th and 12th of May last, is now being represented at the Nottingham Theatre Royal by the "No. 1" provincial company, organized by Mr. D'Oyly Carte for the purpose, and ably piloted by Mr. J. A. Punnett. There was a large audience on Monday evening, and the work achieved a thorough popular success. There were no fewer than eight encores—the duet between Strephon and Phyllis ("None shall part us"), the Peers' march and chorus, the Lord Chancellor's second and third solos ("When I went to the bar" and "When you're lying awake"), the fairies' chorus ("Into Parliament he shall go"), Lord Mount Tolloller's [*sic*] solo ("When Britain really ruled the waves"), the quartette ("In Friendship's Name"), and the trio ("Faint heart never won fair lady"), all having to be repeated in part, and the Lord Chancellor's first solo ("The law is the true embodiment"), Lord Tolloller's solo ("Spur not the nobly born"), Private Willis's solo ("When all night long"), and the Fairy Queen's solo ("Oh, foolish fay") narrowly missing the same compliment. Laughter and applause were constant, and at the end of the first act all the principals were called before the curtain. There can be no doubt, indeed, about the favourable reception given both to the opera and to the company. Concerning "Iolanthe" itself we need not say much, We supplied an estimate of the work when it was performed in Derby, and need only add that, whatever one may think of the position it holds towards its predecessors from the same hand, there can be no question about its intrinsic charm and attractiveness. Mr. Gilbert is always humorous and Sir Arthur is ever graceful, and "Iolanthe" is thoroughly worthy of them both. For the artists who represent it we have little but praise. Did we compare them with their London and provincial rivals in the same parts, we might have occasion to draw attention to inferiority here and there, but, taking the performance as it is, we must pronounce it excellent and enjoyable. Mr. W. Greyling, as Strephon, proves himself a clever comedian and the possessor of a robust voice and skilful method; Miss Laura Clement, as Phyllis, sings with finish and acts with careful grace; Mr. Frank Thornton, as the Lord Chancellor, exhibits a keen sense of humour and character: Messrs. Federici and Cadwaladr are competent representatives of the two Earls; Miss Fanny Harrison is in every respect acceptable as the stalwart Fairy Queen; Mr. George Marler sings his one song effectively; and the Misses Duggan, Forster, and Carstaires do all, that is necessary as the three chief fairies, Miss Duggan proving herself especially capable. Miss Beatrix Young is not quite adequate to the part of Iolanthe, but, on the whole, the principals give unquestionable satisfaction, and well deserve the applause they receive. The chorus, too, is numerous and strong, and goes through its work in admirable form. Nottingham fortunately has (unlike Derby) an orchestra. and, as led by Mr. Horner, Mr. Watson's forces do their duty well. The scenery is from the hand of Mr. Harry

Potts, and is heartily applauded, the "Arcadian landscape" being as cleverly picturesque as the "Palace Yard, Westminster," is ingeniously effective. "Iolanthe" is preceded nightly by Mr. George Grossmith's musical comedietta of "Cups and Saucers," an amusing trifle in which Miss Duggan and Mr. E. Vernon are both seen and heard to advantage. Those who heard "Iolanthe" performed in Derby without an orchestra, and with an inadequate male chorus, should certainly go to Nottingham in order to see what the opera is like when justice is done to Sir Arthur Sullivan's share in it. [*Derby Mercury*, 20 Jun. 1883]

By the way, the little satirical musical sketch by Mr. George Grossmith, "Cups and Saucers," which serves as a *lever de Rideau* this week, is well worth hearing. Both dialogue and music are bright and amusing, and Miss M. Duggan and Mr. E. Vernon go through the trifle with much spirit and sense of humour. [*Nottinghamshire Guardian* (London, England), Friday, June 22, 1883; pg. 3; Issue 1987.]

THEATRE ROYAL.—Manager, Mr. Thos. W. Charles.—Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* was produced on Monday last before a house that might have been better filled in the higher priced parts. The frequent applause and encores showed that appreciation was not lacking for the wealth of charming numbers with which the opera is studded, nor was laughter wanting for the brilliant absurdities of the plot and dialogue; but there is no question that much of the subtle satire of the clever libretto was "over the heads" of the audience, seeing that not a few of the most brilliant things fell as flat as the proverbial pancake. The performance, from an artistic point of view, left little or nothing to be desired. Miss Laura Clement made a delightful Phyllis, rendering the music that falls to her share with a charm all her own. Miss Fanny Harrison, as the Queen of the Fairies, gave excellent effect to the part; and the Iolanthe of Miss Beatrix Young was a charming realization of an ideal inhabitant of Fairyland. Mr. Frank Thornton was a capital Lord Chancellor; Mr. Walter Greyling duly appreciated all the fun of the Earl of Mountarat; than Mr. George Marler, as Private Willis, nobody could have been more comical; the Earl of Tolloller was well done by Mr. L. Cadwaladr; Strephon was capitally acted and sung by Mr. F. Federici. Indeed, to one and all, principals, seconds, chorus, and orchestra, praise is due both for their individual efforts and for the manner in which they worked together. New scenery of an elaborate character was provided, and it is not saying too much that the management has never done anything better. The Palace-yard, Westminster, is one of the best things Mr. Harry Potts has ever painted, and the enthusiastic call he received for it was thoroughly well deserved. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, June 23, 1883; Issue 2335.]

### 25 – 30 Jun. Preston

THEATRE ROYAL.—IOLANTHE.—In the appearance this week of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company in Gilbert Sullivan's latest success "Iolanthe," Preston theatre-goers have had the first opportunity of seeing the new piece. Though probably few will be so enthusiastic in the praise of "Iolanthe" as to say that it is equal to that master-piece of literary and musical satire, "Patience," equally few will leave the Theatre after having seen the new piece without a feeling of entire satisfaction with the music, which is rich and varied, or with the appointments—the dresses, &c.—by which the whole is made beautiful. It has been splendidly staged during the week, and Mr. D'Oyly Carte's name is sufficient to give confidence in the dresses being of the best. The company is a very large one, and the whole of the members are so excellently suited to their parts that the piece moves on, from beginning to end, with a graceful



ease most pleasing to observe. The leading parts are taken by, in every case, very clever artistes. "Iolanthe" is charmingly acted by Miss Young, who, in addition to a very sweet voice, has a graceful deportment, which enhances inestimably her performance. Miss Laura Clement is a very pleasing Phyllis, sings well and acts with sprightly ease. Miss Harrison is a portly and popular fairy queen, and the songs with which she is entrusted are well treated by her excellent voice. Of the male members of the company, Mr. Frank Thornton, as the Lord Chancellor, Mr. Gregling [*sic*] as the Earl of Mountararat, and Mr. Cadwaladr as Earl Tolloller, merit high commendation for excellent vocal ability and characteristic treatment of their parts. Mr. Federici is a very good Strephon, yet we cannot compliment him on the possession of a particularly pleasing voice. The other members of the company are, without exception, excellent, and as the opera has been brought at enormous expense, we are happy to see that it has been so well patronised. [*Preston Chronicle*, 30 Jun. 1883]

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE PRESTON THEATRE

Crowded houses have rewarded the enterprising lessee of the Theatre Royal, Preston, during the present week, attracted by the performance of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest operatic success, "Iolanthe," by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Company. The company represents the opera most admirably. Altogether there are upwards of forty vocalists, and among the principals are two or three known to Lancaster audiences, having appeared here in Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, "Pinafore," "Pirates of Penzance," or "Patience." Mr. F. Federici, as the half mortal and half fairy Strephon, sings well and gives a capital representation of the part. Miss Fanny Harrison, as Fairy Queen, is in good voice, and the part could not be in better hands. Miss Beatrix Young, as "Iolanthe" sings sweetly and acts gracefully, and the same remark applies to the leading fairies. Mr. Frank Thornton's interpretation of the Lord Chancellor is very clever and exceedingly amusing, and his delivery of the lines describing the difficulties of his position as "a highly-susceptible Chancellor" bring down the house:—"The feelings of a Lord Chancellor who is in love with a ward of court are not to be envied. What is his position? Can he give his own consent to his own marriage with his own ward? Can he marry his own ward without his own consent? And if he marries his own ward without his own consent, can he commit himself for contempt of his own court? And if he commit himself for contempt of his own court, can he appear by counsel before himself, to move for arrest of his own judgment? Ah, my lords, it is indeed painful to have to sit upon a woolsack which is stuffed with such thorns as these!" The opera is well put on the stage, and the choruses and orchestral arrangements are excellent. There are only two scenes in the piece, and the artist has carefully supplied every detail to make them effective. The dresses of the peers are very rich, and some of the groupings are very pretty. The company's engagement closes on Saturday night. [*The Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser for Lancashire, Westmorland, and Yorkshire* (Lancaster, England), Saturday, June 30, 1883; Issue 5358.]

THEATRE ROYAL AND OPERA HOUSE.—Lessee and Manager, Mr. T. Ramsay.—Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company is having a successful six night's engagement here, and producing *Iolanthe* in the completest and most satisfactory manner. The mounting is excellent, the dresses are superb, and the chorus is strong and well in tune. The piece is giving the greatest delight to Mr. Ramsay's patrons, and the calls and encores are frequent and emphatic. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, June 30, 1883; Issue 2336.]

## 2 – 4 Jul. Wigan

THEATRE ROYAL.—Responsible Manager, Mr. George F. Warde.—On Monday evening this place of amusement was crowded to its utmost capacity to witness the performance of *Iolanthe*, an opera presented in most excellent style by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company. The artists who took part were as follows:— Messrs. Frank Thornton, Walter Greyling, L. Cadwaladr, George Marler, J. Federici [*sic*]; Miss Fanny Harrison, Miss Beatrix Young, Miss Kate Forster, Miss M. Duggan, Miss Evelyn Carstairs, and Miss Laura Clement. The engagement was for three nights only, at the conclusion of which Mr. Henry Loydall and his company entered for the remaining three, appearing in *The Sacred Trust*, *Infant's Prayer*, and *The Medal of Death*. [*Era*, 7 Jul. 1883]

## 5 – 7 July. Halifax

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Mr. F. Rawling.—Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *Iolanthe* company, with new scenery, full band, ballet, and chorus, opened here on Thursday evening for three nights. [*Era*, 7 Jul 1883]

## 9 – 14 Jul. Southport

THE WINTER GARDENS.—Manager, Mr. J. Long.—Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company in *Iolanthe* have appeared during the week, and the company is one of the best which has occupied the Pavilion for some time. The choruses are capitally rendered, and the principals are one and all excellent. Mr. L. Cadwaladr as the Earl of Tolloller, and the Earl of Mountararat, represented by Mr. Walter Greyling, are most acceptable. Mr. Frank Thornton is highly diverting as the Burlesque Lawyer. Mr. Geo. Willis [*sic*] is the Private Willis. He possesses a fine voice. AS the Queen of the Fairies Miss Fanny Harrison shows herself a thorough artist, both her singing and acting being frequently applauded. Mr. F. Federici as the Arcadian shepherd, Strephon, sings with good taste and expression. Miss aura Clement as Phyllis renders her part admirably. The mounting of the piece was excellent, and the Place Yard scene was deserving of the recognition it received at the hands of the audience. [*Era*, 14 Jul. 1883]

## 16 – 21 Jul. Blackpool

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.—Manager, Mr. T. Sergenson.—Mr. D'Oyly Carte's No. 1 *Iolanthe* company opened on Monday evening to a house crowded in every part. The opera was splendidly mounted; in fact, as regards scenery, dresses, and properties, nothing better has been seen here. Miss Fanny Harrison was in fine voice, and charmed all present as the Fairy Queen. Mr. Frank Thornton as the Lord Chancellor both acted and sang in an admirable manner, and as stage-manager for the company is entitled to a share of the praise we bestow on the general excellence. Mr. G. Marler was very good as Private Willis. The orchestra, which has been considerably augmented for this opera, is under the conductorship of Mr. Ralph Horner, and both band and chorus were all that could be desired. [*Era*, 21 Jul 1883]

## 23 – 28 Jul. Huddersfield

THEATRE ROYAL AND OPERA HOUSE.—Lessee, Mr. J. W. White.—*Iolanthe* has been given here during the week by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, and has attracted large audiences. Although opinions differ regarding its superiority or inferiority to those which preceded it, yet there seems to be no doubt of its success, judging from the cordiality and warmth of the reception given to the piece and the company during the week. Several old favourites are included in the cast, and were

warmly welcomed when they made their appearance on Monday. Mr. Frank Thornton takes the rôle of the Lord Chancellor, and plays the part with much humour, the judicial gravity of the distinguished peer being very well rendered. Mr. Walter Greyling and Mr. L. Cadwaladr, as the Earl Mount Ararat and Tolloller, rendered excellent service; and Mr. George Marler shares the honours for his Private Willis. Mr. F. Federici as Strephon acts in capital style. Miss Fanny Harrison has not so much opportunity as the Queen of the Fairies to display her undoubted humour as she had in *Patience*, but still contrives to make her mark. Miss Beatrix Young as Iolanthe is successful; and Misses Late Forster, V. Russell, and Evelyn Carstairs do good service as Leila, Celia and Fleeta respectively. Miss Laura Clement enacts the part of Phyllis, her capital vocalisation and no less capital acting being sufficient to render her very prominent. She was unable to appear on Monday, when her place was filled at short notice in a highly creditable manner by Miss Rose Estelle. Thanks to Mr. White and the scenic artist, Mr. Gowns, the piece was appropriately and attractively mounted; and the band, under Mr. George Arnold, deserves complimenting for its playing of the orchestral and incidental music. [*Era*, 28 Jul 1883]

### 30 Jul. – 1 Aug. Newcastle

TYNE THEATRE. — Lessee, Mr. Richard W. Younge. — This popular theatre, after a short recess, was reopened for the regular season on Monday evening to a crowded and enthusiastic audience, who testified in the most demonstrative way their approval of the wonderful transformation effected during the four weeks that the theatre has been closed. When the theatre was lighted and the audience assembled, the tout ensemble was very fine, the artistic and lavish decoration of all parts of the theatre provoking unstinted praise. The fairy opera by Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan entitled *Iolanthe* was presented for the first time in Newcastle, supported by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's No. 1 company, and received with considerable favour, the whole of the artists coming in for a hearty greeting. Mr. Frank Thornton's humorous rendering of the Lord Chancellor was heartily enjoyed. Mr. Walter Greyling as Lord Mountararat sang with taste; as also did Mr. Cadwaladr as Lord Tolloller, Mr. F. Federici as Strephon, and Mr. G. Marler as Private Willis. Miss Beatrix Young was a charming *Iolanthe*, and Miss Laura Clement a pleasing *Phyllis*. Miss Fanny Harrison sang with much effect and acted throughout in the most satisfactory manner as the Fairy Queen. At the close of the first act the new act-drop was exhibited, and provoked enthusiastic applause, in response to which the painter, Mr. William Glover, came to the footlights and bowed his acknowledgments. The subject is a view of the Silver Strand, Loch Katrine, treated in the artistic style which has made Mr. Glover famous as a painter of Scottish scenery. The lessee, Mr. Younge, shortly afterwards stepped to the front, and met with such a reception as is only accorded on very rare occasions and to very popular favourites. The cheering lasted for nearly a minute, and on the subsidence of the applause Mr. Younge spoke as follows:—

"Ladies and gentlemen, I can scarcely find words to express my feelings and to welcome you to what I trust you will say is a charming theatre. When nearly two years ago I appeared before you for the first time as a manager of this theatre, I said I would not be too pretentious in words, and that my deeds should speak more eloquently for me. I trust that after the lapse of that period you will think that I have fulfilled my promises. I am certain that in the past I have tried to do so, and I will zealously essay to do so in the future. Your generous aid has enabled me to present before you a theatre which I am proud to think — and which I hope you will think — is second to none in the provinces. The name of the theatre has for some years been

distasteful, but just as the Tyne Commission has made your river one of the noblest in the land — second in trade to the metropolis and to Liverpool — so I hope that the tide of public favour and opinion will flow on in the direction of this theatre, and enable me to present before you the greatest productions of the time, the best artists, and the most complete entertainment that the theatrical arrangements of the time can afford. And whilst I am manager of this theatre the name of 'The Tyne ' shall stick to it. I had hoped to present you with the electric light in this house, but I found that the noise of the engine and the dynamo would disturb the performance, and therefore I abandoned the idea. But I have abandoned the idea, only for the present, and I am informed by a scientific friend that we shall have before long the electric light in our buildings without the aid of engines at all. I can only say, ladies and gentlemen, that I am deeply grateful for the favours you have conferred upon me in the past. As I said two years ago, nothing can be too good for your acceptance, nothing too high for your appreciation. And I trust, as Sam Gerridge says in *Caste*, that by constant attention to business, and by supplying the best article I can at the least possible price, to merit a continuation of .our favours."

The musical sketch *Cups and Saucers* concluded, supported by Misses Duggan and Vincent and Mr. E. Vernon. [*Era*, 4 Aug. 1883]

### 6 – 18 Aug. Glasgow

#### THE THEATRES.

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE ROYALTY

The Gilbertian doctrine, needless to say, is a type of philosophy realised only by its clever sponsor. In his hands the old, old story is omnipotent, for Mr Gilbert's love philtres fairly astound by reason of their potency. At one swoop the conventional is ruthlessly bowled out; those who sit in high places are discovered scampering about Arcadia performing the biggest of jinks, luxuriating, revelling in the fascinations of a grotesque Elysium. With cunning subtlety and force which are his alone the author of "The Bab Ballads" pokes mirth-provoking fun at the anomalies and absurdities of our work-a-day life. His satire has been aimed at the army and the navy, at our jury system, and at the votaries of æstheticism and kindred nonsense; a grave ecclesiastic has before now been told off to pipe a rondo, or to trip right merrily the light fantastic. Nothing, indeed, escapes the barbed shafts of Sir Arthur Sullivan's collaborateur, and if "Iolanthe" does not break absolutely new ground, there is small occasion for wonder, inasmuch as the peculiarities of this, that and the other thing have already been hit at in such works as "Pinafore," "Patience," "The Sorcerer" – the most artistic of the lot, by the way – and other familiar operas. "Iolanthe" is the latest of the Gilbert-Sullivan collaborations, and this was the work which Mr Knapp presented last night at the Royalty, and to a crowded audience. Originally produced at the Savoy Theatre on 25th November last, the opera has had a remarkable success there. It is still running at Mr D'Oyly Carte's house, and it would be hazardous to say when its prosperous course shall end. The newcomer, as regards plot, has little to say for itself, the story, or rather eccentricity, being laid on a somewhat slender basis. The "book" opens with a fairy chorus, wherein Mr Gilbert's paradoxical vein very speedily asserts itself. His elves, fays, brownies, and such-like gentry "hide themselves in lovers' hearts," they verily "live on lover, tripping hither, tripping thither, nobody knows why or whither." There is a Fairy Queen, of course, and she it is who at length forgives *Iolanthe* for the dread sin of marrying a mortal. On the return of the pardoned fay to terrestrial scenes she encounters her son *Strephon* – an Arcadian shepherd and half fairy of five-and-twenty summers – on the eve of his union with *Phyllis*, a rustic

maiden and ward in Chancery. The "only joy" is, however, a source of some trouble, and it so happens that the Lord Chancellor has heard wondrous tales of her charms. In a song for the Keeper of the Great Seal he admits the susceptible side of his nature:—

"For I'm not so old and I'm not so plain,  
And I'm quite prepared to marry again,  
But there'd be the deuce to pay in the Lords  
If I fell in love with one of my wards."

Then, as if to complete the drollery of the situation, Mr Gilbert contrives that his legal luminary should deliver himself of the following refreshing lines(?):—

"And every one who'd marry a ward  
Must come to me for my accord,  
And in my court I sit all day,  
Giving agreeable girls away,  
With one for him – and one for he –  
And one for you – and one for ye –  
And one for thou – and one for thee –  
But never, oh, never a one for me!"

*Phyllis* now appears before her guardian and his brother Peers. There are high bids for her heart and hand, but she spurns the nobly born in spite of the entreaties of *Lord Tolloller*, a personage who urges the maiden to

"Spare us the bitter pain of stern denials,  
Nor with low-born disdain augment our trials;  
Hearts just as pure and fair  
May beat in Belgrave Square  
As in the lowly air  
Of Seven Dials."

The meeting between the *Lord Chancellor* and *Strephon* is humorous, so also the ditty which the limb of the law sings in praise of his own various resolves in days gone by. One quotation will suffice:—

"When I went to the bar as a very young man  
(Said I to myself, said I),  
I'll work on a new and original plan  
(Said I to myself, said I),  
I'll never assume that a rogue or a thief  
Is a gentleman worthy implicit belief,  
Because his attorney has sent me a brief  
(Said I to myself, said I)."

Fairies have a knack, it seems, of preserving their youth and beauty, and thus *Iolanthe* wills it that her personal appearance shall be that of "sweet seventeen." *Strephon* is discovered with his arms around the beautiful fay, In vain he argues –

"This lady's my mother...  
Of evidence I have no dearth.  
She is – has been – my mother from my birth."

The rejected one must needs be avenged and thus "into Parliament he shall go, backed by our supreme authority."

"He shall end the cherished rights  
You enjoy on Wednesday nights;  
He shall prick that annual blister –  
Marriage with deceased wife's sister;  
Title shall ennoble then

All the common councilmen;  
Peers shall teem in Christendom,  
And a Duke's exalted station  
Be attainable by competitive examination!"

The second act takes us to Palace Yard, Westminster, where a sentry, in a pretty song, thus states his philosophy:—

"When all night long a chap remains  
He exercises of his brains,  
That is, assuming that he's got any.

\* \* \* \* \*

I often think it's comical,  
How nature always does contrive  
That ev'ry boy and ev'ry gal,  
That's born into the world alive,  
Is either a little Liberal,  
Or else a little Con-ser-va-tive."

The Peers arrive on the scene and lament how —

"Strephon's a member of Parliament!  
Running amuck of all abuses,  
His unqualified ascent  
Somehow nobody now refuses."

*Lord Mountarat* sings a comical travesty concerning the period "When Britain really ruled the waves." The Queen of the Fairies admits the existence of the tender passion after this manner:—

"Oh, amorous dove, type of Ovidius Naso,  
This heart of mine is soft as thine,  
Although I dare not say so,  
Oh, Captain Shaw, type of true love kept under!  
Could thy brigade with cold cascade  
Quench my great love I wonder!"

The *Lord Chancellor* discourses a characteristic patter song, eventually reconciles himself to the propriety of marrying his own ward, and the wonderful spectacle of the highest legal functionary in the land dancing a waltz measure, emphasises the matrimonial prospect. All is not yet, however, over, for *Iolanthe*, turns out to be the *Chancellor's* long lost spouse. *Strephon* and *Phyllis* are made one. In the approved Gilbertian style, the Peers are transformed into fairies, and thus it is unnecessary to say how the general pairing off is satisfactorily adjusted.

As of yore, whimsical conceit, racy humour, sallies of wit, the diction of extravaganza, and the hundred and one drolleries common to Mr Gilbert are through this odd fantasy. Coming to the music which Sir Arthur Sullivan has wedded thereto, it need not be said that it is singularly appropriate. It is remarkable for agreeable rhythm and pretty melody rather than fertility of resource. In several numbers Sir Arthur is instead reminiscent of himself and of others — a fact which may or may not suggest the notion that the constructive power of the composer in the domain of comic opera is not altogether progressive. Sir Arthur's firmest friends do say that he ought to rest content with the laurels already so conspicuously won in this department of his art, and that the time has fully arrived when he might again turn his attention to composition of abiding interest. It would, none the less, be mere affectation to say that the latest example of his workmanship does not hit the tastes of thousands of his patrons. On the contrary, "*Iolanthe*" is a distinct success from the view of the

*entrepreneur*, and that, we apprehend, is no small matter. Last night's audience, we are also bound to say, unhesitatingly approved of some old friends in a slight change of raiment, and certified once more that the conductor of the coming Leeds Musical Festival has not appealed in vain. The concerted music, it occurs to us, is by no means the least attractive feature of the opera, albeit that assigned to the fairies is hardly what might have been expected from Sir Arthur's keen sense of the refined and graceful. Other noticeable numbers comprise the amusing and pompous "Peers March and Chorus" – signalised last night by the aggressiveness of the brass instruments; the tuneful trio "Of all the young ladies I know," and the ambitious finale to Act 1, wherein we have a hit at the grand opera, interwoven with some bright and exhilarating morceaux, yet not altogether free from a dash of the opera bouffe element. The pizzicati accompaniment to be found in the duet for "Leila and Celia" in Act 2 is effective and the well constructed quartett "Though p'raps I may incur" pleased so well that the audience re-demanded it. Little space has been left us to refer to the representation of the opera. In general it was a worthy one. Miss Laura Clement won hearty recognition as a bright and piquant exponent of the character of *Phyllis*. Miss Beatrix Young personates *Iolanthe* with grace and intelligence, features which also accompany the acting of Misses Forster, Duggan and Carstairs. Miss Fanny Harrison is an excellent *Queen of the Fairies*, her experience as a vocalist standing her in good stead. Into the song "Oh, am'rous dove" she imparted much humour, and a hearty encore was the inevitable result. Mr Frank Thornton's histrionic ability enabled him to present the character of the *Lord Chancellor* with unflagging drollery, Messrs Greyling, Federici, Cadwaladr, and Marler being also successful in their respective parts. A little roughness incidental to a "first night" marked the efforts of the band and chorus, but this is a matter which Mr Arnold, the conductor, can easily put to rights. Mr Smyth has not been found wanting in the pretty scenery which has been painted for the occasion, and it only remains to be said that the costumes are bright and signally appropriate. [*Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, Scotland), Tuesday, August 7, 1883; Issue 188.]

ROYALTY.—Lessee and Manager, Mr. E. L. Knapp.—*Iolanthe* was presented for the first time in Glasgow on Monday evening by one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's companies before a very large audience. The reception accorded the opera, however, although decidedly favourable, can scarcely be described as enthusiastic. At all events, it was not received with such marked and warm approval as was the case with other Gilbert-Sullivan works when presented here for the first time. The reason is not far to seek. *Iolanthe*, while written in the same satirical vein as the other libretti by the clever author of "The Bab Ballads," is less humorous than *Pinafore*, *The Sorcerer*, or *The Pirates of Penzance*, although it is certainly not less ingenious. Nor is Sir Arthur Sullivan's music so thoroughly ear-catching as in the operas named. With the exception of one or two numbers, the music of *Iolanthe* does not haunt the memory like that of *Pinafore*, and is scarcely likely to enjoy to such an extent the distinction of being played on barrel-organs, and whistled by street boys of a musical turn. It is not probable that the want of these sure signs of popularity will cause much regret. The majority of the people will be more inclined to say with Bernando, "For this relief much thanks." Misses Fanny Harrison and Laura Clement, as Fairy Queen and Phyllis, appeared to most advantage, the former lady in particular distinguishing herself as a vocalist. Miss Beatrix Young was fairly good as *Iolanthe*. Mr. Geo. Marler as Private Willis, and L. Cadwaladr as Earl Tolloller, gave a good account of themselves, vocally and histrionically; and Mr. F. Thornton sang the Lord Chancellor's patter songs with success. The quality of the orchestra was not quite up

to the mark, but shortcomings in that respect are expected on a first night. Some very clever scenery has been painted by Mr. R. S. Smythe, and the dresses were extremely handsome. [*Era*, 11 Aug. 1883]

ROYALTY.— Lessee and Manager, Mr. E. L. Knapp.—*Iolanthe*, although acknowledged to be weaker both in libretto and music than the author's and composer's former work, continues to fill this house, notwithstanding the most unpropitious weather. The performance is a very fair one all round, and the beautiful dresses and mounting are generally admired. [*Era*, 18 Aug. 1883]

### 20 Aug. – 1 Sep. Edinburgh

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

It must satiety, rather than a process of critical comparison, which given currency to the opinion that "Iolanthe, or the Peer and the Peri," is inferior on its merits to those previous operas by the same authors, of which the titles run to "P's." Satiety, indeed, might well affect the popular appetite for these entertainments, though, as a matter of fact, last night's audience at the Theatre-Royal was both large and sympathetic. When a pair of collaborators go on producing works as builders produce types of ships, on given lines and with invariable attributes; when it is understood that their every plot is to be at once fantastic and topsy-turvy; that in all the characters are to be gravely nonsensical; that there shall be many patter-songs of a stereotyped pattern, and so many catchy choruses—when all this is realised time after time it is inevitable that there shall be some degree of falling-off in the taste for the article thus manufactured. The wonder is that the invention of Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan has kept its vogue so long; and possibly the next generation, temporarily satisfied with its own frivolities, will wonder how this could ever have laughed through whole evenings at Mr Gilbert's mechanical fun. It may be said with all sincerity, however, that "Iolanthe" is well worth a visit from those who have been entertained by "Pinafore," "Patience," and the Pirates;" and that, moreover, the flavour of this species of entertainment is as distinctly as ever preferable to that of recent opera-bouffe. "Iolanthe" has all the healthiness or harmlessness of tone which "parents and guardians" recognised so gratefully in its predecessors. With its carefully nonsensical story, and careful acting and good singing on the part of the performers, it is sure of popularity. The fairy element is undeniably thin, but the methodical satire shows no falling off; indeed there is more provocation to mirth than in almost any of the other operas of the series. Mr Sullivan—it is impossible to give him his title in the present connection—has produced music which more than meets expectation. Simple, soothing, and melodious, including pleasing airs and telling choruses, it is thoroughly appreciable by his audience; and last night it was on the whole very satisfactorily interpreted. Alike in acting and singing the cast is a strong one. Mr. Frank Thornton as the Lord Chancellor is absolutely perfect in the former respect; and Miss Clement is happily placed in the part Phyllis, though her voice lacks volume. Miss Young gave fair rendering of the thinly sketched part of Iolanthe, singing with sweetness and expression, if at times with some lack of fire; and the fairy queen had a competent representative in Miss Fanny Harrison. The singing of Messrs. Greyling and Cadwaladr as Lords Mountarat and Tolloller was especially good, the latter's powerful tenor only needing little refinement Messrs. Federici and Marler, too, as Strephon and Private Willis, were well up to the general level. The chorusing left little to be desired, though was here evident that more reliance has been placed by the authors on spectacular than on musical effects. [*Edinburgh Evening News*, 21 Aug. 1883]



THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee and Manager, Mr John Heslop.—Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new fairy opera *Iolanthe* was presented for the first time in Edinburgh, at this theatre on Monday evening, by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, before a very crowded and brilliant audience, and had a most enthusiastic reception. The performance was one of much merit, and the various artistes engaged in the cast may be complimented on the complete success of their respective impersonations. Of the work itself we may simply say that, while the quaint conceit of the plot is thoroughly in unison with past examples of the same pen, the libretto is written in Mr Gilbert's most entertaining style, and the music, which is beautifully scored, has a the measure of the freshness and interest so delightfully apparent in all Mr Sullivan's previous operas. Mr Carte has brought a first-class company, which includes some established favourites, and several of the artistes who had the privilege of creating their parts on the occasion of the first production of the opera in America. The Lord Chancellor had an altogether admirable representative in Mr Frank Thornton, an artiste of consummate ability, who acted with a capital appreciation of the droll idea that pervades the part, and made every part tell. Mr Thornton also gave the several incidental songs very cleverly, and had a number of encores. Mr, Walter Greyling made an effective appearance as the Earl of Mountarat, and Mr L. Cadwaladr greatly distinguished himself as the Earl of Tolloller, singing with marked success in the concerted pieces. Mr F. Federici assumed the picturesque character of Strephon, and played it well, singing also with artistic skill; and Mr. George Marler made quite a feature of Private Willis, a part he did full justice to. Phyllis was charmingly played by Miss Laura Clement, whose vocal acquirements had effective display during the evening; and Miss Fanny Harrison appeared as the Queen of the Fairies with her accustomed success. Miss Beatrix Young made an excellent Iolanthe, and the fairies Leila, Celia, and Fleta were cleverly sustained by Misses Kate Forster, M. Duggan, and E. Carstairs. The opera was tastefully mounted, the dresses were particularly rich and gorgeous, and the set scenes were both highly effective. The chorus, on which a good deal of the musical effect of the opera depends, was thoroughly adequate and efficient, and the fine orchestra of the theatre, conducted by Mr. Arnold, did its work well. The opera was prefaced by Mr George Grossmith's neat musical sketch *Cups and Saucers*, in which Miss M. Duggan made a clever appearance as Mrs. Nankeen Worcester, ably assisted by Mr. E. Vernon as General Deelar, and by Miss Vincent as Jane. The pretty incidental music was capitally rendered, and the principal comic song encored. [*Era*, 25 Aug. 1883]

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Mr John Heslop.—The enormous success of *Iolanthe* at this theatre last week necessitated special morning performance on Saturday, the 25th ult., which was well attended. On that occasion the part of Phyllis was sustained with singular effect by Miss M. Duggan, a very clever and charming young lady, whose previous appearances in Edinburgh, both in operatic and dramatic parts, have invariably been successful. Miss Duggan, who discarded the white wig customary to the rôle, looked the dainty shepherdess to perfection, and acted with a piquant sprightliness that was particularly appropriate, while her tuneful rendering of the music allotted to her won much applause. This week, the good business of last continues, and Monday evening witnessed another capital house. The principal performers were received with increased favour, and Mr, Frank Thornton carried off chief honours in his exceptionally able impersonation of the Lord Chancellor. The beauties of Mr. Sullivan's music unfold themselves in fresh variety nightly, and with Mr Gilbert's droll humour afford abundant enjoyment to the audience. Mr.

Grossmith's operetta *Cups and Saucers* still forms a pleasant introduction to the evening's entertainment. [*The Era*, 1 Sep 1883]

### 3 – 6 Sep. York

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

The now popular comic opera "Iolanthe," or "The Peer and the Peri," was presented before a York audience for the first time in the Theatre Royal on Monday, and in recognition of the abilities of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan there was a large and fashionable attendance. Comic operas have long been popular amongst English audiences, both in London and the provinces; indeed, they were received at the outset with more marked favour than was the case in Paris, the home of pieces of this class. When Offenbach produced his first comic sketch in Paris he was laughed at; not so in London, however. There the theatre-going public became interested, and soon looked for something that might be regarded as more solid and true to the traditions of the stage while not losing any of its humorous elements. The success scored by the ever-green "Pinafore" will never be obliterated from theatrical annals, and this achievement certainly afforded an impetus to Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan to engage their talents on something more in the same line which should be equally acceptable. But, on comparison, the "Sorcerer" can hardly be said to rank with the nautical comic opera which never failed to amuse audiences here, there, and everywhere; "The Pirates of Penzance," however, met with much greater favour; and "Patience" struck the chord of popularity by reason of its bright and charming melodies. Now "Iolanthe" appeals—and has hitherto done so successfully, too, in many parts—for public favour. One or two of the foregoing pieces, however, still hold their own even against the newcomer. For instance, there is no such racy music in "Iolanthe" as is to be found in "Pinafore;" and no such taking airs as are to be met with in "The Pirates." If there is one piece to which it bears resemblance it is "Patience," and that similarity is to be found, first, in the softness and delicacy of the scenic appointments, especially in the first act; and secondly, in the brilliancy and chasteness of design in regard to the costumes. Nevertheless, the instrumentation "Iolanthe" is high-souled and mighty of its kind—fairly entrancing indeed to lovers of melody. Perhaps in this particular, the new piece rather excels some of the others, because its uniformity of beauty with regard to the instrumental features is at once striking. A better company than the one at present located in York is seldom seen in the provinces. The character of Phyllis is played by Miss Laura Clement, whose singing, as well as her general style and grace of movement, is at once charming; while the title role is in the hands of Miss Beatrix Young, an equally capable lady. In Mr. F. Federici is to be found an admirable exponent of the part of Strephon, and Mr. Frank Thornton is a most amusing Lord Chancellor. The two most important peers—the Earl of Mountararat and the Earl of Tolloller—are respectively played in a very capable manner by Mr. Walter Greyling, a local artiste of repute, and Mr. L. Cadwaladr, who will doubtless be remembered as Ralph Rackstraw in "Pinafore." Mr. George Marler sings Private Willis's music well; and a word of recognition is also due to Miss Kate Forster (Leila), Miss M. Duggan (Celia), and Miss Evelyn Carstairs (Fleta), whose parts though minor are not by any means unimportant. In addition to the principals there is a strong company of supernumeraries, and the opera was placed on the York stage last evening in a manner that the most fastidious theatre-goer would hardly wish to see excelled. [*York Herald*, 5 Sep. 1883]

### 7 – 8 Sep. Harrogate

"IOLANTHE" AT THE HARROGATE TOWN HALL THEATRE—On Friday and Saturday evenings, and at a grand fashionable *matinee* on Saturday afternoon, Mr. D'Oyly Carte's No. 1 Opera Company appeared at the Town Hall Theatre, Harrogate, in Gilbert and Sullivan's latest success, the fairy opera "Iolanthe." On each occasion the audience was very large and the rendering, in every respect, brilliant and fascinating, leaving nothing to be desired. [*York Herald*, 10 Sep. 1883]

### 10 – 15 Sep. Scarborough

LONDESBOROUGH THEATRE. – Proprietor and Manager, Mr. W. A. Waddington. – *Iolanthe* was produced here for the first time on Monday evening, by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's excellent company, and right well did they maintain the reputation they have acquired. The house was literally crammed in every part. Mr. Thornton as the Lord Chancellor was very effective, and Miss Laura Clement was admirable as Phyllis. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, September 15, 1883; Issue 2347.]

### 17 – 29 Sep. Manchester

#### THEATRE ROYAL.

#### IOLANTHE.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company succeeded in drawing a very large house to the Theatre Royal last night to see and hear Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's popular opera of *Iolanthe*. It has now been performed so often that there is little to be said of it. If we mistake not, the company last night was the same as appeared on the last occasion. The principals and chorus did their work remarkably well, and the whole piece was greatly appreciated. When all did so well it is almost invidious to single out any person in particular, but, as so much depends on the part of the Lord Chancellor, we cannot refrain from speaking of the perfect way in which Mr. Frank Thornton took that part. The principals were called before the curtain at the close of the first act. The only drawback was a slight want of unanimity between the band and the chorus but this no doubt will be rectified. The opera remains here for 12 nights. [*Manchester Courier*, 18 Sep. 1883]

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Captain R. Bainbridge.—Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan's last operatic success, *Iolanthe*, has been produced here before very crowded and enthusiastic audiences during the past week, and the engagement has abundantly demonstrated—if demonstration were needed of that fact—that the fairy opera has taken quite as high a position in popular favour now as any of those other great successes which preceded it. The more charming of Sir Arthur Sullivan's melodies have been greeted with most hearty encores, whilst the keen satire and deep humour of Mr. Gilbert have given rise to almost infinite amusement. The company producing *Iolanthe* on the present tour does not differ very materially from that which originally produced the opera in Manchester. Mr. Walter Thornton [*sic*] still retains the part of the Lord Chancellor, which he renders with inimitable unctuous appreciation of the humorous features of the character. Messrs. Walter Greyling and L. Cadwaladr are, as on the first production, the two chief Lords. Mr. Marler retains his (provincially) original character of Private Willis, and Mr. Federici that of Strephon. Miss Fanny Harrison also remains with the company in her part of the Fairy Queen. Miss Beatrice Young is still an admirable exponent of the title rôle, and Miss Esme Lee is a satisfactory Phyllis; whilst Mdlls. Kate Forster, Duggan, and Carstairs are all admirable in their respective minor parts. Mr. George Arnold's conductorship has

been attended with complete success in the orchestral department, and the production has altogether proved very satisfactory indeed. [*Era*, 22 Sep 1883]

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Captain R. Bainbridge.—The second week of *Iolanthe's* return visit has not brought with it any diminution of popular support, and every night excellent houses have been collected to witness the careful representation of Gilbert and Sullivan's fairy opera afforded by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company. [*The Era*, 29 Sep 1883]

### **1 – 6 Oct. Bradford**

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mrs. C. Rice. – Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company are paying a return visit with *Iolanthe*. The opera has lost none of its popularity, the house being crowded to excess nightly. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, October 6, 1883; Issue 2350.]

### **8 – 13 Oct. Leeds**

THE GRAND THEATRE.—Lessee, Mr. Wilson Barrett; Acting Manager Mr. Lee Anderson.—By a rather singular coincidence Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Iolanthe* is being performed here while he is conducting at the Leeds Musical Festival. All the parts are admirably filled. The opera is preceded by Mr. George Grossmith's capital little musical sketch *Cups and Saucers*, in which Misses Duggan and Vincent and Mr. E. Vernon appear. [*Era*, 13 Oct 1883]

### **15 – 20 Oct. Hull**

"IOLANTHE" AT THE HULL THEATRE ROYAL.—The return visit of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's opera of "Iolanthe" finds it shorn of none of the attractions which rendered it so popular on its first representation here a short time back. The public recognise that it is impossible for these agreeable collaborators to perpetrate a really bad opera, but the test of attractiveness, if not in the same measure also of excellence and permanence, is in a repetition. This test "Iolanthe," following on the heels of "Patience," has more than borne, as was shown by the audiences which have been present this week, admittedly one of the worst weeks to ensure large attendances of the whole season. The opera and the company are admirably wedded together, and afford a sum of entertainment most undesirable by any to be missed. [*Hull Packet*, 19 Oct 1883.]

### **22 Oct. – 3 Nov. Liverpool**

#### **PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS. PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE**

When "Iolanthe" was first given in Liverpool, some seven months ago, occasion was taken here to define its characteristics, and so clear must be the recollection of these that it is hardly necessary to emphasise them further. As was said then, "Iolanthe" exhibits Mr. Gilbert in his most whimsical vein, whilst it is impossible to discover a weak joint in the ingeniously pretty structure in which Sir Arthur Sullivan enshrines the sarcasms of his witty colleague. "Iolanthe" was last night again placed before the public of Liverpool at the Prince of Wales Theatre, whose stage has, if we are not mistaken, been the scene of the original production in this city of all the dramatic works of Gilbert and Sullivan, beginning with "Trial by Jury". There was a large audience, who thoroughly appreciated the literary and musical quality of the piece. The cast remains unchanged with one exception, Miss Esme Lee now playing *Phyllis*, a part which was formerly in the hands of Miss Ethel M'Alpine. Mr. F. Thornton

repeats his admirable impersonation of the *Lord Chancellor*, and he, together with Mr. Greyling as *Lord Mountararat*, Mr. Cadwaladr as *Lord Tolloller*, Mr. G. Marler as *Private Willis*, and Miss Fanny Harrison as the *Fairy Queen*, enjoyed a cordial welcome. There is an extra performance of "Iolanthe" on Saturday afternoon next. [*Liverpool Mercury etc* (Liverpool, England), Tuesday, October 23, 1883; Issue 11163.]

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. — Lessee, Mr. Frank Emery; Acting Manager, Mr. C.P. Emery. — *Iolanthe* is perhaps the best example of the happy results of the combined wit and ingenious musical ability of Gilbert and Sullivan which we possess, and the performance of the opera at Mr. Emery's theatre on Monday evening was attended by success which was gratifying and well deserved. When last represented in Liverpool the work was most cordially recognised as the outcome of genius of which England may be proud, and the strong current of popular favour which has continuously flowed with it in connection with its provincial representations has amply confirmed the verdict given in this city. The fun is worthy of the reputation of the "Bab Ballads" author, and the music of the bright, telling, piquant character which has made Sir Arthur so famous. The company intrusted with the performance of *Iolanthe* is, with one exception, precisely the same as that which did good service for the author and composer on a previous occasion, the single change being the appearance of Miss Esme Lee as Phyllis. She sings with intelligence and well-matured cultivation, and her acting is singularly graceful and free from mannerism. Miss Fanny Harrison one more proved a bewitching Queen of the Fairies, and Miss Beatrice Young secured "golden opinions" from all parts of the house by her excellent singing and acting as the heroine. The Lord Chancellor was again impersonated with rich humour by Mr. Frank Thornton; and Mr. F. Federici's Strephon was full of merit, vocally and histrionically. Chorus, band, dresses, and scenery were of the best class, and calls were given to the chiefs in the cast at the close of each act. [*The Era* (London, England), Saturday, October 27, 1883; Issue 2353.]

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.—Lessee, Mr. F. Emery.—*Iolanthe* has again proved a strong attraction here during the week, morning performances to meet public demand having been rendered necessary on Wednesday and today (Saturday). [*Era*, 3 Nov. 1883]

### 5 – 10 Nov. Birmingham

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.  
MR. SULLIVAN'S "IOLANTHE."

The noisy distraction of Guy Fawkes night and the deterrent influence of a rainstorm, sufficient to quench all its bonfires and fireworks, were alike powerless to prevent a large audience from flocking to this house to witness the reproduction of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's fascinating lyric fantasia known as "Iolanthe, or the Peer and the Peri." On the first production of this graceful and fanciful work in the spring of the year, we discussed its merits, literary and musical, in sufficient detail to stand dispensed from further criticism on the present occasion; and we will only remark in general terms, that if "Iolanthe" is not quite so strong in dramatic backbone as some of its predecessors, it yield: the palm to none in the quaintness of its concerto and the elegance and refinement of the music. The latter is wanting, perhaps, in the broad and popular qualities, say of "Pinafore," but that its charms for 'the popular ear are of a very real and potent order was conclusively demonstrated last night by the enthusiasm it evoked, and the number of pieces which had to be repeated in

compliance with the demand of the audience.

As the company is essentially the same as on the occasion of the first production here of the operetta, our remarks upon the performance will be brief. The all important part of the *Chancellor* finds an admirable representative in Mr. Frank Thornton, whose humour and articulateness leave nothing to be desired, and who wants in parts a little more vocal power to be an ideal representative of the character. Last night he was in excellent form, and was encored in all three of his songs, especially kindling the enthusiasm of his audience in "Said I to myself, said I," and the wonderfully graphic scena descriptive of a headache, commencing "When you're lying awake with a dismal headache," which will hereafter be ranked among the composer's most original and striking efforts. In the various concerted pieces, and especially the quartet with Lords *Tolloller* and *Mountararat* and the sentry in the second act, and the famous trio and dance which follows it, Mr. Thornton also rendered valuable service. Miss Beatrix Young, as the Fairy Mother, *Iolanthe*, who for twenty five years prior to the opening of the drama has been doing her sentence "on her head at the bottom of a stream," is becomingly youthful, graceful, and tender, and sings the somewhat trying air in the second act, in which *Iolanthe* pleads to the *Lord Chancellor* on behalf of her son, with much sweetness and pathetic effect. The *Fairy Queen* of Miss Fanny Harrison, though somewhat lacking in the ethereal quality which we associate with the idea of Titania, is eminently graceful, pleasing, and vocally effective; and the Arcadian shepherdess *Phyllis* – the Helen of this new tale of Troy – finds a very competent and pleasing representative in Miss Esme Lee, whose performance last night was a great advance, both in dramatic intelligence and in vocalisation, upon her *Gretchen* in "Rip Van Winkle." In the charming little pastoral duet with *Strephon*, "None shall part us," she was especially effective, in spite of the somewhat too rapid *tempo* adopted, and the occasional obtrusiveness of the accompaniment. Mr. Federici as the shepherd *Strephon*, half fairy and half mortal, acted and sang with equal ability, contributing largely to the effect of every scene in which he took part. The sister fairies *Leila*, *Celia*, and *Fleta* were gracefully personated by Miss Kate Forster, Miss Mary Duggan, and Miss Evelyn Carstairs. Mr. Walter Greyling was specially good as the *Earl of Mountararat*, and Mr. Cadwaladr's *Earl of Tolloller* was not far behind it. Mr. Marler as *Private Willis*, who plays Bottom to the *Fairy Queen's* Titania was encored in the popular old English sentry's song; but the compliment must be ascribed rather to the merits of the music than to those of the performance, which was in parts decidedly flat.

The chorus plays an important part in *Iolanthe*, and its work last night was on the whole well executed. The chorus of Peers, "Bow, bow, ye lower middle classes," and the piquant wooing scene of Fairies and Peers, "Don't go," with continuous *pizzicato* accompaniment, were as usual encored, and the fine *ensemble* at the end of the first act left nothing to be desired. Here and there the playing of the band was a little coarse and uneven, but on the whole there was not much to complain of. The operetta was capitally mounted, and the scene representing Palace Yard, with the Houses of Parliament in the background, by moonlight, called forth, as usual, loud expressions of approval.

The opera, which was followed last night by Mr. George Grossmith's diverting musical sketch, "Cups and Saucers," in which the character of *Mrs. Nankeen Worcester*, a china maniac, was played by Miss Duggan, will be repeated each evening this week, and a special day performance for the accommodation of country visitors is announced for Thursday. [*Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham, England), Tuesday, November 6, 1883; Issue 7908.]

## 12 – 17 Nov. Bristol

### LOCAL NEWS.

NEW THEATRE ROYAL. – To-night, Mr. D'Oyly Carte's "Iolanthe" Company will commence an engagement with Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's popular opera, which gives them their distinctive title, and in the course of which they will add to the evening representations of the week a special illuminated day performance on Saturday. Of "Iolanthe" as a musical play it can hardly be necessary to say much. In the whimsical character of its story, its witty dialogue, and its more than agreeable music, it shares in the popularity of "The Pirates of Penzance," "Patience," &c. Mr. D'Oyly Carte's connection with it also gives assurance that it will be carefully and well rendered. He is one of the metropolitans, who, recognising that they have reputations to uphold, rarely if ever send into the provinces anything that is not worthy of their names. "Iolanthe" this week will be sustained by the same thoroughly efficient artistes as supplied the cast when the opera was last performed here, and will of course bring with them the advantage of having since had several months of practice. The orchestral and other arrangements will also be closely attended to, so that a satisfying performance may be relied upon. The places, we are pleased to learn, are being secured in a manner which promises fashionable houses. [*The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* (Bristol, England), Monday, November 12, 1883; Issue 11075.]

### IOLANTHE AT THE NEW THEATRE ROYAL

Last night Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company commenced a brief return visit to this house with Gilbert and Sullivan's fairy opera of "Iolanthe; or, The Peer and the Peri," and it was gratifying to find the enterprise of the managers rewarded by the presence of a numerous and fashionable audience. It cannot, we are sure, be necessary to describe a plot with which Bristol playgoers, and especially the readers of this journal, have already been made familiar. We had an opportunity of noticing it *in extenso* when the opera was first produced in London; and again when it migrated to the Theatre Royal, Bath; and as lately as June last we devoted more than a column to a detailed description of it. It will be sufficient for the present, then, if we say that it describes one of those farcically, fanciful stories which Mr. Gilbert is such an adept at framing for Sir Arthur Sullivan's tuneful illustration. Its association with fairy lore and its humorous blending of the material with the ethereal in some degree removes it from the category in which "Pinafore," "The Pirates of Penzance," and "Patience" hold places, but there is, nevertheless, no mistaking the paternity of either the *libretto* or the music. The dialogue exhibits the whimsical fancy, and comical conceits, and the wit and sparkle of Mr. Gilbert's muse, and there runs through it a true Gilbertian vein of good-tempered political satire. The music is characterised by the tunefulness and graceful flow of melody, the cleverly constructed and occasionally grand harmonies, and, quite as much as either, the mastery of instrumentation and orchestral effect which are so generally to be encountered in Sir Arthur Sullivan's operatic writings. The opera has been produced in as complete a manner as on its former representation. There is an augmented orchestra, well trained chorus, some of Mr. M. H. Barraud's well rendered scenery, and appropriate and elegant costumes by competent costumiers. The cast, too, if we except the substitution of Miss Esme Lee for Miss Laura Clements in the character of the Arcadian shepherdess, Phyllis, is precisely the same as on the last occasion. As we had anticipated, the additional practice they have had has given the *artistes* a firmer grasp of their characters, and has enabled them to fill them in with many little effective bits of by play. The result is that

the opera goes with increased smoothness and spirit. The character of Phyllis loses nothing in the hands of Miss Esme Lee. She has a nice, fresh voice, and sings very agreeably, and her acting is naïve and effective. Miss Fanny Harrison's Fairy Queen is still marked by the high qualities which won renown for her on the former occasion. Her rich contralto notes and impressive style thoroughly fit her for the part. Miss Beatrice Young was again a charming Iolanthe, and the minor lady characters of Leila, Celia, and Fleta were also well filled by the Misses Kate Forster, Mary Duggan, and Evelyn Carstairs. Mr. Federici has greatly improved since he was last here, and his Strephon last night was a thoroughly artistic performance. Mr. Cadwaladr's voice has also increased in fulness, and he sang finely as the Earl of Tolloller. Mr. Walter Greyling, as the Earl of Mountararat, also quite sustained his former reputation. Mr. Marler was, of course, very effective as Private Willis of the Grenadier Guards, whilst Mr. Frank Thornton's Lord Chancellor – a really high class example of character acting – was as amusing as ever. He was heartily applauded and as heartily laughed at, and his songs were vociferously redemanded. There were many encores, and the choruses were received with marked favour; indeed the opera went with an effectiveness which not only proved very satisfying to last night's audience, but was full of promise for the week. [*The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* (Bristol, England), Tuesday, November 13, 1883; Issue 11076.]

#### LOCAL NEWS

NEW THEATRE ROYAL. – The fairy comic opera of "Iolanthe" has held the boards of this house during the week, and considering the fanciful and amusing character of Mr. Gilbert's conceit, the great beauty of Sir Arthur Sullivan's music, and the perfect manner in which Mr. D'Oyly Carte's numerous and highly efficient company have rendered the work, it is no matter of surprise that it has afforded very pleasurable entertainment to large audiences. To-day the managers will give a mid-day performance, and from what we hear there is likely to be a fashionable attendance. Such representations are becoming very popular in the metropolis, and there can be no doubt that they afford to dwellers in the surrounding villages, aged persons, and invalids, opportunities which they would not otherwise have of witnessing and hearing the current dramatic productions. The last night performance will take place this evening, and on Monday the popular actress Miss Ada Cavendish will commence a brief engagement. [*The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* (Bristol, England), Saturday, November 17, 1883; Issue 11080.]

#### LOCAL NEWS

NEW THEATRE ROYAL. – The day and evening performances of "Iolanthe" on Saturday attracted very large audiences, and the frequency of the hearty applause and the encores attested that, admirably rendered as it has been by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's opera has had a firm hold on the popular favour. [*The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* (Bristol, England), Monday, November 19, 1883; Issue 11081.]

#### 19 – 24 Nov. Brighton

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Mrs. H. Nye Chart.—... The return visit of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *Iolanthe* company has attracted large numbers to the theatre each evening during the past week. [*Era* 24 Nov 1883]



### 26 Nov. – 1 Dec. Leicester

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE.—Lessee and Manager, Mr. Elliot Galer.—Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company with *Iolanthe* are delighting the lovers of music here. [*Era*, 1 Dec. 1883]

### 3 – 8 Dec. Sheffield

THEATRE ROYAL.—Lessee, Mr. E. Romaine Callender.—Once more *Iolanthe* forms the attraction here for six nights, and, judging by the large and fashionable audiences, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest opera has established a permanent hold on the approval of local musicians and theatregoers. [*Era* 8 Dec. 1883]

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

The second visit of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's "Iolanthe" Company opened auspiciously at the Theatre last night, when a large audience assembled to witness the performance of this popular opera. On the occasion of its first production in Sheffield the opera met with a most enthusiastic reception, and was generally acknowledged to be the best of the Gilbert-Sullivan series. The music belongs to a much higher standard than does that of their previous operas, and its advanced character and sterling merit justify the announcement that Sir Arthur Sullivan is at work on a grand opera, which will shortly be produced. Mr. W. S. Gilbert's clever libretto shares equally with the music in the success which the opera has attained, and the hearty laughter which greeted all his witty sallies last night showed that his dry humour was appreciated. Mr. Gilbert has an enviable facility of obtaining fun out of the most unlikely subjects, and the neat manner in which he reverses everything may be seen in the following. One of the characters is made to say:—

Hearts quite as pure and fair  
May beat in Belgrave square  
As in the lowly air of Seven Dials.

And, again, the chorus of peers sing:—

Bow, bow, ye trade-men; bow, ye masses:  
Bow, bow, ye lower and middle classes.

And

We are peers of highest station—  
Pillars of the British nation.

As "Iolanthe" has already been performed here this year, it is needless to recount the story, which has for its leading character a Lord Chancellor who falls in love with one of his own wards in Chancery. A number of complications ensue, in which a party of fairies and an Arcadian shepherd named Strephon take part. The Invocation scene in the first act is, though short, one of the best constructed numbers in the opera, and is an exceedingly clever parody of the Rising of the Rhine daughters, in Wagner's "Das Rheingold." The pompous march of the peers was greeted with much applause and obtained one of the many encores accorded during the evening. Mr. Frank Thornton was excruciatingly funny in the egotistical Lord Chancellor, and his amusing rendering of the part was keenly relished by the audience. The Earl of Mountararat was ably represented by Mr. Walter Greyling, who gave the popular song, "When Britain really ruled the waves," in very effective style. Mr. L. Cadwaladr, as Earl Tolloller, also sang and acted with much success. The latter gentleman possesses a pleasing tenor voice, and would sing exceedingly well but for a tendency to use the crescendo on almost every note. Miss Esme Lee acted well as Phyllis, and Miss Fanny Harrison as Queen of the Fairies, and Miss Beatrice Young found much favour with

the audience. Mr. F. Federici was somewhat boisterous as Strephon, but acted with spirit throughout. Mr. George Marler gave an inimitable rendering of the part of the bombastic Sentry and his son [*sic*], and was loudly encored. The parts of Leila, Celia, and Fleta were ably filled by Miss K. Forster, Miss M Duggan. and Miss E. Carstairs. The opera was preceded by a short musical sketch, entitled "Cups and Saucers," which, however, contains nothing of much interest excepting a song with a pretty refrain, "Chiggery, chiggery china." [*Sheffield Independent*, 4 Dec 1883]

#### "IOLANTHE" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL

The return visit Mr. D'Oyly Carte's "Iolanthe" Company was begun at the Theatre Royal last night with all indications of success. The house was well filled, and the audience enthusiastic, the principal and best known music of the opera being loudly applauded, having in several instances to be repeated. Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan have not, their many joint productions, brought out a comic opera that has laid such a hold upon the public as "Iolanthe," and those who prophesied for it a short lived popularity compared with "The Pirates" and "Patience" have but to mark the interest manifested in any performance of it that may give to become convinced that there every prospect of its surviving even the favourite works just mentioned. "Iolanthe" is one the greatest theatrical successes of the day, and so long as it continues be as well performed as it was last evening, that success is not likely to wane. The performance was in the hands of the same artistes who appeared in it when it was last given in Sheffield, with the exception that Miss Esme Lee sustained the part of Phyllis, the Arcadian shepherdess and ward in Chancery. The opera was well-rendered throughout, and its pretty music gave the greatest pleasure. Mr. Thornton's Lord Chancellor was a capital representation, and his two descriptive songs were given with the greatest amount of effect. Strephon—half fairy, half mortal—could not be intrusted to a better actor than Mr. Frederici [*sic*]. Private Willis has little to do, but Mr. George Marler made much of that little whilst "On sentry go," and his comical song was irresistible. Mr. Cadwaladr and Mr. Greyling were the two principal Earls, the latter gentleman singing "When Britain really ruled the waves" with his customary success. The fairies are impersonated by a good-looking bevy of damsels, who go about their business as if "to the manner born." Iolanthe (Miss Beatrix Young) sang the beautiful ballad "He Loves" with much sweetness; and the "massive" Fairy Queen (Miss Fanny Harrison) was quite attractive. The chorus of peers, indeed the choruses generally, were executed with smartness, and the orchestra, under Mr. Arnold's conductorship, did full justice to the accompaniments. [*Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 4 Dec 1883]