

## Mr. D'Oyly Carte's "E" Company January 1st to December 28th 1885

From 27 December 1884 to 24 January 1885, advertisements appeared in *The Era* listing the engagements of this company for the following week. The operas performed were *Iolanthe* and *Patience*. Bessie Wilkinson, Millie Vere, Helen Kinnaird, Miss Carr-Shaw, Freda Bevan, Katie Kavanagh, Albert James, Albert Christian, Robert Fairbanks, Ferdinand Theiler, F. Landor Scates were listed as members of the company and Willie Robinson named as the conductor.

### **Week commencing 29 December 1884**

TAVISTOCK. Monday & Tuesday

TEIGNMOUTH. Wednesday & Thursday.

WESTON-SUPER-MARE. Friday & Saturday. [*The Era*, 27 Dec. 1884, p.5.]

### **Week commencing 5 January.**

SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS, STROUD. Monday & Tuesday, *Patience*. Wednesday, *Iolanthe*. [*Gloucester Citizen*, 5 Jan. 1885, p.2.]

COMIC OPERA.—Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company is paying a three days' visit, opening tonight at the Subscription Rooms with the charming opera "Patience," Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's clever satire on ultra-æstheticism. This beautiful *bonne bouche* in comic opera is well known to play goers, and the strains of its captivating melodies familiar to all in the form of dance music, while the reputation of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company cannot fail to draw good houses. [*Gloucester Citizen*, 5 Jan. 1885, p.4.]

"PATIENCE."—Dr. [*sic*] D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company occupied the boards Stroud last evening with Gilbert and Sullivan's operatic gem, "Patience." The company all round is a thoroughly good one, the chorus being notably excellent, the voices all of good quality, and the individuals of pleasing appearance. The part of heroine was prettily played by Miss Bessie Wilkinson, of sweet voice and taking *naivete*, and Lady Jane and the rapturous maidens were all of the order excellent. Too much praise can scarcely be given to Mr. A. James for his splendid reading of the æsthetic hypocrite Bunthorne; his singing and acting throughout were such as to call forth enthusiastic plaudits. Grosvenor, the idyllic poet, found an able exponent Mr. Robert Fairbanks, who has a pleasing baritone voice, and played his part well. Of the other characters it needs only to be said that little or no fault could be found with them. Nearly every number of the sparkling music was encored, and the audience were kept in a delighted mood the whole opera through. The concerted singing was unusually good, with the exception of a slight tendency to hurry in some of the sombre numbers. There was a good attendance. To-night "Patience" will be repeated, and to-morrow "Iolanthe" will be put on. [*Gloucester Citizen*, 6 Jan. 1885, p.4.]

ABERGAVERN. Thursday to Saturday. [*The Era*, 3 Jan. 1885, p.6.]

### **Week commencing 12 January.**

TEMPERANCE HALL, MERTHYR TYDFIL. Monday & Tuesday, *Patience*. Wednesday, *Iolanthe*.

TEMPERANCE HALL. — Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company have been here on a visit this week, engaged by Mr. Clements, of Dudley, the well-known caterer for the Midland Counties, and have met with marked success. On Monday, the opening night,

the hall was crammed, hundreds failing to obtain admission. *Patience* was given again on Tuesday, and *Iolanthe* on Wednesday. [*The Era*, 17 Jan. 1885, p.20.]

ABERDARE. Thursday to Saturday. [*The Era*, 10 Jan. 1885, p.7.]

**Week commencing 19 January.**

ROYAL VICTORIA THEATRE, NEWPORT. Monday & Tuesday, *Iolanthe*.  
Wednesday & Thursday, *Patience*.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company opened a four nights' engagement on Monday in *Iolanthe*. The efforts of Mr. Albert Christian as Strephon and Miss Bessie Wilkinson as Phyllis were praiseworthy, while the animated performance of Miss Millie Vere in the title-role was equally attractive. The rest of the parts were fairly well represented. *Patience* was staged on Wednesday and Thursday. [*The Era*, 24 Jan. 1885, p.16.]

ROBINSON'S ASSEMBLY HALL, NEATH. Friday, *Patience*.

D'Oyly Carte's company appeared here on the 23rd inst., in the æsthetic opera of *Patience*, and were favoured with a capital house, although the prices of admission were considerably increased. [*The Era*, 31 Jan. 1885, p.17]

LLANELLY. Saturday. [*The Era*, 17 Jan. 1885, p.6.]

**Week commencing 26 January.**

NEW THEATRE, WATERFORD. Monday to Wednesday.

This week Mr. D'Oyly Carte's always welcome opera company occupy the boards, and nightly turn away money from *Iolanthe* and *Patience*. [*The Era*, 31 Jan. 1885, p. 17.]

THEATRE ROYAL, LIMERICK. Thursday to Saturday. [*The Era*, 24 Jan. 1885, p.7.]

**Week commencing 2 February.**

DROGHEDA, DUNDALK and ARMAGH.

**Week commencing 9 February.**

ENNISKILLEN, OMAGH and LONDONDERRY.

**Week commencing 16 February.**

Protestant Hall, Ballymena. Friday, *Iolanthe*. Saturday, *Patience*. [*Ballymena Observer*, Saturday 14 Feb. 1885.]

**Week commencing 23 February.**

LARNE and PAISLEY.

**Week commencing 2 March.**

CORN EXCHANGE, KIRKALDY. Monday, *Iolanthe*. [*Fife Free Press & Kirkaldy Guardian*, Saturday 28 Feb. 1885.]

ARBROATH. Tuesday to Saturday.

**Week commencing 9 March.**

MONTROSE, STONEHAVEN and FRASERBURGH.

**Week commencing 16 March.**

MUSIC HALL, PETERHEAD. Monday, *Iolanthe*. Tuesday, *Patience*.

In the Music Hall, Peterhead, last night, the two-act fairy opera “Iolanthe” was produced by Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s Opera Company. Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s operas were sure to be popular to a Peterhead audience since the recent performance of “H.M.S. Pinafore” by the members of the Choral Society, and since the announcement of the visit of this company, a great interest has been manifested in Peterhead so that the audience which assembled to hear the performance was very large. A keen appreciation was shown by the audience of all the “good things” throughout, almost all the catching airs being rapturously encored. Perhaps Miss Wilkinson as Phyllis, and Mr. A. Christian as Strephon, and Mr. Albert James as the Lord High Chancellor, were most admired, judging from the plaudits of the audience. Miss Helen Rinnard (?) [=Helen Kinnaird] made a good queen of the fairies, while Miss Nellie Veil (?) [=Millie Vere] as Iolanthe also made a good appearance. The singing of the choruses was very effective, all the parts being well balanced. The stage scenery and costumes were admirable. At the close all the leading characters were called before the curtain. Tonight “Patience” will be produced. [*Aberdeen Evening Express*, 17 Mar. 1885, p.3.]

WHEN the curtain fell last night upon the last act of “Patience” there could be no doubt about the verdict of the large audience which had assembled in the Music Hall as to the success Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s first presentation of Gilbert-and-Sullivan comic opera to Peterhead audiences. The enthusiastic cheers which greeted the principals as they came before the curtain, no less than the attention with which the opera was followed and the frequency of the encores, were sufficient to show that the performance had effectually taken the popular taste. This was manifested no less emphatically on the previous evening at the performance “Iolanthe,” and the engagement altogether may be best described, in the words of Colonel Mulberry Sellers, as a “k. c.—complete success.” On both evenings, as on the preceding Friday and Saturday at Fraserburgh, the operas were witnessed by crowded houses, who were unstinted of applause. On both evenings almost every shot of Mr. Gilbert’s humour told, while Sir Arthur Sullivan’s sparkling melodies were again and again encored. The gratifying reception thus accorded to comic opera on its first appearance—other than in the hands of local amateurs—in the Buchan district, was in every way justified, for people may seek a long time before they find a better or more enjoyable entertainment than was afforded by the rendering of “Patience” and “Iolanthe” by Mr. Carte’s company, and certainly no entertainment of a higher all-round excellence has been seen in Peterhead for a very long time, if indeed ever. In “Iolanthe” Mr. Albert James, as the Lord Chancellor, was quite inimitable, and he was scarcely less successful last night as Bunthorne, the fleshly poet. Last night, perhaps, he shared the honours with Miss Kinnaird, who was admirable as the “massive” Lady Jane, and the most deafening and decided success of the evening was their duet “Hey, hey, to you,” which was repeatedly encored. In “Iolanthe” Miss Kinnaird also made herself exceedingly popular, and one of the heartiest encores of the evening, as it is one of the prettiest numbers the opera, was her song “Oh, foolish fay.” Further into detail as to individual performances it unnecessary enter, the more so because there was really no weak or ineffective feature in either the pieces. In “Iolanthe,” Messrs. Fairbanks and Young as Lords Mountarat and Tolloller, Mr. Christian as Strephon the Arcadian shepherd, Miss Wilkinson Phyllis, and Miss Vere as the fairy who has married mortal—all were alike excellent both in singing and acting; and Theiler, as Private Willis, secured special favour in a very small part. The Peers were exceedingly

amusing, the fairies graceful and attractive, and the chorus singing was throughout effective. In "Patience" Miss Wilkinson gave a very sympathetic and pleasing interpretation of the heroine's part, and did adequate justice to her pretty ballads. Mr. Fairbanks was scarcely so happy as the idyllic poet as in the part of Lord Mountararat, but Mr. Young as the Duke of Dunstable, Mr. Christian as Colonel Calverley, and Mr. Scates as Major Murgatroyd, were all in admirable form, and were well supported by the chorus of rapturous maidens and dragoons. The æsthetic and other costumes and the staging of the pieces generally, were in keeping with the merits of the performance, and Mr Robinson acquitted himself well of the arduous duties accompanist and conductor. Undoubtedly Peterhead people have seldom the opportunity of enjoying so thorough a treat, either musical or dramatic, and those who were present on either occasion will be pleased hear that the company is not unlikely to make return visit in the autumn with some other of Gilbert and Sullivan's popular pieces. [*Peterhead Sentinel and General Advertiser for the Buchan District*, Wednesday 18 Mar. 1885, p.5.]

#### ACCIDENT AT PETERHEAD

An accident occurred in the Music Hall, Peterhead, last night during the removal of the scenery used by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. In the course of the operations John Dickie, joiner, in the employment of Messrs. George Scott & Sons, St. Mary Street, fell from the flies to the stage, a distance of eight feet. He was somewhat severely injured, and was attended by Drs. Comrie Hay and Caito. [*Aberdeen Evening Express*, 18 Mar. 1885, p.3.]

KEITH. Wednesday & Thursday.

ST. ANDREW'S HALL, BANFF. Friday, *Iolanthe*. Saturday, *Patience*.

On Friday and Saturday evenings Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Comic Opera Company occupied the boards of St. Andrew's Hall, and presented on the former evening the opera of "Iolanthe," and on the latter, "Patience." On both occasions the house was crowded in every part, and the frequent and enthusiastic cheers which greeted the performers, testified how thoroughly the rare treat was appreciated. The whimsical humour and quiet satire of Mr. Gilbert told immensely, while the sparkling melodies of Sir Arthur Sullivan were frequently encored. It is unnecessary to go into detail as to the individual performances, suffice it to say that the principals did their parts very successfully, and were well supported. The staging and costumes were in harmony with the nature of the performances, and it may truly be said that the people in the far north have seldom had the opportunity of enjoying so great a treat, either musical or dramatic. [*Aberdeen Journal*, 23 Mar. 1885, p.2.]

#### **Week commencing 23 March.**

INVERNESS.

#### **Week commencing 30 March.**

???

#### **Week commencing 6 April.**

**THEATRE ROYAL, WEST HARTLEPOOL.**

Another musical and dramatic treat has been afforded the patrons of this place of amusement by the appearance this week of one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's companies, under the direction of Mr. W. Wallace, in *Iolanthe* and *Patience*. The parts were admirably played, those deserving special mention being Messrs. A. Christian, A.

James, D. Young, R. Fairbanks, Miss M. Vere, Miss Helen Kinnaird, Miss K. Kavanagh, and Miss B. Wilkinson. [*The Era*, 11 Apr. 1885, p.18.]

**Week commencing 13 April.**

THEATRE ROYAL, STOCKTON-ON-TEES.

This week lovers of comic operas are enjoying a treat, for Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company are performing *Patience* and *Iolanthe* in capital style. [*The Era*, 18. Apr. 1885, p.18.]

**Week commencing 20 April.**

BARNARD CASTLE, PENRITH and WHITEHAVEN.

**Week commencing 27 April.**

KENDAL. Monday to Wednesday.

THE ATHENÆUM, LANCASTER. Thursday & Friday, *Iolanthe*. Saturday, *Patience*. [*Lancaster Gazette*, 29 Apr. 1885, p.2.]

"IOLANTHE." — On Thursday evening, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's fairy opera "Iolanthe; or the Peer and the Peri," was produced at the Athenæum for the first time in Lancaster. There was not a very full house, but the audience thoroughly appreciated the performance, and frequently testified its approval by hearty applause. "Iolanthe" is a clever production. The humour and satire are as fresh and pungent as in any of its predecessors, and the music quite as charming. The opera is in two acts, and the scenery appropriate to the fairy character of the piece. When the curtain rises on the first act, a dozen pretty fairies come tripping upon the stage, singing as they dance:-

"Tripping hither, tripping thither,  
Nobody knows why or whither;  
We must dance and we must sing,  
Round about our fairy ring."

The scene is very effective, and at once secures the attention of the audience. Then follows two dainty solos by "Celia" and "Leila," concluding with a chorus, at the end of which the ladies all sigh despondingly. In the dialogue which follows we are made acquainted with the cause of the grief of the fairy maidens. The Queen had banished Iolanthe, "who rote [sic] all our songs and arranged all our dances," because she had "married a mortal." They appeal to the Queen to forgive Iolanthe. "Think," says Leila, "how we loved her." The reply of the Queen is intensely funny. Miss Helen Kinnaird, who takes the part, is a tall, handsome woman, of fine form, and the reference to her fairy character is grotesque, and sets the house in a roar. "Loved her!" she exclaims in a reproachful tone, "what was your love to mine? Why, she was invaluable to me! Who taught me to curl myself inside a buttercup? Iolanthe! Who taught me to swing upon a cobweb? Iolanthe! Who taught me to dive into a dewdrop - to nestle in a nutshell - to gambol upon gossamer? Iolanthe!" The banished fairy is summoned from the water, and appears clad in weeds; she is pardoned, the weeds fall from her, and she is once again restored to her fairy character, with wings complete. Iolanthe has a son, Strephon, who is in love with Phyllis, a ward in Chancery, but the Lord Chancellor interferes to prevent their marriage, and one of the most amusing parts of the opera is the scene in that high dignitary confesses himself to be "a highly susceptible Chancellor":-

"For I am not so old, and 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!  
Which rather tries my temper, for  
I'm such a susceptible Chancellor."

Surrounded by a number of peers, who wish him to give Phyllis to the one she may think proper to select, the Lord Chancellor confesses to the misfortune of being "singularly attracted to this young person." But, if he gave her to himself "the award would be I open to misconstruction," and he waives his claim, soliloquising thus:- "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, I my lords, it is indeed painful to have to sit upon a woolsack which is stuffed with such thorns as these!" And on through the opera there is sparkling bits of humour which are highly entertaining. The Lord Chancellor's patter song contains some brilliant bits of satire. We give one verse as a specimen:-

"Ere I go into court I will read my brief through,  
(Said I to myself - said I,  
And I'll never take work I'm unable to do,  
(Said I to myself - said I,  
My learned profession I'll never disgrace  
By taking a fee with a grin on my face,  
When I haven't been there to attend to the case,  
(Said I to myself - said I!")

The curtain fell on the first act amidst the most hearty applause. There were several encores, which were cordially responded to. All the solos were carefully and effectively sung, and the choruses were rendered in a style that left nothing to be desired. The company is strong in numbers and musical talent, and the dresses superb. Lovers of the opera, who have enjoyed "Pinafore," "Pirates," or any other of Gilbert and Sullivan's productions, will be equally entertained with "Iolanthe." When the curtain dropped over the last scene the applause was hearty and unanimous, and the principals were called before the curtain to receive the congratulations of the audience. "Iolanthe" will be repeated on Friday, and on Saturday "Patience" will be produced. [*Lancaster Gazette*, 2 May 1885, p.5.]

***Week commencing 4 May.***

THEATRE ROYAL, PRESTON. Monday to Friday, *Iolanthe*. [*Preston Chronicle*, 2 May 1885, p. 1.]

Mr. Harry Smart's motto in things theatrical evidently is "excellence and variety," for he is constantly presenting his patrons a succession, of novelties intrinsically worth all commendation and appealing to the better and more refined parts of our nature. This week he has placed before the public the successful fairy opera of "Iolanthe, or the Peer and the Peri," by Gilbert and Sullivan. The argument of the opera will be grasped by the reader for a perusal of the following description of it:- "Iolanthe is a fairy, who was condemned to penal servitude for the crime of marrying a mortal. Her son, Strephon, who is half mortal and half fairy, is in love with Phyllis, a shepherdess and a ward in Chancery. The Lord Chancellor, who has charge of all the wards in chancery, is himself in love with Phyllis but the circumstances of

his position are such that he dare not declare his passion. This is the state of things when the fairies entreat their Queen to pardon Iolanthe, who has for twenty-five years been undergoing punishment, head downwards in a neighbouring stream. The Queen relents, and Iolanthe is restored to her former position in the fairy ranks. Iolanthe having the gift of eternal youth appears younger than her son Strephon. When Phyllis sees Strephon embracing his mother, her jealousy is aroused, and upon this the development of the plot principally turns. Phyllis, thinking herself slighted, expresses her willingness to become the bride of any member of the House of Lords who may select her. The fairy Queen, however, is persuaded to summon her band to the aid of Strephon, and the first act closes with the fairies' declaration that Strephon should be made an M.P. for the purpose of thwarting the Lords. The scene of the second act is the Palace Yard at Westminster. Two peers - the Earl of Mountararat and the Earl of Tolloller, sue for the heart and hand of Phyllis, and she is ready to receive the suit of either of them as long as they can agree between themselves which it shall be. But the Lord Chancellor is still consumed with love for the beautiful Phyllis, and is about to tell her he has given his own consent to his marriage with her, when Iolanthe interposes and discloses to him the fact that he is her husband, it having long been commonly believed she was dead. The Queen is disposed to send Iolanthe back to her servitude, but she herself has fallen in love with a stalwart sentry, Private Willis, whom she has seen in the Palace Yard; and the other fairies have given their hearts to Peers, so poetic justice is at last attained by arrangements of marriage all round, Strephon and Phyllis being made the happiest of them all. The opera has met with unequivocal success during the week, and our readers should not allow tonight to pass without making themselves acquainted with the entertaining piece. The music is bright and lively, with here and there a touch of solemnity that agreeably contrasts with the more vivacious element which predominates throughout. The libretto is written with smartness and skill, and clever thrusts at passing topics are conceived in a kindly if necessarily ironical manner. The scenery has been exceptionally good and appropriate, reflecting great credit on the management who, in the matter of stage management, are likewise to be congratulated. There is a general all-round excellence displayed by the artistes, who, of course, from long association, are thoroughly conversant with their parts. The Phyllis of Miss Bessie Wilkinson was very good, so far as the acting was concerned, though, there was nothing extraordinary in her vocalisation. Strephon was well played and sung by Mr. A. Christian. The Queen of the Fairies had a majestic and capable impersonator in Miss Helen Kinnaird, while Miss Millie Vere, as Iolanthe, was graceful and pleasing in her vocalisation. The Lord Chancellor was ably interpreted by Mr. Albert James, albeit his antics under the shadow of St. Stephen's, must have caused legal gentlemen present many a sly and meaning smile. The band and chorus were excellent and went with a dash and ease that secured a most gratifying success. Next week Messrs. Shiel Barry and William Hogarth's "Les Cloches de Corneville" company appear with that genuine and sound actor Shiel Barry in the important part of the Miser. [*Preston Chronicle*, 9 May 1885, p.5.]

***Week commencing 11 May.***

LECTURE HALL, DERBY. Monday, *Patience*. Tuesday, *Iolanthe*. [*Derby Daily Telegraph*, 8 May 1885, p. 1.]

COVENTRY. Wednesday & Thursday.

THEATRE ROYAL, LEAMINGTON. Friday, *Iolanthe*. Saturday, *Patience*.

Two of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, viz., *Iolanthe* and *Patience*, are announced for presentation at the Theatre Royal tonight (Friday) and tomorrow night. *Iolanthe*, in which Miss Fortesque played Celia, is set down first, and the clever æsthetic opera comique *Patience*, will be produced tomorrow. The company has been changed since the last visit, though Miss Millie Vere still portrays the title role of *Iolanthe*. The lateness of the engagements precludes any notice of the performance this week. [*Leamington Spa Courier*, Saturday 16 May 1885]

**Week commencing 18 May.**

OPERA HOUSE, NORTHAMPTON. Monday & Tuesday, *Iolanthe*. Wednesday & Thursday, *Patience*. Friday & Saturday, *The Mikado*.

Next week will indeed “a feast of fat things” to the lovers of music and the drama. Such an array of attractions has never yet been offered since the Opera House opened its portals. Not only is *Patience* and *Iolanthe* to be performed according to the promise made in the recent managerial address, but since that was delivered, we learn with pleasure that Mr. Tarry has succeeded inducing Mr. D’Oyly Carte to produce for the first time in the provinces the opera now playing with such conspicuous success at the Savoy, *The Mikado*. This is indeed a compliment to our New Opera House, as well as an eloquent testimony to the rank and position which it holds in the metropolis. Mr. Tarry could scarcely expect that his assertion, that “its name was great in mouths of wisest censure,” would be so speedily and amply vindicated. Of *Patience* and *Iolanthe* we feel that it is quite unnecessary to speak—the plots, situations, and melodies of both are of European, nay, world-wide repute, and as this will be the first time that playgoers have had an opportunity of witnessing them under favourable conditions (for the performances of these operas at the Corn Exchange were more tantalising than satisfying) we have no doubt that overflowing houses will be the record of the week. With regard to *The Mikado* we feel we ought to write more fully, and are only prevented doing so by want of space. This is said to be the most successful of the operas which those most successful collaborators, Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, have yet produced, and the London Press hardly knew, on its first production, which to lavish most praise upon — the ingenuity of the plot, the quaint and daring originality of the witticisms, the melody of the music, the beauty of the scenery, or the grotesque and startling splendour of the dresses. Doubtless the same things will divide the admiration the public here, as it is well known that Mr. D’Oyly Carte is the only manager who provides the whole of the scenery, properties, and costumes illustrating his productions. If wit and satire, the keenest and most caustic since the days of Sheridan, and music the most captivating and masterly of any composed in our day, united to clever artistes, beautiful scenery, gorgeous dresses and appropriate accessories have any power to please, the record of next week will be a red letter one in the calendar of our beautiful Opera House. Brilliant as no doubt the audiences will be all the week, that of Friday promises to be exceptionally so. We may add that Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s company includes a daughter of Mr. Butler Wilkins—Miss Florence Wilkins (Miss Freda Bevan), who is cast for Leila in *Iolanthe* and Lady Saphir in *Patience*. [*Northampton Mercury*, 16 May 1885, p.8.]

“It is ridicule that kills,” says the old aphorism. The follies and foibles of society’s votaries, the cant so often characteristic of the “unco gude,” the shams in the world of politics, fashion, and science—ridicule finds these out, as the acid does the spurious diamond. Although, perhaps, it hardly necessary that every play and every opera should point a moral and adorn a tale, yet Gilbert and Sullivan’s works are all charged with some such mission as this. Notwithstanding no modern satirist can strike



at every variety of social vice and idiosyncrasy with the dexterously handled flail of Theodore Hook or a Sydney Smith, yet Gilbert and Sullivan's piquant musical pasquinades show that there are nineteenth century authors who can adroitly shoot at folly as it flies. The libretti of their operas are all seasoned with the spice of social persiflage and keen-edged, yet not unkindly ridicule. *Iolanthe*, the piece performed by D'Oyly Carte's opera company at the New Opera House, on Monday and Tuesday evenings, has all these characteristics, with just a flavour of Shelley's aerial *Queen Mab* and Milton's mercurial *Comus* thrown in. Everyone, for instance, acquainted with the foibles of counsel, can appreciate the sly good-tempered thrusts contained in the Lord Chancellor's song:-

Ere I go into Court I will read my brief through  
 (Said I to myself — said I);  
 And I'll never take work I'm unable to do  
 (Said I to myself — said I).  
 My learned profession I'll never disgrace  
 By taking fee with grin my face,  
 When I haven't been there to attend to the case  
 (Said I to myself—said I.)

The performance each evening was distinguished by all that poetry of feeling, artistic development, and wealth of colouring which the opera-loving public are accustomed to expect from author, composer, and impresario of the fame and genius of W. S. Gilbert, Arthur Sullivan, and D'Oyly Carte. Mr. Albert James acts and sings with point and *esprit* as the amatory Lord Chancellor, whose peculiar function is, according to the Gilbertsonian dictum to—

“Sit all day  
 Giving agreeable girls away.”

Messrs. R. Fairbanks and Duncan Young give picturesque and diverting portrayal of the Earl of Mountararat and the Earl of Tolloller. Nothing could well be better than the rich Pickwickian humour of their *rencontre* in Palace Yard to decide their rival claims to Phyllis's hand, and the house fairly rang with laughter at the grotesque and fantastic satire of the scene. Mr. Ferdinand Thielor has only small part to take as Private Willis of the Grenadier Guards, but in look, gesture, and gait he contributes his full quota to the pronounced success achieved. Mr. Albert Christian's performance as Strephon, the Arcadian Shepherd, is well nigh *ad unguem*. Full of sonorous sweetness was his rendering of “Good morrow, good mother,” “A shepherd I,” and the duet with Phyllis, “If we're weak enough to tarry.” Miss Helen Kinnaird's performance as the Queen of the Fairies is marked by a delicacy and lightness of touch combined with a pseudo-classicism and statuesque beauty almost worthy of Mr. Gilbert's Pygmalion-loved Galatea. Although her voice is not one of great compass she warbles her numbers with a vivacity and charm that render redemands inevitable concomitants of her appearance before the footlights. Miss Millie Vere's *Iolanthe* is a graceful and artistic performance, dramatically as well vocally. The airy vivacity of her step, the purity of her vocalisation, alike in the rendering of the lighter numbers and those containing notes of deeper passion, invest the character with singular weirdness and witchery. Miss Freda Bevan (Miss Florence Wilkins) is a winsome Leila, whose performance is invested with striking merits—vocal, dramatic, and Terpsichorean. Miss Agnes Taylor as Celia, and Miss Kate Kavanagh as Fleta, are also impersonations far above the common place; while Miss Bessie Wilkinson's Phyllis (the ward in chancery) is coloured and suffused with idyllic charm and Arcadian grace. The orchestration is spirited and effective, and the concerted music is

given with an *élan* and choral sweetness of a piece with the entire performance. The tableaux are poetically picturesque, bevvies of dainty damsels semi-classic attire, and coronetted lords gorgeous in many-hued robes adding to the glow and fascination of the piquant, pastoral pageant.

Iolanthe shoots at the ways of the legal profession. *Patience*, another of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas, and the one that has longest maintained public favour, satirises with no less force the ecstatic worshippers of Æstheticism; and something of the blight which has passed upon an absurd craze, as distinguished from that temperate love of all that is beautiful which marks the advance art in English dress and household adornment, is to be credited to the well-known opera which a company of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's placed before Northampton audience, not, however, for the first time, on Wednesday evening. The house was hardly well filled, some local playgoers familiar with *Patience* doubtless reserving themselves for *The Mikado*, played for the first time out of London on Friday evening. Lord and Lady Burghley and few of his lordship's fellow Militia officers witnessed the performance. The pretty nonsense never offending against the canons of good taste, the plaintive choruses and distressing sighs of love-sick maidens, their infatuation of the new light and its poets, the amusing plots and melodies hummed in the ear for many long day, and familiar music, had not lost all their charm; and the tableaux, the enchanting scene of the exterior of Bunthorne's Castle, and old English dresses, were justly admired. Whether, however, the public are tiring of the earlier of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas, or whether because the extravagancies of æsthetic people having been dropped the shafts directed at them no longer keenly interest, we know not, but the performance of *Patience* in Northampton might have been expected to be witnessed by a larger audience, and more rapturously received than it was on Wednesday. The audience gave proof of entertainment now and again, yet there was somewhat of a languidness of interest in the opera as an entirety. We do not think this due in any appreciable degree to the company. Many marks of public favour were shown to Bunthorne (Mr. Albert James) and the Lady Jane (Miss Helen Kinnaird) in their duet in the second part, they being twice recalled; the "Conceive me if you can" of Bunthorne and Grosvenor (Mr. Robert Fairbanks) was good; and encores were also demanded of some other songs. We rather believe that which was wanting was the same as makes Dickens's novels less relished by present day readers than by the public which first read them—the follies and oddities he helped to laugh out of existence are not with us now, and the comicalities of Æstheticism are mostly gone, or, at any rate, we are not troubling ourselves about them. The Lady Saphir, it may added, is played by a local lady, Miss Florence Wilkins.

*Apropos* of the production of *The Mikado* at the Northampton Opera House on Friday and Saturday evenings, a London correspondent thus writes: "I hear that the *Mikado*, the new Japanese opera the Savoy, is likely to be greater success financially than any of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's earlier ventures. The theatre is crowded night after night, and the majority of the higher-priced places are booked for some time to come. Everyone is delighted with the performance, and its run through the greater part of the season is certain."

We hear that so great is the demand for places that the first and second rows of the upper circle are being utilised. The dresses of the performers are superb, and the material has all been imported from Japan for the purpose. It is said that three artistes (in dress) were engaged for three weeks in continuous labour laying on the gold on the satin of the *Mikado*'s dress alone. We trust that the compliment Mr. D'Oyly Carte has paid the town, the theatre, and the management in selecting Northampton for the

*Mikado*'s introduction to the provinces will meet with the appreciation of crowded houses. [*Northampton Mercury*, 23 May 1885, p. 6.]

On Friday, the 22d inst., the latest production of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan was started on its provincial tour at the Theatre Royal and Opera House, Northampton, under the distinguished patronage of the most noble the Marquis of Exeter, A.D.C., and before a house crammed in every part. Everything that could be done to give *éclat* to the occasion had been done. The entrances and lobbies to the various parts of the theatre were decorated with lamps, banners and fans of Japanese design. The new and specially painted scenery by Hawes Craven, and the gorgeous dresses designed by Mr. Wilhelm, and executed by Madame Lèon, presented a brilliant picture of kaleidoscopic colour. Of the presentation itself we cannot speak too highly; every one engaged was perfect, and, encouraged by the hearty applause given from the first, were all at their best. The orchestra, specially augmented, was conducted by Mr. W. Robinson, R.A.M., the opera was rehearsed and produced under the active supervision of Mr. F. A. Lèon, and the whole was under the superintendence of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's acting manager, Mr. W. Welby Wallace. We append the cast:-

The Mikado of Japan.....	Mr. ROBERT FAIRBANKS
Nanki-Poo.....	Mr. J. DUNCAN YOUNG
Ko-Ko.....	Mr. ALBERT JAMES
Pooh-Bah.....	Mr. ALBERT CHRISTIAN
Pish-Tush.....	Mr. EDWARD WHITE
Go-To.....	Mr. FERDINAND THEILER
Yum-Yum.....	Miss BESSIE WILKINSON
Pitti-Sing.....	Miss BEATRIX YOUNG
Peep-Bo.....	Miss AGNES TAYLOR
Katisha.....	Miss MILLIE VERE

An equally enthusiastic reception was accorded to the opera on Saturday, and general regret was expressed at the shortness of its stay amongst us. [*The Era*, 30 May 1885, p.15.]

Friday night week at the Northampton Opera House witnessed the rarest event in local dramatic annals—the first production in provinces of one of those unrivalled comic operas which have issued from the fertile collaboration of W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. The fame of *The Mikado*, as produced at the Savoy, and the success it has achieved there, had preceded it, and the announcement of its presentation at Northampton excited, therefore, the most pleasurable anticipations. But these anticipations, great as they were, were more than eclipsed by the reality. A crowded and expectant house assembled to do honour to the occasion, and the performance was further under the patronage of the Marquis of Northampton and the officers of the 3rd and 4th Battalions the Northamptonshire Regiment. The opera was received with unqualified delight, and aroused an enthusiasm such as has never before been witnessed in our Theatre, and which is rarely excited by dramatic performances. The applause was continued and hearty throughout, and encores were the order of the evening. Stage and public were in perfect *rappor*t; every point told. And whilst we must congratulate Mr. D'Oyly Carte's accomplished company on the perfection of their representation of the joint work of librettist and composer, they are also to be congratulated on having a receptive and appreciative audience.

As most of our readers are aware, *The Mikado, or the Town of Titipu* is a Japanese opera, in which some of the curiosities of Japanese manners and fashions have been converted into dramatic capital, with a humour that never fails and a charm

that never flags. The opening scene of the first act introduces us to the court-yard of Ko-Ko's Palace in Titipu. Ko-Ko is Lord High Executioner of Titipu. His original calling was that of a cheap tailor, who had been

“A convict from the county jail,  
Whose head was next  
On some pretext  
Condemnèd to be mown off,”

but who had been made Headsman. He has as wards three sisters, Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo. Nanki-Poo, the Mikado's son, is in love with Yum-Yum, and wants to marry her; but Ko-Ko is anxious to marry her himself. A grotesque but friendly rivalry ensues between the two for her hand, Yum-Yum inclining to the Mikado's son, whom, however, she only knows as a wandering minstrel. Nanki-Poo had fled from his father's court to escape the unwelcome attentions of an elderly lady there, by name, Katisha, whom his father decreed he should marry within week or perish ignominiously on the scaffold. A letter received by Ko-Ko from the Mikado leads him to suppose that his Imperial Highness requires an offering on the altar of a Lord High Executioner's duty, for he is “struck by the fact that no executions have taken place in Titipu for a year, and decrees that unless somebody is beheaded within one month, the post of Lord High Executioner shall be abolished and the city reduced to the rank of a village.” The decree produces the greatest consternation, and after passages of extravagant humour, it is ultimately agreed that Nanki-Poo shall be the victim on condition of his being allowed to marry Yum-Yum, Ko-Ko consoling himself with the thought that in a month, by the operation of the law she will be widow and eligible for marriage to him. This comfortable arrangement has scarcely been made when Katisha rushes on the scene to “claim her perjured lover, Nanki-Poo,” and to pronounce a doom upon the “pink cheek, bright eye, rose lip, sweet tongue” of his intended bride. The scene receives a mock melodramatic ending from the angry denunciation and wrathful claims of the love-lorn Katisha. In the second Act, whose *locale* is Ko-Ko's garden, it is discovered on the authority of Pooh-Bah, who is Japanese “Attorney-General, Lord Chief Justice, Master of the Rolls, Judge Ordinary, and the Lord Chancellor” all in one, that the Mikado's law, when a married man is beheaded his wife is buried alive.” Yum-Yum is not quite prepared for such a fate, even in exchange for the bliss a month's married life, although whether such a fate would be a draw-back either to bride or bridegroom, Pitti-Sing says “all depends.” Hence further complications arise, in which it is agreed that Nanki-Poo shall by an agreeable fiction, be supposed to be executed, and a certificate to that effect handed to the Mikado. Ke-Ko is induced to woo and wed Katisha, and so, ultimately, everything ends happily. Such is a bald hint of the plot. Very nonsensical but very funny and the fun got out of it flows in a continuous stream.

The songs and dialogue are written in Mr. Gilbert's best vein. The burlesque is grotesque, the wit pointed but kindly and healthy. Traces there are of other productions of the author's facile pen, as in the music there are floating melodious echoes of other charming operas of Sir Arthur Sullivan's composition. But these, after all, are but the varied manifestations of the same genius applied to different circumstances, for in the whole opera there is freshness and charm, an originality of idea, brilliancy of movement and of melody, and so singularly striking an adaptation of the music to words and sentiment that, only in a somewhat lower degree than the Laureate's meaning, because comic opera does not occupy the same level as epic poetry, we may be said to have a setting of “perfect music” unto “noble (?) words.” Humorous songs to “catching” tunes, glees and choruses to ear-haunting melodies,

dance music, lively and sparkling, fit accompaniment to the “poetry of motion,” succeed each other with embarrassing rapidity and richness. There is not a weak number the whole opera; not an ineffective situation.

The opening scene gave impressive foretaste of the artistic, humorous, and musical enjoyment which the Gilbert-Sullivan partnership had provided, in conjunction with the managerial genius of Mr. D'Oyly Carte. A Japanese Court-yard, a perfect imitation of the real thing, a company of Japanese nobles, appropriately costumed, and sitting in the various attitudes suggested by native drawings, with the tonsured peculiarities the Japanese, and the artistic multi-coloured robes, all set off by solemn pantomimic action and the smart manipulation of that Japanese institution, “the fan.” These gentlemen of Japan, “with their attitudes queer and quaint,” are disturbed by the entrance of Nanki-Poo, who, first as wandering minstrel and then in his own proper person as the son of the Mikado, is the young lover of the piece, running through the whole gamut of passion, in burlesque, from the seventh Heaven of delight to the infinite depths of despair and—back again. Mr. J. Duncan Young, to whom this character is allotted, sings and plays with admirable effect. His first song, “A wandering minstrel I,” gives an excellent taste his quality, and in succeeding dialogue, duet, or quartet he wins upon his audience. Mr. Edward White as Pish-Tush - a noble lord, who acts as foil to Pooh-Bah, another noble lord, a “lord-of-all-work” - has one good song, “Our great Mikado, virtuous man,” but he sang it well, and scored the first encore. “Pooh- Bah,” a queer character, full of dry humour, found in Mr. Albert Christian a perfect exponent. He could trace his ancestry back “to a protoplasmal primordial atomic globule,” consequently, his “family pride is something inconceivable.” He was “born sneering,” and he carries “the sneer” with ineffable scorn through the performance. A pluralist, he is not above selling his services, and to mortify his own pride does not object to be “a salaried minion.” In his song, “Young man, despair,” he was heartily encored, and throughout the opera his sarcastic humour was greatly appreciated. The most diverting episodes of the opera, however, are those which Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner, is the chief figure. In Mr. Albert James's hands Ko-Ko is a creation high burlesque and broad farce, intensely funny. His entrance upon the stage, and his reception by Japanese nobles with the profoundest and most grotesque obeisances, his own solemn burlesque of high dignity, and his singing of “Taken from the county jail,” formed an incident of dramatic drollery which was received with shouts laughter and repeated encores. It was immediately followed by one *the* songs of the opera, “They'd none of 'em be missed,” which originates in his considering who shall be put upon his “list” as eligible for execution. The last verse may be given as example of the rest:

“And that Nisi Prius nuisance, who now is rather rife,  
The judicial humorist — I've got him on the list!  
All funny fellows, comic men, and clowns of private life —  
They'd none of missed—they'd none of 'em be missed  
And apologetic statesmen of a compromising kind,  
Such as — what d'ye call him — Thing'em bob, and likewise Never Mind,  
And 'St—'st—'st —and What's-his-name, and also You-know-who —  
The task of filling up the blanks I'd rather leave to you.  
But it really doesn't matter whom you put upon the list,  
For they'd none of 'em be missed—they'd none of 'em be missed!”

And as the closing strains of the chorus fell from their lips, the audience beheld three quaintly pretty figures, full of artless innocency, engaged in the exchange of the little confidences, understood to be the joys of the giggling school-girl period, entering

from the rear of the stage. These were Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo — the three wards of the harmlessly ferocious Lord High Executioner — and they were represented respectively Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Miss Beatrix Young, and Miss Agnes Taylor. Three more bewitching graces than these young ladies it would be impossible to imagine. The quaint but perfectly artistic Japanese costumes became them perfectly, and their acting was characterised by an exquisite sense of humour, a refined delicacy, and indefinable charm, which simply took the house by storm. Their trio —

“Three little maids from school are we,”

was inexpressibly fascinating in its grace and beauty, and highly diverting its humour. The girlish snickering, the artless pantomimic demureness, the quaint, elegant dancing, which gave to the words a humour and significance simply irresistible, were elements of witchery, the power of which there was no withstanding. The enthusiasm the trio evoked was phenomenal; and even after a third response had been made by the fair songstresses to the vociferous encores with which they were greeted from all parts of the house, the re-demands would have gone on *ad infinitum*, but for the stern decree of the manager. Miss Bessie Wilkinson was artlessly bewitching as Yum-Yum. Her play was perfect in its charm and *abandon*; and her singing was exquisitely sweet. Very beautiful in its arch coquetry was her rendering of the song “The sun, whose rays,” her quaint *naïvetè* and by-play being exceedingly effective. In addition to the hearty encore which she received, a floral tribute, in the shape of a basket of the choicest flowers, was handed her from the audience amid prolonged and enthusiastic plaudits. Miss Beatrix Young’s Pitti-Sing was a delicious bit of humour and coquetry, and her contributions to music and dialogue were amongst the brightest features of the evening. The quartet, “Brightly dawns our wedding day,” in which she sang with Yum-Yum, Nanki-Poo, and Pish-Tush, went with perfect harmony, and the minor key, with its broken light of<sup>1</sup> The verses were accompanied with pantomimic gestures, which, as in the verse given, were supposed to be indicative of certain names; and the “hits” were provocative of hearty laughter, eventuating in repeated encores. This was but a solitary instance of the enthusiastic merriment which Mr. James’s Ko-Ko elicited at all times in every scene in which he appeared. If the broad farce of Ko-Ko and the dry humour of Pooh-Bah, with the burlesque sentiment of Nanki-Poo, were rich diversions; it was reserved for the ladies of the company to produce the most charming ensemble. The procession of Yum-Yum’s school-fellows, a bevy of dainty damsels, attired with perfect artistic taste in Japanese costume, rich and varied in colour, and quaint in form, elicited murmurs of admiration. Sweetly pretty was the chorus they sang:-

“Comes a train of little ladies  
From scholastic trammels free,  
Each little bit afraid is,  
Wondering what the world can be!”

burlesque, gave strange and weird effect; it was repeatedly encored. Miss Agnes Taylor’s Peep-Bo was as arch and charming a piece of acting as could well be desired. The three ladies were a perfect harmony of Japanese colour and character. The lighter shades the opera were thrown into relief by the melodramatic acting and singing of Miss Millie Vere as Katiaha. As Iolanthe, a fair and graceful creation of the poet, Miss Vere had won golden opinions. As Katisha, she represented a character with the

---

<sup>1</sup> The text as printed seems to be out of order. There is clearly something missing from the original at this point. The sentence beginning “The verses were accompanied...” seems to relate to Ko-Ko’s “Little List” song.

deeper shades of dramatic passion, and exhibited capacities of force and feeling scarcely suspected. Notwithstanding the element of burlesque, which gave her utterances the semblance of mock heroics, was easy to see in the character and the player unfathomed depths of human passion and artistic power. In nothing was this more evident than in the touching recit., “Alone, and yet alive!” and the exquisite song, “Hearts do break.” The song is one of the gems of the opera; the music is in Sullivan’s finest manner. Its indescribable pathos, marrying with it a meaning all too deep for tears, received a beautiful interpretation in Miss Vere’s rendering of it. In the midst of the light and gaiety of burlesque, the song comes as an inspiration and was crowned with the gift of a basket beautiful flowers from the audience. Miss Vere’s share in the comedy scene with Ko-Ko indicated versatility as rare it is welcome. In this scene Ko-Ko’s burlesque cooing song

“On a tree by river little tomtit  
Sang, Willow, titwillow, titwillow!”

provoked roars of laughter and repeated encores. Miss Vere’s powers of comedy were similarly exemplified in the lively, sparkling duet with Ko-Ko, “There is beauty in the bellow of the blast,” which was also encored. The Mikado, the highest dignitary of the opera, had comparatively little to do, but through the personality of Mr. Robert Fairbanks did that little well. His song

“A more humane Mikado never  
Did in Japan exist,”

fully merited the enthusiastic encores with which it was rewarded; and his playing was dignified, bland, and benignant as a Mikado’s performance should be. It would be easy and pleasant to single out other features for hearty commendation did space permit. But again we may say the audience bubbled over with enthusiasm, which found continual expression in repeated encores all through the evening.

The opera is unique in its play upon Japanese character, custom, and costume. Throughout, the Japanese local colouring — initialled, by the bye, by coloured Chinese lanterns in the crush-room — is preserved with singular fidelity, as the *cognoscenti* gladly testify. The costumes are all according to approved Japanese patterns — the material being imported direct from Japan, and made up under the artistic eye of Madame Lèon, “the mistress of the robes” at the Savoy, from designs by Wilhelm. Some of the robes are gorgeous in their richness and colour. The Mikado’s dress alone, it is said, cost a hundred guineas. Three artistes in costume were engaged early and late for three weeks in stitching on his Highness’s black satin robe the gorgeous ornithological ornaments (also imported from Japan) which adorn it. Yum-Yum, herself, wears a beautiful garment which was worn a hundred years ago by young lady at the Court of the Mikado. The weapons of the male performers are real, the snickersees being genuine blades, with the sharpness of razors. The superb costumes have been most costly, but the effect is infinitely superior to that of the mere tinsel which is so often made to do duty on the stage.

The scenery by Mr. Hawes Craven, the scenic artist of the Savoy, is especially fine, the effect of a tropical sky being achieved with singular success. In connection with the scenery, it is only right we should mention the share Mr. Sheldon, the master carpenter of the Savoy Theatre, has had in the production. He came down specially to superintend the scenery, which was made by him from the models of the Savoy Theatre, and nothing could have worked better. The opera has been most ably rehearsed by Mr. Lèon, the stage manager; and, although only in rehearsal two or three weeks, the members of the company work in such perfect harmony together,

that we question whether any first performance ever went as smoothly—none could possibly have gone more smoothly.

The ordinary orchestra of the theatre was largely augmented for the occasion, and was conducted most skilfully by Mr. Robinson, R.A.M.

At the close of the performance the members of the company having responded in the usual way to the enthusiasm of their delighted audience, there were loud calls for Mr. D'Oyly Carte, who, it may be said, had hoped to be present, but who sent a telegram at the last moment, regretting that he had been unable to carry out his intention. Mr. Welby-Wallace, the able and courteous manager for Mr. Carte, upon whom the anxiety of superintending the production has devolved, thereupon stepped forward, amid loud plaudits, and said:

“It has become such a universal custom of London managers to give the provinces the good things that are placed before the London public, that on the successful production of a new piece in town almost the first question that is asked is, “How will this go in the country?” I think the reception — the magnificent reception — that you good people of Northampton have given the first country production of *The Mikado* leaves no manner of doubt as to what is likely to be its future career. I very much regret that Mr. D'Oyly Carte could not be present tonight to witness this handsome and enthusiastic reception, but so soon as the telegraph wires can take the news I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, he will be made acquainted with it. It only remains now for me to thank you most cordially on his behalf, and to say that on some not far distant date we shall look forward with pleasurable anticipation to making you a return visit.” (Enthusiastic applause.)

Calls were made for Mr. Lèon and Mr. Robinson, each of whom bowed his acknowledgments; and then there were enthusiastic cries for “Tarry.” Mr. Tarry, who was in the dress circle, not expecting to receive so pronounced a compliment, thereupon expressed his acknowledgments of this spontaneous expression of congratulations on the part his gratified *clientèle*.

*The Mikado* was repeated on Saturday evening. [*Northampton Mercury*, 30 May 1885, p.9.]

### ***Week commencing 25 May.***

THEATRE ROYAL, CAMBRIDGE. Monday to Wednesday, *The Mikado*. [*Cambridge Independent Press*, 23 May 1885, p.4.]

The visit of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company this week has been the occasion of one of the most remarkable of the many successes which have been achieved at this theatre since it was opened. On Monday night, when the short season of three nights was begun, the house was crowded out in every part, and very large numbers were entirely unable to gain admission. In the face of the great pressure for places, it was found desirable to extend the visit by one night. It was therefore announced, after communicating by telegraph with Mr. D'Oyly Carte, that the company would remain one extra night, to give an additional opportunity of seeing the new comic opera. Of the performance itself, we can speak in the highest terms. It may be that the *Mikado* is not intrinsically a better opera than some others of the series which have been produced by Gilbert and Sullivan; but none of those which have preceded it have been presented to provincial audiences with such magnificent appointments as those which graced the performances this week. The dresses were new and resplendent; the scenery was brilliant and fresh; the orchestra was admirable, and the acting and singing had all the verve and dash which marks a new performance. The reception of the opera was enthusiastic to a degree, which must have proved almost inconvenient



to the performers, all the chief members being vociferously encored. The members of the company were most obliging and good natured in this respect; they were obliged to repeat their songs, duets, choruses, &c., in some cases as many as four times. The whole of the characters were sustained with great ability, and all the performers were loudly applauded. Amongst those who were specially favoured in this respect were Mr. Albert James as Ko-Ko, of whose songs, and especially the "Titwillow" song, it seemed as if the audience could never have enough. Miss Bessie Wilkinson gained much applause as Yum Yum; Miss Beatrix Young sang very sweetly and acted exceedingly well as Pitti-Sing, some of the prettiest songs falling to her share; and Miss Agnes Taylor also did well as Peep-Bo. Miss Millie Vere provoked much merriment and sang with great feeling as Katisha, and Mr. J. Duncan Young did very well as Nanki-Poo. Mr. Robert Fairbanks, as the Mikado, acquitted himself admirably, and his song about his sublime system of punishment was repeatedly encored. Mr. Albert Christian, as Pooh-Bah, sustained the dignity of his ancient line, and endured repeated but pleasing insults with great equanimity. His acting was very good. On Thursday evening the house was full and enthusiastic as ever, and the fact that many of the audience had seen the opera before seemed only to heighten their enjoyment. [*Cambridge Independent Press*, 30 May 1885, p.8.]

On the first four nights of last week the boards of this theatre were occupied by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *Mikado* company. The theatre on each evening was crowded to its utmost capacity, and many had to be refused admission. The opera sparkles with wit and humour, and the audience manifested their delight at the presentation in unmistakable terms. The Mikado found an admirable exponent in Mr. Robert Fairbanks; whilst Nanki-Poo was well represented by Mr. Duncan Young. Mr. Albert James distinguished himself as the Lord High Executioner; and Miss Millie Vere, who possesses an excellent voice, was highly successful as Katisha. Yum-Yum, Peep-Bo and Pitti-Sing were represented respectively by Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Miss Beatrix Young, and Miss Agnes Taylor; and the trio by these ladies "Three little girls from school, from school are we," one of the most successful numbers in the opera was nightly encored. The remainder of the company - a most efficient one - rendered admirable support and all connected with the rendering of the opera are to be congratulated on the success achieved. The stage decorations were elaborate and tasteful, and highly characteristic of Japanese art. On Wednesday night Prince Albert Victor of Wales witnessed the performance. [*The Era*, Saturday 6 Jun. 1885, p. 17.]

??? Thursday.

EXCHANGE HALL, BEDFORD. Friday & Saturday, *The Mikado*.

On Friday and Saturday last enthusiastic audiences assembled to witness the lately produced *Mikado*, by D'Oyly Carte's efficient and capable company. The piece has been carefully cast, and the opera is produced on a scale seldom seen in connection with touring companies. Hawes Craven's scenery is quite a study, the company is good all round, and the dresses, which have been prepared under the able superintendence of Madame Leon, the mistress of the robes at the Savoy, are superbly rich. Of the acting the first mention must be made of Mr. Albert James, who in his part of Lord High Executioner, was highly successful, his rendering of it being most amusing. Mr. Albert Christian is an able exponent of the queer character of Pooh-Bah, the dry humour and sarcasm infused into the part making it in Mr. Christian's hands a most appreciable piece of drollery. Mr. J. Duncan Young scored well as the hero Nanki-Poo, he possesses a rich tenor voice, and his singing all through was greatly admired; as was also that of Mr. Ferdinand Thieler, as Pish-Tush. Of the ladies, Miss

Bessie Wilkinson is too well known in connection with these companies to need much comment. Yum-Yum in her hands was a bewitching creature, full of fun and tender feeling, and her clear, sweet voice was heard to much advantage. Miss Beatrix Young came in for a good share of applause as the humorous and coquettish Pitti-Sing, and Miss Agnes Taylor played well as Peep-Bo; while the thankless task of impersonating the unwelcome Katisha fell to the lot of Miss Millie Vere, an actress well able to do justice to the part. The opera presented a spectacle rarely seen in the country, and its production certainly reflected favourably upon the stage-manager, Mr. F. Léon. Nearly all the songs were encored, many of them several times. During the first week, of its production tremendous business was done, and there is little doubt that under the able guidance of Mr Welby Wallace, the tour will be as successful as previous ones have been. [*The Era*, Saturday 6 Jun. 1885, p.17.]

***Week commencing 1 June.***

TOWN HALL, OXFORD. Monday to Wednesday, Wednesday matinee, *The Mikado*. [*Oxford Journal*, 30 May 1885, p.1.]

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *The Mikado* company commenced a three nights' engagement here on Monday last. The scenery was pretty, the opera splendidly mounted, and such the excellence of the whole company that, notwithstanding the tropical heat, the hall has been well filled nightly. All the principal parts were played in first class style, and the chorus was also both powerful and well trained. [*The Era*, 6 Jun. 1885, p.18.]

THEATRE ROYAL, ALBERT HALL, READING. Thursday to Saturday, *the Mikado*.

By arrangement with Mr. Frank Attwells, Mr. D'Oyly Carte's brilliant opera company appeared on Thursday and last night at the Theatre, in Gilbert and Sullivan's inimitable Japanese opera, "The Mikado," before very large houses. The work is certainly the most successful of the numerous popular productions of these clever writers, and is extremely well put upon the stage. The performance will be repeated this (Saturday) afternoon and evening. [*Reading Mercury*, Saturday 6 Jun. 1885, p.5.]

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new and original Japanese opera *The Mikado; or, the Town of Titipu*, was performed here on the three concluding nights of last week, before large and fashionable audiences. The opera was put upon the stage in a manner which reflected the greatest credit on the management, the dresses and scenery being of unusual beauty, the latter being specially painted by Hawes Craven. The limited space of our local theatre does not, of course, admit of the effects which are produced on a larger stage. The music was highly appreciated, many of the pieces being loudly redemanded. The principal characters were well sustained by Messrs. Fairbanks, Young, Christian, Albert James, White and Mesdames Wilkinson, Vere Taylor, and Young. [*The Era*, Saturday 13 Jun. 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 8 June.***

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. Monday & Tuesday, *The Mikado*.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company appeared here on the 8th and 9th inst., in *The Mikado*, and was received most enthusiastically, the characters being sustained by Mr. Robert Fairbanks as the Mikado, Mr. J. Duncan Young as Nanki-Poo, Mr. Albert James as Ko-Ko, who was very successful in the part; Mr. Alfred [*sic*] Christian as Pooh-Bah, a very creditable performance; Mr. Edward White as Pish-Tush, Mr. Ferdinand Thieler as Go-To, the Misses Bessie Wilkinson, Beatrix Young, and Agnes Taylor as the three sisters, who exerted themselves in a most artistic way; and last but by no means least, Miss Millie Vere as Katisha, who rendered the part in a very

efficient manner. There was an excellent chorus. Mr. W. Robinson as conductor of the capital orchestra helped materially in the “go” of the piece. [*The Era*, Saturday 13 Jun. 1885, p.19.]

??? Wednesday to Friday.

***Week commencing 15 June.***

PUBLIC HALL, CROYDON. Monday to Wednesday, *The Mikado*.

Thanks to the enterprise of our townsman, Mr. Charles Raymond, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s highly successful Japanese opera was produced at the Public Hall, on the first three evenings of the week, by Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s Company. The latter gentleman’s name in connection with the production is sufficient guarantee that the entire representation was a performance of rare excellence, the artistes being engaged all being thoroughly capable ones, while great care and attention had been given to even the most minute details. Mr. Fairbanks in the title role was extremely diverting, while Mr. Duncan Young’s agreeable tenor voice was heard to advantage. Mr. Albert James claims first honours by his inimitable acting and singing as “Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner,” and Mr. Albert Christian, as “Pooh-Bah,” is scarcely less successful. Miss Millie Vere, as “Katisha,” shows that she is a cultured vocalist as well as a clever actress, and the other characters were all well filled. Mr. Robinson, R.A.M., officiates as conductor, and not a little of the success of the production was due to the unfailing courtesy and urbanity of Mr. Welby Wallace, the acting manager, a gentleman very favourably known as a tenor vocalist and musician. [*Croydon Advertiser*, Saturday 20 Jun. 1885, p.5.]

On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s *Mikado* company appeared here. The well known excellence and care and attention to every detail, which always characterises his productions, has made Mr. Carte’s name an extremely popular one in Croydon, and the hall has been well filled for every performance. Mr. Robert Fairbanks in the title role is highly amusing, and Mr. Duncan Young used an agreeable tenor voice as Nanki-Poo. Mr. Albert James claims first honours amongst the gentlemen by his really inimitable acting and singing as Ko-Ko, and Mr. Albert Christian as Pooh-Bah is scarcely less successful. Mr. Edward White’s exceptionally fine bass voice is not heard to best advantage in the little he has to do. Mr. F. Theiler is Go-To. Miss Millie Vere in the arduous role of Katisha uses a highly cultivated mezzo voice with much effect; in fact the lady’s impersonation throughout is that of a cultured artist. Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Miss Beatrix Young, and Miss Agnes Vere [*sic*] are all highly satisfactory in their respective roles. Mr. W. Robinson, R.A.M., operates as conductor. The company is under the management of Mr. Welby Wallace, a gentleman favourably known as a tenor vocalist, and whose unfailing urbanity and attention to business not a little of the success of the production is due. [*The Era*, 20 Jun. 1885, p. 17.]

PUBLIC HALL, EPSOM. Thursday to Saturday, *The Mikado*.

The latest of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan’s successes, “The Mikado,” was performed at the Epsom Public Hall, on Thursday evening. Notwithstanding its artistic mounting, its performance by *artistes* of exceptional lyrical powers, the beauty of its music, and the excellence of its libretto, it was received by an audience of not more than two hundred persons. [*Croydon Advertiser and East Surrey Reporter*, Saturday 20 June 1885, p. 7.]

***Week commencing 22 June.***

NEW PRINCE OF WALES’S THEATRE, GREENWICH. Monday to Thursday. *The Mikado*.

*The Mikado* was presented here on Monday by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company to a large and fashionable audience. The opera receives every possible assistance from picturesque scenery, magnificent dresses, and an excellent company. Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner, becomes an intensely amusing personage in the hands of Mr. Albert James; and Mr. Christian deserves more than a passing word of praise for his highly finished rendering of Pooh-Bah. The "three little maids from school" have charming and cultured representatives in Misses Bessie Wilkinson, Beatrix Young, and Agnes Taylor. Miss Millie Vere was splendid as Katisha. The charming music with which the opera abounds was rendered in the most finished style, and the acting all round was excellent. Decidedly the gem of the opera was the madrigal "Brightly dawns our wedding day," which deservedly received a double encore, and a similar compliment was also paid to several of the other most popular numbers. [*The Era*, 20 Jun. 1885, p.6 & 27 Jun. 1885, p. 18.]

LECTURE HALL AND OPERA HOUSE, CHATHAM. Friday & Saturday, *The Mikado*.

This popular place of entertainment was favoured on Friday and Saturday of last week with highly successful performances of *the Mikado* by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's talented company. Miss Edith Courtenay and a powerful and a well-organised company commenced an engagement on Monday last, *Pygmalion and Galatea* and *Moths* being in the bill of fare. [*The Era*, 20 Jun. 1885, p.6 & 4 Jul. 1885, p.17.]

***Week commencing 29 June.***

SITTINGBOURNE. Monday & Tuesday, *The Mikado*.

FAVERSHAM. Wednesday & Thursday, *The Mikado*.

CANTERBURY. Friday & Saturday, *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 27 Jun. 1885, p. 6.]

***Week commencing 6 July.***

THE THEATRE, MARGATE. Monday to Thursday, *The Mikado*.

The Japanese opera *The Mikado* has been produced here this week before large audiences by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, under the management of Mr. Welby Wallace. The work is too well known to need any description here, but it may not be amiss to state that it was remarkably well received. The acting, costumes, and scenery were alike good. Several of the solos, quartettes, and choruses were encored, and the comic business of Mr. Albert James as Ko-Ko was intensely amusing. The prominent characters were efficiently represented by Miss Edith Blair, Miss Bessie Wilkinson, and Messrs R. Fairbanks, J. Duncan Young, A. James, and A. Christian. On Friday night Miss Thorne's company appeared in the comedy of *The Serious Family*, the representation of the various characters being good throughout. [*The Era*, Saturday 11 Jul. 1885, p.18]

GRANVILLE THEATRE, RAMSGATE. Friday & Saturday, *The Mikado*.

Last Friday and Saturday evenings lovers of operatic entertainments were regaled here with two performances of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's famous *Mikado* by one of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's companies. There was a fashionable audience on each occasion. The performance went off with much *élat*, some picturesque grouping elicited deserved applause, and the singing was well up to the mark. The following parts were particularly well filled:—Ko-Ko, by Mr. Albert James; Nanki-Poo, by Mr. J. Duncan Young; and Pooh-Bah, by Mr. Albert Christian. Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo were also deftly handled by Misses Bessie Wilkinson, Beatrix Young, and Agnes Taylor; while the part of Katisha, in the hands of Miss Edith Blair, lost none of its originality. The scenery was very artistic. [*The Era*, Saturday 18 July 1885, p.19.]

**Week commencing 20 July.**

DEAL. Monday & Tuesday. *The Mikado*.

DOVER. Wednesday & Thursday. *The Mikado*.

FOLKSTONE. Friday & Saturday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 11 Jul. 1885, p.6.]

**Week commencing 20 July.**

GAIETY THEATRE, HASTINGS. Six nights. *The Mikado*.

The success attending the engagement of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's excellent opera company in *The Mikado* at this house, under the management of Mr. Welby Wallace, has been most pronounced. Admirably played, and mounted in splendid style, this opera has given the utmost satisfaction to large and fashionable audiences during the week. Mr. Albert James was highly successful as Ko-Ko, Mr. J. Duncan Young was excellent as the Minstrel, the Mikado was well sustained by Mr. Robert Fairbanks, Mr. Albert Christian was humorous as Pooh-Bah, and Mr. Edward White Pish-Tush. Miss Bessie Wilkinson made an exceedingly interesting Yum-Yum. Miss Beatrice Young and Miss Agnes Taylor were lively as Pitti-Sing and Peep-Bo. Katisha was well enacted by Miss Millie Vere, who, we are pleased to see, has recovered from her serious indisposition. The chorus is particularly strong and evenly balances. The capital orchestra was under the direction of Mr. Robinson, R.A.M. [*The Era*, Saturday 25 July 1885, p.18.]

**Week commencing 27 July.**

EASTBOURNE. Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 25 July 1885, p.6.]

GUILDHALL, WINCHESTER. Thursday, Friday & Saturday (Mat. & Eve.), *The Mikado*. [*Hampshire Chronicle*, Saturday 25 July 1885, p.4.]

**Week commencing 3 August.**

NEW THEATRE ROYAL, PORTSMOUTH. *The Mikado*. Six nights (Saturday Mat. & Eve.) [*Portsmouth Evening News*, Saturday 1 August 1885, p.1.]

A double interest attached to the production of "The Mikado" at the Theatre Royal on Monday. Besides being the first representation of Messrs. so Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera in Portsmouth, it was also the first anniversary of the opening of the handsome and commodious building which Mr. Boughton's unflagging energy has been instrumental in providing for our local playgoers. It was on the August Bank Holiday of last year that "Princess Ida" was given at the opening ceremony, and now another opera by the same composers has been selected to commemorate the first anniversary of our Temple of Thespis. A crowded house on a Bank Holiday is a matter of course, but it does not equally follow that there will be overflowing audiences for the rest of the week. Such, however, has been the case on the present occasion. Popular everywhere, and with all classes of our countrymen, Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan are nowhere more popular than in Portsmouth, and their new venture on Monday was as warmly welcomed as any of its predecessors, not even forgetting "Patience" and "The Pinafore." Let us be quite candid in our criticism. We do not mean to say that the public are not getting just a little tired of perpetual topsey-turveydon. We believe they are so far weary of it that they would prefer something more wholesomely natural from their favourite composer and dramatist. But on the other hand they have such a liking for everything which bears the stamp of these delightful collaborateurs that they will do much more than tolerate such an opera as

“The Mikado,” which indeed shows the incomparable pair at their very best. Perhaps this remark may seem to some to need qualification. It will be said that in “The Mikado” it we are again and again reminded of something or other in the seven preceding operas from the same fertile source, The fact is undeniable, and yet, after all it amounts to little more than an admission that author and composer have so pronounced a style of their own that it can be traced in everything they do. The same is true to a greater or less extent of novelists and poets, and indeed Mr. Gilbert is a true poet after his kind. We sincerely wish, however, that he could by way of a change give us the world right side up instead of eternally upside down. Never before has he been so outrageously sardonic in his satire. Some of the details of the story are revolting in their cruelty, and the whole *dramatis personæ* seem to be so unsusceptible of a single kindly feeling or wholesome impulse that, as an eminent critic said on first seeing them, “were they not manifestly maniacal they would be demoniacal.” Of course, amidst the smooth and tuneful numbers of the opera one is able to thrust most of these horrors into the background, but all the same, it is not unreasonable to desire and even to demand that those who have for so long and so profitably ministered to our pleasures should do so less ferociously. It is not a little remarkable that two men of such opposite peculiarities should have worked so long and so successfully together. There really seems nothing in common between the cynical and sardonic as humour of Mr. Gilbert and the genial and graceful vein of Sir Arthur Sullivan’s compositions. The composer has plenty of sprightly fun, of quaint and graceful humour, but he is never savage, and to this extent he sometimes fails in giving full expression to the Gilbertian sentiment of his theme—very much to everybody’s delight. If there is to be any suggestion of assassination or any other human atrocity, whether of thought or of deed, our favourite composer takes care to dilute it and reduce it to harmlessness with bewitching melody. We can only just glance at some of the many gems which abound throughout the opera. The most “fetching” piece of all is the trio, “Three little maids from school are we,” sung by Ko-Ko’s bewitching little wards Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo, and a double encore is a matter of course—in fact, double encores form quite a feature of the whole performance. Equally charming, though less sprightly and more sentimental is the duet between Yum-Yum and her lover, Nanki-Poo, “Were I not to Ko-Ko plighted.” The rarest jewel of the whole opera, however, is the quartette “Brightly dawns our wedding day” which has a fine old English ring about it that awakens a responsive echo in every heart. In utter contrast to it is the “On a tree by a river a little tom-tit,” whose quaint humour convulsed the house. “Hearts do not break” is one of the few pathetic songs in the opera, which is certain to be done to death by the possessors of contralto voices. The Mikado’s capital song, “A more humane Mikado never did in Japan exist,” is also an excellent composition of its kind. Sullivan has always shown himself a master of choral and orchestral effects, and in his latest production he gives us some of his finest work. Of Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s company it is almost superfluous to speak in detail. It does not contain a single weak member. Mr. Robert Fairbanks makes an excellent Mikado; Mr. Charles Conyers, as Nanki-Poo, exhibits a pleasing and sympathetic tenor voice; Mr. Albert Christian is sufficiently sardonic and amusing as Pooh-Bah, Lord High Everything Else; while Mr. Albert. James as Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Titipu (the Bunthorne and Lord Chancellor of “Patience” and “Iolanthe” is the quintessence of quaint humour and the very soul of the piece. The three pretty sisters, pretty despite their ugly Japanese dresses, are all that three pretty sisters should be, and are efficiently represented by Misses Bessie Wilkinson, Beatrix Young, and Agnes Taylor. The mounting of the piece is superb.

and the dresses are costly, if not captivating, while from first to last everythings goes as merrily as marriage bells. No “first night” ever proved a more complete and signal success. [*Portsmouth Evening News*, Tuesday 4 August 1885, p.2, and *Hampshire Telegraph*, Saturday 8 August 1885, p.9.]

***Week commencing 10 August.***

RYDE. Monday & Tuesday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 8 August 1885, p.6.]

NEWPORT. Wednesday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

TOWN HALL, SANDOWN. Thursday. *The Mikado*. [*Portsmouth Evening News*, Friday 14 August 1885, p.3.]

SHANKLIN. Friday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 8 August 1885, p.6.]

VENTNOR. Saturday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

***Week commencing 17 August.***

THEATRE ROYAL, BOURNEMOUTH. Monday to Wednesday. *The Mikado*.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's provincial company are playing *The Mikado* this week with a very powerful cast, Mr. Albert James, as Ko-Ko, deserving special praise. The scenery and dresses are remarkably elaborate. [*The Era*, 15 August 1885, p.6 & 22 August 1885, p.16.]

POOLE. Thursday & Friday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 15 August 1885, p.6.]

BRIDPORT. Saturday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

***Week commencing 24 August.***

ROYAL PUBLIC ROOMS, EXETER. Monday & Tuesday (Mat. & Eve.), Wednesday. *The Mikado*. [*Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette*, Monday 24 August 1885, p.1.]

Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's latest production, “The Mikado,” produced originally at the Savoy Theatre, was performed last evening, for the first time in Exeter, by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's specially-selected company, the Royal Public Rooms. As might have been expected, a capital house assembled to witness the performance, and very heartily did the audience enjoy the entertainment provided for them. And, indeed, they could hardly do otherwise, for “The Mikado” is one of the most popular productions that have emanated from the pen of Mr. Gilbert, while from a musical point of view it is certainly as great a success as any of the many previous charming compositions of Sir Arthur Sullivan. “The Mikado” is utterly unlike any of the comic operas from the same pen which have preceded it; but it is thoroughly Gilbertian—in other words it abounds with quaint and whimsical ideas, pointed, but, withal, humorously expressed, satire, fanciful but smoothly-flowing rhymes, and charming ballads. “The Mikado” can hardly be said to owe much to its plot, which is of very simple character. The play is based on the workings of an imaginary Japanese criminal code, and is portrayed two acts. The first scene is laid the courtyard of *Ko-Ko's* palace, where the audience are introduced to a company of Japanese nobles, and to *Nanki-Poo*, the son of queer old Mikado of Japan, the Lucius Junius Brutus of his race. *Nanki-Poo* has captivated an elderly maiden lady, *Katisha*, and is ordered by his Royal father to marry her within a week or die on the scaffold. *Nanki-Poo*, however, is love with *Yum-Yum*, one the three wards of *Ko-Ko*, a cheap tailor, and he accordingly flies in disguise, and becomes trombone-player in an itinerant band. In this disguise he comes to his love, who, by-the-bye, *Ko-Ko* designs for himself. *Ko-Ko*, after being condemned to death for some offence, is reprieved on undertaking the duties of Lord High Executioner, in which character he makes his first appearance. In

the opening scene the audience also makes the acquaintance of *Pooh-Bah*, a “particularly haughty and exclusive person of pre-Adamite ancestral descent,” who traces his ancestry back to a protoplasmal, primordial, atomic globule. Consequently his family pride is something inconceivable. This disease—the family pride—he endeavours to repress, and allows himself to be frequently “insulted with a very considerable bribe.” It is his “degrading duty” to serve *Ko-Ko* as First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor, both acting and elect, all rolled into one—the officers of State having been too proud serve under an ex-tailor. The duties of these important offices, being opposed to each other, cause serious difficulties. A consultation between *Ko-Ko* and this important personage is interrupted by the arrival of the three wards, *Yum-Yum*, *Peep-Bo*, and *Pitti-Sing*, who, in charming trio, announce that they are—

“Three little maids from school,  
Three little maids, who all unwary,  
Come from a ladies' seminary,  
Freed from its genius tutelary.”

With the entrance these pretty damsels complications begin to ensue. *Nanki-Poo* and *Yum-Yum*, despite the law to the contrary, indulge in flirtation, and carry on finely unknown to *Ko-Ko*. The latter has soon reason to be upset, for receives a letter from the *Mikado* complaining that there have been no executions for a twelvemonth, and demanding that someone shall be beheaded within a year. As *Ko-Ko* is the only person under sentence of death, he finds himself in a difficult position. Self-decapitation he observes is difficult and dangerous, and, moreover, suicide is a capital offence. In a song he suggests a list of social offenders who would “never be missed,” as substitutes, among them, the pestilential nuisances who write for autographs, people of flabby hands and irritating laughs, precocious children, the nigger serenader, the piano organist, people who eat peppermint, the “idiot who praises with enthusiastic tone all centuries but this, and every country but his own,” the lady novelist, the judicial humorist, all the funny fellows, comic men, the “apologetic statesman of compromising kind,” and many others. He soon finds a way out of his difficulty for *Nanki-Poo*, unable to marry *Yum-Yum*, enters intent upon hanging himself for love. *Ko-Ko* persuades him to be beheaded handsomely in public instead, of assuring him that in the month he would have to live he should live like a fighting-cock. *Nanki-Poo* consents on condition that he is allowed to marry *Yum-Yum*. To this offer, after some demur, *Ko-Ko* consents, consoling himself that she will soon be a widow. This is the starting point for further complications, for it appears that the widow of man who is beheaded is doomed to be buried alive, and to this *Yum-Yum* objects. *Nanki-Poo* thereupon insists upon being beheaded at once, but *Ko-Ko* will not hear of it. A way out of the difficulty found by procuring a false certificate of execution. This in turn leads to further complications, for the arrival of *The Mikado* leads to the discovery that *Nanki-Poo* is the heir-apparent, and that to compass his death means something “humorous but lingering, with boiling oil or melted lead.” In the end a satisfactory settlement is arrived at, through *Ko-Ko* sacrificing his feelings and marrying *Katisha*, and all ends happily. The performance last evening was most enthusiastically received, and many of the more taking musical portions were redemanded. There are at times passages which recall previous compositions, but they are merely passing. The piece is exceedingly well mounted and played throughout, and the singing, moreover, is excellent. *Yum-Yum* and her sister[s], who have a good deal to do both in singing and acting throughout, were impersonated by *Miss Bessie*



*Wilkinson, Miss Beatrice Young, and Miss Agnes Taylor.* A very trying and difficult part to play was that of *Katisha*, which fell to the lot of Miss Millie Vere, who rendered it with marked effect. Miss Vere has, moreover, very melodious and well-trained voice, which was heard to great advantage on several occasions, especially in the cheering song, "Hearts do not break." Mr. C. Conyers, as *Nanki-Poo*, played the part well, and showed that he is possessed of a pleasing voice. Mr. Albert James made a very amusing *Ko-Ko*, and was heartily encored for his song, "Willow, tit-willow." As *Pooh-Bah*, Mr. Albert Christian was exceedingly humorous, and was frequently applauded and encored. In short all the characters were well portrayed, and the play proceeded swimmingly from first to last. To-day there will be a matinee as well as an evening performance, and the company will close their stay in the city on Wednesday evening. [*Exeter & Plymouth Gazette*, Tuesday 25 August 1885, p.4.]

Last evening Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Opera Company commenced series of performances of "The Mikado," by Gilbert and Sullivan, at the Royal Public Rooms. The hall was crowded and many were refused admission. The scenes of the opera, which is comprised in two acts, are laid Japan, and the scenery and costumes are in keeping with the theme. "Nanki-Poo" (Mr. C. Conyers) is the son of the "Mikado of Japan" (Mr. Robert Fairbanks), and, disguised as a wandering minstrel, falls in love with "Yum-Yum" (Miss Bessie Wilkinson). "Ko-Ko," Lord High Executioner (Mr. Albert James), also desires to marry "Yum-Yum," and selects "Nanki-Poo" as a victim for the block, agreeing, however, to allow him to marry "Yum-Yum" and live with her for a month. In the meantime the position of "Nanki-Poo" is proclaimed, and "Ko-Ko" declares himself for "Katisha" (Miss Millie Vere), an elderly lady in love with "Nanki-Poo." "Pooh-Bah"—Lord High Everything Else—(Mr. Albert Christian) is also one of the leading characters, and the whole acquit themselves admirably. The music is in the well-known Gilbert-Sullivan style—sprightly, dashing, and pleasing. The principal characters in the political world come in for an allusion (though it is by signs and gesticulations alone), and the most is made of the "protection of the young" question. The songs are very good, and the choruses, too, are excellent. The cast is strong and the whole are in good voice. The applause last evening was continuous, and encores were frequent, some parts of one duet being repeated three times. The opera is put on the stage in the most complete manner. Allowance must of course be made for the limited space at the disposal of the stage manager, and though, when the whole company assembled there appeared a little crowding, the utmost regularity was observed and matters passed off without the slightest hitch. The commencement of the performance was somewhat delayed owing to the late arrival of staging materials, but this of course will be avoided subsequent performances. A matinee of "The Mikado" opera will be given this afternoon and the evening representations will be resumed at eight o'clock. [*Western Times*, 25 August 1885, p.5.]

TEIGNMOUTH, Thursday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

NEWTON ABBOT. Friday & Saturday (Mat. & Eve.). *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

### **Week commencing 31 August.**

CORNWALL ROUTE. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

THE "MIKADO" IN CORNWALL.—Residents in West Cornwall will have an opportunity next week of witnessing the latest operatic production of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan—the "Mikado"—which, since its recent introduction, has had a highly successful run in London. The company which is about to visit Cornwall is one of the largest and most talented that has ever been on tour, and in view of the excellent companies which have been brought to the county during the past two years, that is

saying a great deal. The scenery excels anything which Mr. D'Oyly Carte has previously sent into the provinces, and is an exact copy of that now being used at the Savoy Theatre. The dresses, too, are very elaborate and effective, and no expense has been spared in fitting up the company for this provincial tour. For the visit to Truro, which takes place on Wednesday and Thursday next, the arrangements are being carried out by Messrs. Heard and Sons. A two days' visit will also be made to Penzance and Falmouth. [*Royal Cornish Gazette*, Friday 28 August 1885, p.5.]

ST. JOHN'S HALL, PENZANCE. Monday & Tuesday. *The Mikado*. [*Cornishman*, Thursday 20 August 1885, p.8.]

TRURO. Wednesday & Thursday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 29 August 1885, p.6.]

FALMOUTH. Friday & Saturday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

***Week commencing 7 September.***

THEATRE AND OPERA HOUSE, TORQUAY. Monday to Friday. *The Mikado*.

*The Mikado* has been drawing immense audiences during the week. Under the present able management there is every reason to believe that the house will win a reputation which it has never before enjoyed. [*The Era*, Saturday 5 September 1885, p. 6 & Saturday 12 September 1885, p.19.]

THEATRE ROYAL, WEYMOUTH. Saturday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

***Week commencing 14 September.***

THEATRE ROYAL, WEYMOUTH WEYMOUTH. Monday. *The Mikado*.

*The Mikado* was here on Saturday and Monday, and did immense business. [*The Era*, Saturday 12 September 1885, p.5. & Saturday 19 September 1885, p.19]

SAREL HALL, GUERNSEY. Tuesday & Wednesday. *The Mikado*. [*The Star*, Thursday 10 September 1885, p.3.]

It is long since this building was filled with such a large and brilliant assembly as was literally packed within its walls on Tuesday evening, on the occasion of the first visit of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Company for the production of Gilbert and Sullivan's newest comic opera on Japanese lines—"The Mikado." His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Mrs. Sarel, Edgar MacCulloch, Esq., Bailiff, and the leading families of the Island were present. In our last issue we published Mr. W. S. Gilbert's letter to the *New York Tribune*, describing "the evolution of The Mikado," from which our readers were better able to understand the reason and object of this very entertaining production. The favourable accounts we had heard of it scarcely prepared us for such a pleasing result, for it was in every way a complete musical and artistic treat from beginning to end. The following was the cast on this occasion:—

The Mikado of Japan ..... Mr. R, Fairbanks  
Nanki-Poo ..... Mr. Charles Conyers  
Ko-Ko ..... Mr. Albert James  
Pooh-Bah ..... Mr. Edward Clowes  
Pish-Tush ..... Mr. Edward White  
Go-To ..... Mr. Ferdinand Theiler  
Yum-Yum ..... Miss Bessie Wilkinson  
Pitti-Sing ..... Miss Beatrix Young  
Peep-Bo ..... Miss Agnes Taylor  
Katisha ..... Miss Millie Vere  
Chorus of School Girls, Nobles, Guards, and Coolies.

Want of space compels us to omit in detail the plot of the opera, which is unique in its play upon Japanese character, custom, and costume. Throughout, the

Japanese local colouring is preserved with singular fidelity, as the *cognoscenti* gladly testify. The costumes are all according to approved Japanese patterns—the material being imported direct from Japan, and made up under the artistic eye of Madame Léon, “the mistress of the robes” at the Savoy, from designs by Wilhelm. Some of the robes are gorgeous in their richness and colour. The Mikado’s dress alone, it is said, cost a hundred guineas. Three artistes in costume were engaged early and late for three weeks in stitching on his Highness’s black satin robe the gorgeous ornithological ornaments (also imported from Japan) which adorn it. Yum- Yum, herself, wears a beautiful garment which was worn a hundred years ago by a young lady at the Court of the Mikado. The weapons of the male performers are real, the snickersees being genuine blades, with the sharpness of razors. The superb costumes have been most costly, but the effect is infinitely superior to that of the mere tinsel which is so often made to do duty on the stage.

The principal weight of the piece in the first act rests upon Nanki-Poo, Ko-Ko and Pooh-Pah, who in their respective *rôles* were inimitable, the Lord High Executioner especially, while the three sisters Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo were certainly the most fascinating and bewitching little Japanese imaginable. In the second act the Mikado’s imposing entrance is most effective and the appearance of Katisha, the elderly lady in love with Nanki-Poo, brought to our notice the charming Iolanthe of twelve months ago, who, in this not very attractive part, displayed those artistic powers which rendered her such a favourite on her previous visit. The choruses were admirably rendered and the accompaniments by Mr. W. Robinson, R.A.M. were well sustained. The most popular numbers such as Ko-Ko’s “They’ll none of ’em be missed,” the trio “Three little maids,” the quartett “Brightly dawn our Wedding day,” and Ko-Ko’s song “Willow Titwillow,” were vociferously redemanded and the whole company was called before the curtain at the close of each act. Mr. Welby Wallace, Mr. Carte’s courteous manager, looked well after the arrangements, which considering the crush were admirably carried out, giving the most finished and successful entertainment witnessed in the Island for a long time past. Wednesday night was again a crowded house and Mr. Wybert Rousby is to be congratulated on bringing such a talented company and brilliant opera to Sarel Hall. [*The Star*, Thursday 17 September 1885, p.2.]

THEATRE ROYAL, JERSEY. Thursday to Saturday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, 12 September 1885, p.5.]

During last week the boards of the Theatre Royal were occupied by Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s *Mikado* company, performances being given on Thursday evening and on Friday afternoon and evening. Crowded houses were the rule, and a marked success was attained, both financially and artistically. Mr Albert James was eminently successful as Ko-Ko, and Pooh-Bah found a capital exponent in Mr Edward Clowes. In the part of Yum-Yum Miss Millie Vere’s vocalism and acting were greatly admired, and very able support was afforded her by Miss Beatrix Young and Miss Agnes Taylor in the roles of Pitti-Sing and Peep-Bo respectively The remaining characters were also very satisfactorily filled, and the mounting of the opera elicited much praise. [*The Era*, Saturday 26 September 1885, p.17]

***Week commencing 21 September.***

PRINCE OF WALES’S ROYAL THEATRE, SOUTHAMPTON. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 19 September 1885, p.6.]

The great event of the week here has been the production of *The Mikado*. We have repeatedly had to record the immense success of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s

operas in this town, but such a reception as the present work has met with is quite unprecedented. The house has been literally crammed with large and fashionable audiences, and the opera, produced, as it was, with all the artistic excellence invariably associated with Mr. D'Oyly Carte's name, was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The beautiful music of Sir Arthur Sullivan was listened to with rapt attention, and nearly all the principal numbers were encored—not only twice, but even three times. Mr. Gilbert's libretto provoked unbounded merriment. The opera was faultlessly interpreted as follows:—The Mikado, Mr. Robert Fairbanks; Nanki-Poo, Mr. Charles Conyers; Ko-Ko, Mr. Albert James; Poo-Bah, Mr. Edward Clowes; Pish-Tush, Mr Edward White; Go-To, Mr. F. Thuler; Yum-Yum, Miss B. Wilkinson; Pitti-Sing, Miss Beatrix Young; Peep-Bo, Miss Agnes Taylor; Katisha, Miss Millie Vere. We must not omit to mention the capital rendering of the choruses by the entire company, and a word of praise is due to the orchestra under the direction of Mr. W. Robinson, RA.M. [*The Era*, Saturday 26 September 1885, p.18.]

***Week commencing 28 September.***

HAMILTON HALL, SALISBURY. Monday, Tuesday (Mat. & Eve.) & Wednesday. *The Mikado*.

One of Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera companies opened here on Monday for three nights with *The Mikado*. Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's productions always attract crowded audiences in Salisbury—Mr. Gilbert's father is a well-known resident in the close of the city—and *The Mikado* proved no exception to the rule. The piece was put upon the stage in Mr. Carte's usual handsome and complete manner, and the performance was generally speaking excellent. The largest share of applause fell to Mr. Albert James, whose rendering of the part of Ko-Ko would not discredit Mr. George Grossmith himself. All the other characters had efficient exponents, and Mr. W. Robinson proved himself to be a capital conductor. A morning performance given on Tuesday—market day—was very numerously attended. [*The Era*, Saturday 26 September 1885, p.6. & Saturday 3 October 1885, p.19.]

BRIDGEWATER. Thursday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

LONDON HOTEL ASSEMBLY ROOM, TAUNTON. Friday & Saturday. *The Mikado*. [*Taunton Courier*, Wednesday 23 September 1885, p.1.]

On Friday, at the London Assembly-rooms, in the presence of a full house, Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company produced the latest musical extravaganza which has emanated from the pens of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. Although there are numerous reminiscences of the series of operas which has made famous the names of these two authors, there is a sufficient departure from the rut in that they ran to make a special notice necessary. A Mikado of Japan (Mr. Robert Fairbanks) has a son, Nanki-Poo (Mr. Charles Conyers), who is in love with Yum-Yum (Miss Bessie Wilkinson), one of three sisters who are wards of Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Titipu (Mr Albert James) who candidly admits that he has been "taken from the county gaol by set of curious chances." To Ko-Ko (who, by the way, is an ex-cheap tailor) Yum-Yum is betrothed, and is about to be married. The servile old Mikado has destined his son to be the husband of Katisha (Miss Millie Vere), a maid of more certain sentiments than years. Nanki-Poo leaves the place disguised as wandering minstrel. The opera opens in the courtyard of Ko-Ko's official residence—one the brightest and most effectively arranged scenes ever presented in the theatre. Here, in all sorts of comical postures, are a number of Japanese nobles, who introduce themselves in a characteristic chorus. Nanki-Poo comes upon the stage, and declares himself "a wandering minstrel, a thing of shreds and patches." Here he makes himself

known Yum-Yum, while the latter explains to Ko-Ko that her lover is “the gentleman who used to play beautifully on the——(the pause being filled up her sister, Pitti-Sing) “on the marine parade!” Yum-Yum readily acquiesces in Pitti-Sing’s definition of the instrument. Nanki-Poo fails to wed the elderly Katisha, and thereby incurs the Japanese penalty of death. The Mikado is anxious for somebody to be executed, and sends a letter to Ko-Ko stating that His Mightiness has been struck by the fact that no executions have taken place in Titipu for year, and decrees that unless somebody is beheaded within one month the post Lord High Executioner shall be abolished, and the city reduced to the rank of a village. The Lord High Executioner is the part of the piece; but it owes no little of its success to the manner in which it is acted; the make-up, gesture, and posturing were full of humour, and the now well-known “little list” of social offenders “who would not be missed” was intensely enjoyed, and provoked the usual demand for repetition. Pooh-Bah, who is Lord High Everything Else (Mr. Edward Clowes), and Pish-Tush, a noble lord (Mr. Edward White), are present when the Mikado’s letter is received, and they both agree that a substitute must be found. Now Ko Ko, having been already under sentence of death for flirting, it is suggested that the Lord High Executioner himself should be the substitute. Ko-Ko puts in the objection that an executioner cannot execute himself, and, asked “Why not?” replies, “Because, in the first place, self-decapitation is an extremely difficult, not to say dangerous, thing attempt; and in the second, it’s suicide, and suicide is a capital offence.” He is pressed to waive the point, but is sternly adamant to the suggestion. “As official headsman,” he says, “my reputation is at stake, and I can’t consent to embark on a professional operation unless I see my way to a successful result.” While this difficulty is being considered, Nanki-Poo, [who] is reduced to despair at finding his lady-love engaged to Ko-Ko, enters with a rope in his hand, declaring his intention of terminating unendurable existence. A gleam of light bursts upon Ko-Ko. If Nanki-Poo is really determined to die, why should he not die in the legal and statutory manner. “Don’t spoil yourself,” he says, “by committing suicide, but be beheaded handsomely at the hands of the public executioner.” Nanki-Poo takes good deal of persuading, but at last consents on certain conditions. He insists on marrying Yum-Yum the next day, and after a month of married life he will submit to be beheaded. Ko-Ko thinks this is asking too much, and remarks that his position during the month will be most unpleasant. Nanki-Poo admits that it will, but not half so unpleasant as his own position the end of it. Besides, he says, Yum-Yum will be widow in month, and Ko-Ko can then marry her. Ko-Ko agrees, pledging Nanki-Poo not to prejudice Yum-Yum’s mind against him during the month. To this Nanki-Poo agrees, and affairs are so far satisfactory. While everybody is rejoicing at the happy arrangement, Katisha comes on the scene in search of her beloved, and there is general disturbance of the harmony of the gathering. Katisha threatening to let the Mikado know his wandering son has been round and predicting that her wrongs with vengeance will be crowned, rushes furiously up the stage, scattering the crowd like ninepins in her course. The second act opens in Ko-Ko’s garden, where Yum-Yum is busy at her bridal toilet. Some very amusing situations ensue when Ko-Ko discloses a fresh terror. By the law of Japan the widow of a man who is beheaded condemned to be buried alive, adding “it’s a most unpleasant death.” Nanki-Poo is thus awkwardly fixed. If he insists on his marriage with Yum-Yum, he dooms her to a dreadful death; if e relinquishes her she becomes at once the wife of Ko-Ko. Yum-Yum’s love is not equal to being buried for her lover, and Nanki-Poo decides to perform the “happy despatch.” This unsettles Ko-Ko, who reminds him that he is under contract to die by the hand of the public executioner in month’s time, “If you will kill yourself (he

piteously asks) what's to become of me? Why, I shall have to be executed in your place." Nanki-Poo admits that Ko-Ko has grasped the situation, and at this moment Pooh-Bah enters with the startling news that the Mikado and his suite are approaching the city. A hurried arrangement is made to deceive the old gentleman, the Lord High Executioner betraying the soft side of his nature and disclosing his utter inability to kill anything. An affidavit is drawn up falsely certifying that Nanki-Poo has really been executed, he disappearing and being married to Yum-Yum. The Mikado is accompanied by Katisha, "his daughter-in-law elect." He declares his many good qualities, and the necessity of obeying him as the Emperor of Japan. It turns out that the Emperor has not come to enquire about the execution, but about the disappearance of his son, the heir to the throne of Japan, who (he candidly confesses) "bolted from our Imperial Court." The Mikado afterwards learns that the person beheaded was none other than his son. Ko-Ko and friends are terribly distressed, but the Mikado solaces them; "his son had disguised himself as second trombone," and must take the consequences. Besides, how could they tell? They think they are getting out of the difficulty nicely, when the Mikado quietly remarks, "I forgot the punishment for compassing the death of the Heir Apparent." the word "punishment" they all drop on their knees in abject terror. The Mikado explains that it is "something lingering, with boiling oil or boiling lead in it," he is not quite sure which, and asks them if they would like the punishment before or after luncheon. They make up their minds they can wait till after luncheon. Ultimately the Mikado gets back his son, there is no execution, "lingering" or otherwise, and after a great deal of very "exquisite fooling," all goes happily to a bright and joyous issue. There is nothing prettier or brighter, or more quaintly merry, than the trio for the three Japanese maids, "Three little maids from school are we." A delightful melody is the song of Yum-Yum, "The sun whose rays;" the quartette, "Brightly dawns our wedding day," is also excellent, and it would be hard to imagine anything more vivacious and droll than the trio, "Here's a How-de-do." The duet between the Mikado and Katisha intensely tickled all who heard it; the Mikado's song is smart, and was capitally sung, the Emperor's grotesque movements and curious manner exciting great mirth. [*Taunton Courier*, Wednesday 7 October 1885, p.6.]

***Week commencing 5 October.***

THEATRE ROYAL, BATH. Six nights including Saturday (Mat. & Eve.). *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 3 October 1885, p.7.]

Bath has been well-favoured the matter of Gilbert and Sullivan's Operas, and the present management evidently intends that the reputation our Theatre in this respect shall be maintained. Thus early in the season the latest and in some respects the most charmingly original of the long series of Savoy operas is being presented here with the efficiency and completeness which characteristic of all Mr. Carte's travelling companies. "The Mikado; or the Town Titipu" is designated a Japanese opera, and in truth everything is Japanese except the language and the music. The company has evidently made a study of the manners and customs of the Japanese, and could more quaint and original, may we say more Japan-like, than their poses and their movements. Mr. Gilbert's incomparably humorous style is, of course, distinctly discernible in "The Mikado." There is, no doubt, a family likeness observable between the successive Gilbert-Sullivan operas, and the curious in such matters will, we think, note several points of resemblance between "The Mikado" and "Patience." The opera is in two acts and when the curtain rose it disclosed the courtyard of Ko-Ko's official residence occupied by a group of the nobles of Titipu looking exactly as if

they were sitting for their portrait on a Japanese fan. They introduce themselves in the appropriate chorus

If you want to know who we are,  
We are gentlemen Japan;  
On many a vase and jar,  
We figure In lively paint:  
Our attitude's queer and quaint—  
You're wrong if you think it ain't.

Nanki-Poo, a strolling minstrel, makes his appearance and strangely moves the Japanese nobles by his varied lays of love, of war, and of the sea, and the audience soon becomes acquainted with the plot the opera. The musical Nanki-Poo (who found an admirable exponent in Mr. Charles Conyers) is in love with Yum-Yum, the ward and betrothed wife of Ko-Ko, who is the Lord High Executioner of Titipu. The imposing entry of Mr. Albert James as Lord High Executioner with a sword of gigantic proportions gave occasion for amusingly pompons chorus. He is accompanied by Pooh-Bah, who next to Ko-Ko is the highest official personage in Titipu, being "Lord High Everything Else," and acting in his own person "First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander in Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop of Titipu, and Lord Mayor—both acting and elect." There is a vast fund of grim, satiric humour in the part which was admirably portrayed by Mr. E. Clowes. The part includes some good songs, but those in the first half of the opera were somewhat indistinct. The arrival of Yum-Yum is heralded by graceful chorus of school girls, "Comes a train," and the entry of Yum-Yum and her two sisters (Misses Bessie Wilkinson, Beatrix Young, and Agnes Taylor) which follows, was one of the brightest and prettiest passages in the opera, both from a spectacular and a musical point of view. The sprightly trio "Three little maids from school are we," was performed with graceful girlish gaiety and admirably sung, the fresh and charming music being one of the most distinct successes of the opera. It was, of course, loudly encored. Yum-Yum would naturally prefer to marry Nanki-Poo rather than her guardian, and the capital love duet "Were I not to Ko-Ko plighted" gives expression to the feelings of the pair. Nanki-Poo reveals himself as the son of the Mikado, who has fled his father's court to escape the attentions of an over-affectionate lady named Katisha, but Yum-Yum is unyielding. Just at this time a letter arrives from the Mikado, who having been struck with the cessation of executions in Titipu, decrees that unless somebody is beheaded in a month the post of Lord High Executioner shall abolished, and the city reduced to the rank a village. Someone must be put out of the way, and the Lord High Executioner, in a quaintly humorous song, mentions some of those whose deaths would be distinct gain to society. Among the rest:—

There's the nigger serenader, and the others of his race,  
And the piano organist—I've got him on the list!  
And the people who eat peppermint and puff it in your face,  
They never would be missed—they never would be missed!  
Then the idiot who praises, with enthusiastic tone,  
All centuries but this, and every country but his own;  
And the lady from the provinces, who dresses like a guy,  
And 'who doesn't think she waltzes, but would rather like to try;'  
And that singular anomaly, the lady novelist—  
I don't think she'd be missed—I'm *sure* she'd not missed!

Ko-Ko must find a substitute, for the suggestion of his friends that he ought to begin with himself he rejects; and when Nanki-Poo enters intent upon hanging himself for love, Ko-Ko begs him to postpone the affair and be “beheaded handsomely.” Nanki-Poo is agreeable provided that he is allowed to marry Yum-Ynm, who would then be a widow in a month. The entrance and protests of Katisha (Miss Millie Vere) bring the first act to an interesting climax. A piece of scenery, Ko-Ko’s garden, is revealed in the second act, and the bridal chorus with which the act opens and the incidental solo for Pitti-Sing proved very captivating, but the musical gem of the act was undoubtedly the delightful quartet for Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, Nanki-Poo, and Pish-Tush, “Brightly dawns our wedding day,” and it was received with an enthusiastic encore. But Ko-Ko dashes the fond anticipations of the lovers by the discovery that if a man is beheaded his wife has to be buried alive! Following this comes the decidedly original Japanese chorus “Miyasama” and the equally original and interesting “March of the Mikado’s Troops.” That mysterious potentate is represented by Mr. Robert Fairbanks with much grotesque humour. The Mikado, course, has a song, in which he explains that one of his chief objects in life is to make the punishment fit the crime. The Mikado’s song was given with an unctuous pleasantries which was extremely amusing, and that an encore was demanded goes without saying. The following stanza will give an idea the truly Gilbertian humour of the song:—

The billiard sharp whom any one catches,  
 His doom’s extremely hard—  
 He’s made to dwell  
 In a dungeon cell  
 On a spot that’s always barred.  
 And there he plays extravagant matches  
 In fitless finger-stalls,  
 On a cloth untrue,  
 With a twisted cue  
 And elliptical billiard balls!

Ko-Ko supposes that the Mikado has come inquire about the scarcity of executions at Titipu and accordingly a fictitious certificate is handed to him. It turns out, however, that is inquiring after his missing son disguised as Nanki-Poo, and when it appears that the certificate of execution refers to him an outburst of might be expected from the monarch. But the Mikado takes it quite easily, remarking that “if a man of exalted rank chooses to disguise himself as a second trombone, must take the consequences. I’ve no doubt he thoroughly deserved all got.” But Ko-Ko and the rest are not reassured by the Mikado’s inquiry as to the punishment for compassing the death of the Heir Apparent, and he produces consternation when he expresses a notion that it is “Something lingering, with boiling oil it... I know it’s something humorous, but lingering, with either boiling oil or melted lead.” In the end the lovers are introduced to the Mikado, and as Katisha accepts the hand of Ko-Ko, all ends happily. The most popular feature in the music of the concluding part of the opera was a glee for five of the leading characters “See how the fates allot” which is one of the most pleasing numbers in the opera and was admirably rendered and heartily applauded by the audience. Katisha has a most expressive song “Hearts do not break,” which was the more noticeable from the fact that was almost, if not the only purely sentimental song in the opera. Ko-Ko and Katisha are provided with patter duet “There is beauty,” and with an effective finale and a charming grouping the curtain falls. The opera was in every respect most successful, and, whether considered from literary or musical point of view, more than maintains the reputation the gifted author and composer. We



are inclined to give it a high place in the operatic successes of Mr. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. The rich and rare Japanese dresses and scenery invested the opera with an originality which is now-a-days rarely achieved in this branch of theatrical representation. "The Mikado" will be repeated nightly with a morning performance on Saturday. Next week Mr. William Duck's Company will appear in "Called Back." [*Bath Chronicle*, Thursday 8 October 1885, p.7.]

On Monday Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company commenced a week's engagement with Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *The Mikado*, and have had crowded and enthusiastic houses, The opera is splendidly mounted, the scenery is effective (having been painted specially for the occasion), and the dresses are brilliant. As Ko-Ko Mr. Albert James is extremely good, and receives double encores for all his songs. Mr. Charles Conyers, as Nanki-Poo, is very pleasing. The Mikado, as represented by Mr. Robert Fairbanks, is excellent, and merits and receives great applause, especially for his song, "A more human Mikado never." Mr Edwin Clowes [sic] is a great success as Pooh-Bah. The Misses Wilkinson, Young, and Taylor, in the respective parts of Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing; and Peep-Bo, are lively and pleasant and receive a hearty encore for their trio. Miss Millie Vere, as Katisha, is good in voice and acting. Altogether, the opera is a complete success here. [*The Era*, Saturday 10 October 1885, p.15.]

***Week commencing 12 October.***

ROYAL VICTORIA THEATRE, NEWPORT. Monday to Wednesday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 10 October 1885, p.6.]

*The Mikado* was produced here for three nights last week by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, and the reception accorded to actors and opera must have been gratifying to all concerned. On Monday evening a numerous audience keenly appreciated the quaint dialogue of Mr. Gilbert and the lively music of Sir Arthur Sullivan. All the most "taking" numbers were rendered with commendable taste, and in almost every instance an encore was asked for. The dresses and stage accessories were artistically arranged, and the superb scenery was in every way worthy of the production, which, under the skilful stage-management of Mr. Albert James, passed off without a single hitch, and was an immense success. As Lord High Executioner Mr. James acted in the drollest fashion possible, and extracted a liberal amount of fun out of the humours of the character. His songs "They never would be missed" and "Tit willow" were received with roars of laughter. Scarcely less praiseworthy was the Pooh-Bah of Mr. Edward Clowes, whose singing and acting were all that could be desired, and the performances of Mr. Chas. Conyers as Nanki-Poo, and Mr Robert Fairbanks as the Mikado were distinguished by a considerable amount of originality. Miss Bessie Wilkinson was the Yum-Yum, and she proved a capital exponent of that character, the other two damsels being impersonated by Miss Beatrix Young and Miss Agnes Taylor. Katisha was portrayed by Miss Millie Vere with sufficient force and pathetic feeling, her song "Hearts do not break" being given with an intenseness which secured at once the sympathies of the house. Messrs. E. White and F. Theiler were efficient as Pish-Tush and Go-To, and the chorus showed evident signs of having been carefully trained. [*The Era*, Saturday 10 October 1885, p.6 & Saturday 24 October 1885, p. 18.]

ABERGAVENNY. Thursday to Saturday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 10 October 1885, p.6.]

***Week commencing 19 October.***

TEMPERANCE HALL, MERTHYR TYDFIL. Monday & Tuesday. *The Mikado*.

Last Monday and Tuesday we had Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *Mikado* company appearing at the hall. Elegantly and most effectively played, the opera has been most flatteringly received by splendid audiences on both nights. The leading characters were sustained with great ability. The Mikado, Mr. Robert Fairbanks; Ko-Ko, Mr. Albert James; Pooh-Bah, Mr. Edward Clowes; Yum-Yum, Miss Bessie Wilkinson; Katisha, Miss Millie Vere; Pitti-Sing and Peep-Bo, Miss Beatrix Young and Miss Agnes Taylor. The remaining characters were also ably filled. [*The Era*, Saturday 24 October 1885, p.18.]

TEMPERANCE HALL, ABERDARE. Wednesday & Thursday. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 17 October 1885, p.6; Saturday 31 October 1885, p.15.]

*The Mikado* was produced here for two nights last week by D'Oyly Carte's company, and was received with decided expressions of favour. Mr. Albert James as Lord High Executioner and Miss Millie Vere as Katisha being especially applauded. The company is an excellent one throughout. The mounting of the opera was most satisfactory. [*The Era*, Saturday 31 October 1885, p.15.]

NEATH. Friday & Saturday. *The Mikado*. [ibid.]

### ***Week commencing 26 October.***

NEW THEATRE SWANSEA. Six nights, *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 24 October 1885, p.6.]

#### THE "MIKADO" AT THE NEW THEATRE, SWANSEA.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's "Mikado" Company on Monday night made a first appearance at the New Theatre, Swansea, where they are engaged to stay for six nights. This newest effort of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan in comic opera has been received elsewhere with general expressions of favour. The music of Sullivan is as lively and sparkling as ever, while of the libretto it may be said that the penetration by Mr. Gilbert into a new and fascinating field—that of Japanese life—gives ampler scope than he has hitherto had for a display of his peculiar humour, which is always of the preposterous kind, and requires grotesque subjects to work upon. The "plot" is as peculiar as can well be conceived. *Ko Ko*, who had been condemned to death for flirting, is reprieved at the last moment and raised to the rank of *Lord High Executioner*. He has three wards, one of whom (*Yum Yum*) he desires to marry. She is, however, loved by, and is in love with, *Nankipoo*, son of the *Mikado*, who is, in turn, beloved by *Katisha*, a lady of his father's Court. An execution being absolutely necessary in the town of Titipu, *Nankipoo* volunteers to be operated upon on condition that he first marries his lover. After the marriage it is found that by Japanese law the wife must be buried with the decapitated husband, and *Ko Ko*, to avoid losing the "widow," determines to make the whole Court perjure themselves by declaring the execution to have duly taken place. The *Mikado* arrives on the scene, declares the executed one to be his son, and states the punishment for compassing the death of the heir-apparent to be "something humorous, but a, lingering, with either boiling oil or melted lead." An ingenious confession follows, and all ends happily. The part of *Nankipoo* is taken by Mr. Charles Conyers, that of *Ko Ko* by Mr. Albert Jones [=Albert James], that of *Pooh-Bah* by Mr. Edward Clowes, that of the *Mikado* by Mr. R. Fairbanks, and that of *Pish-Tush* by Mr. Edward White. The "Three little maids from school," *Yum Yum*, *Pitti-Sing*, and *Peep-bo*, were impersonated by Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Miss Beatrix Young, and Miss Agnes Taylor, while the important character of *Katisha* is portrayed effectively by Miss Millie Vere. The acting, singing, and mounting in the piece were all of the most satisfactory character, and the

performance was in many respects very pleasing. [*Western Mail*, Wednesday 28 October 1885, p.4.]

At Swansea Theatre on Monday evening Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan's greatest success, the "Mikado," was produced for the first time in the Principality. There was a large audience. The songs and dialogues are written in Mr. Gilbert's best vein, and abound in burlesque and pointed wit. In the music traces of Sir Arthur Sullivan's previous compositions are again to be found, but this is no drawback. The stage management is admirable; such perfect imitation of habits, buildings, and dress of the Japanese have perhaps never been seen on the stage. The acting, too, is of the usual high quality provided by Mr. D'Oyly Carte. Many of the leading characters are taken by old favourites in "Iolanthe" and "Patience." The *Mikado* is impersonated by Mr. Robert Fairbanks. He has but little to do, but this little he does with the dignity befitting the exalted personage he represents. Mr. Harry [=Harvey] Lucas takes the character of *Nanki-Poo*, and he sings and acts admirably. The part of *Ko-Ko* is taken by Mr. Albert James, whose quaint impersonation elicits roars of laughter. The ladies play a prominent part in this as in all the other operas by the same authors, and in Misses Bessie Wilkinson, Beatrice [=Beatrix] Young, and Agnes Taylor, the three wards of the Lord High Executioner, find representatives who, by their graceful acting and charming singing, win hearty plaudits. Miss Nellie [=Millie] Vere, too, as *Katisha*, indicates the possession of considerable talent. The opera will remain on the boards during the week. [*South Wales Daily News*, Wednesday 28 October 1885, p.3.]

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company opened here on Monday with *The Mikado*. Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas have always been received with great favour in Swansea, and their latest success has proved no exception. The company, which is a good all round one and gave much satisfaction, includes Mr. Albert James as Ko-Ko, Mr. Chas. Conyers as Nanki-Poo, Mr. Edward Clowes as Pooh-Bah, Mr. Robert Fairbanks as Mikado, Miss Bessie Wilkinson as Yum-Yum, Miss Beatrix Young as Pitti-Sing, Miss Agnes Taylor as Peep-Bo, Miss Millie Vere as Katisha, &c. The band chorus under Mr. W Robinson were admirable, and the scenery was exceedingly good. [*The Era*, Saturday 31 October 1885, p.19.]

#### ***Week commencing 2 November.***

CORN EXCHANGE, HEREFORD. Monday & Tuesday, *The Mikado*.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's talented opera company favoured Hereford with a visit on Monday and Tuesday, when they introduced Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new opera *The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu*. The piece was put on the stage in a very effective manner. The company is an excellent one, and the singing and acting of the members were vociferously applauded by large audiences which assembled. [*The Era*, Saturday 7 November 1885, p.17.]

ASSEMBLY ROOMS, MALVERN. Wednesday, *The Mikado*. [*Worcestershire Chronicle*, Saturday 31 October 1885, p.4.]

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company gave two performances of *The Mikado* on Wednesday to crowded houses. The cast was a most efficient one, and where all were alike excellent it would be invidious to single out any one artist for special comment. The principal characters were sustained by Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Miss Beatrix Young, Miss Agnes Taylor, Miss Millie Vere, Messrs. Robert Fairbanks, Charles Conyers, Albert James, Edward Clowes, Edward White, and Ferdinand Theiler. [*the Era*, Saturday 7 November, p.18.]

THEATRE ROYAL GLOUCESTER. Thursday to Saturday, *The Mikado*. [*Gloucester Citizen*, Monday 2 November 1885, p.2.]

Last week Mr. D'Oyly Carte's opera company appeared here for three nights in *The Mikado* to fashionable and enthusiastic audiences. As the Mikado Mr. R. Fairbanks was most effective; Mr. Lucas, in the place of Mr. Charles Conyers, played and sang admirably as Nanki-Poo; nothing could have been better than the Ko-Ko of Mr. Albert James, which was in every way excellent; and Mr Edward Clowes was exceedingly good as Pooh-Bah. Miss Bessie Wilkinson as Yum-Yum, Miss Beatrix Young as Pitti-Sing, and Miss Agnes Taylor as Peep-Bo are entitled to the highest praise; and Miss Millie Vere, though suffering from a severe cold, was very successful as Katisha. Several of the numbers were splendidly rendered and received a double encore. [*The Era*, Saturday 14 November 1885, p.17.]

#### “THE MIKADO.”

The favourable reception accorded to this the latest joint production of Sir Arthur Sullivan and Mr. W. R. Gilbert [sic] last night was quite sufficient to show that the fame the “Mikado” has preceded the excellent; company selected to represent the ways that are cunning and the ways that are vain of that all powerful and august personage. The traces of former operas the latter results of the happy collaboration of Sullivan and Gilbert were so many that the discriminating public began shake their heads and say that they were “worked out.” “The Mikado” is proof positive of the reverse.

The subject of the opera is, as will be surmised, Japanese, and was suggested no doubt by the Japanese fever that lately took hold upon the people of London. The whole of the incidents turn upon a remarkable point of law in Japan, and Mr. Gilbert has made the most of it for his favourite idea of topsey-turveydom. The plot is slight, yet subtle. It is not easy to give a fair idea of it in a few lines. The “Mikado,” a sort of supreme “boss” in Japan, has a son, “Nanki-Poo.” The latter is loved by an elderly lady, one Katisha, and not reciprocating the affection, he flees from his father's court, disguises himself as a wandering minstrel, and is known to his friends as “the second trombone.” In the course of his travels he meets “Yum-Yum,” a charming school girl and ward of “Ko-Ko.” “Yum-Yum” is betrothed to “Ko-Ko,” but, of course, falls in love with, the minstrel. “Ko-Ko” is the good-natured, soft-hearted “Public Executioner.” He recognises the fact that “Nanki-Poo” is more suitable for a husband to “Yum-Yum” than he is; but since they are betrothed, though he has a terrible conflict within himself at the thought of hurting the feelings of “Nanki-Poo,” he concludes that his own right to “Yum-Yum” is incontestable. Meanwhile, the Public Executioner, “who had never killed a fly,” was getting lax in his duty. Someone must be executed once a month; and he is put in this predicament: he must find a substitute, or execute himself. Somebody must suffer; and the reflection of “Ko-Ko” as to who shall supply the deficiency shows that there are very many who “never would be missed,” and leads to one of those inimitable patter-songs for which Mr. Gilbert is so famous, and which we regret want of space prevents us from quoting. To continue the plot: when “Nanki-Poo” hears he cannot marry “Yum-Yum” he determines to commit suicide. The Great Executioner is struck with an idea, and a compromise is arrived at by which “Nanki-Poo” marries “Yum-Yum,” but at the end of a month has to submit his head to the block. He should not spoil himself by committing suicide, but be beheaded handsomely at the hands the Public Executioner. “Nanki” doesn't see how that would benefit him. However, it is arranged that “Nanki-Poo” and “Yum-Yum” should be married for a month, and the end of that time “Nanki” shall be publicly beheaded. Further difficulties turn up. It is discovered that the wife of a man who is beheaded has to be buried alive, and so, in a most amusing scene, it is decided that an affidavit shall be prepared, setting forth that “Nanki-Poo” has suffered, he in

reality having done nothing of the sort. At this stage the “Mikado” himself makes his appearance with Katisha. The story of the supposed execution is told him, and “Ko-Ko” finds that in “compassing the death of the heir-apparent” of the “Mikado” he has incurred the penalty of death by “burning oil,” something “humorous and lingering.” Of course, at the appointed time it is discovered that the heir-apparent is not dead, and the whole matter is set right, with, it must be owned, a rather lame conclusion.

Of the performance we are able to speak in terms of most unqualified approbation. The part of “Ko-Ko,” as played by Mr. Albert James, was literally all that could be desired. We do not compare Mr. James with Mr. Grossmith in the part, for comparisons are proverbially odious to one or other of the parties; but Mr. James possesses this advantage over Mr. Grossmith, that he has much better voice. His rendering of the patter-song, “They never would be missed,” and the excruciating ballad of the love-sick tom-tit, were so excellent that each had to be twice repeated. Mr. Lucas, in place of Mr. Conyers, as “Nanki-Poo,” sang the admirable tenor music with the same taste with which he played the part. The part of “Pooh-Bah,” Lord High Everything Else, found able exponent in our old friend, erstwhile in “Patience” and “Pirates,” Mr. Edward Clowes; and the “Mikado” was played by Mr. Fairbanks in an exceedingly droll and effective manner. The admirable song of the “Mikado” elicited a well-deserved encore. The parts of the noble lords “Pish-Tush” and “Go-To” were represented by Messrs. White and Theiler, the latter rendering excellent service in the beautiful madrigal, which was perfectly rendered. Of the three delightful little maids from school—the Misses Wilkinson, Young, and Taylor—it is unnecessary to speak in a critical notice, as their artless rendering of the parts, and faultless singing of the music, defy the critic. Miss Vere appeared as “Katisha,” and evidently was heard at a disadvantage, as she is suffering from severe cold and hoarseness. The scenery and costumes are both handsome; and everything is put on with that thoroughness which has made D’Oyly Carte’s management so successful. The chorus played their difficult part with the greatest success; and the orchestra (thanks to Mr. Robinson) was more than usually effective. [*Gloucester Citizen*, Friday 6 November 1885, p.3.]

#### ***Week commencing 9 November.***

THEATRE ROYAL, CHELTENHAM. Six nights and Saturday matinee. *The Mikado*. [*Gloucestershire Echo*, Friday 6 November 1885, p.2.]

CHELTENHAM NEWS. “The Mikado.”—This new opera of Gilbert and Sullivan’s, of which we have already given a lengthy critique, was produced last night at the Theatre Royal before a capital house, and was equally successful as the representation given Gloucester last week and other provincial towns. Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s companies can always be relied on to produce something worthy of being seen and listened to, and the present instance no exception to the rule. Several of the songs were highly appreciated and received encores. Performances will be given every evening, and on Saturday at 2.30. [*Gloucester Citizen*, Tuesday 10 November 1885, p.4.]

#### THE “MIKADO” IN CHELTENHAM.

At the Theatre Royal Monday night was witnessed the first production Cheltenham of one those unrivalled comic operas which has issued from the fertile collaboration of W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan. *The Mikado*, produced at the Savoy, achieved great success there, and the announcement of its presentation here had excited the most pleasurable anticipations. A good house assembled to honour the occasion. The opera was received with great delight. The applause was continued and hearty throughout, and encores were the order of the evening. Stage and public were

in perfect *rapport*; every point told, and whilst we must congratulate Mr. D'Oyly Carte's accomplished company on the perfection of their representation of the joint work of librettist and composer, they are also to be congratulated on having an appreciative audience. *The Mikado, the Town of Titipu*, is a Japanese opera. The opening scene the first act introduces us to the courtyard of Ko Ko's Palace in Titipu. Ko-Ko is Lord High Executioner of Titipu. His original calling was that of a cheap tailor, who had been

“A convict from a county jail,  
Whose head was next  
On some pretext  
Condemned to mown off.”

but who had been made Headsman. He has as wards three sisters, Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo. Nanki-Poo, the Mikado's son, is in love with Yum-Yum, and wants to marry her; but Ko-Ko is anxious marry her himself. A grotesque but friendly rivalry ensues between the two for her hand, Yum-Yum inclining to the Mikado's son, whom, however, she only knows a wandering minstrel. Nanki-Poo had fled from his father's court to escape the unwelcome attentions of an elderly lady there, by name, Katisha, whom his father decreed he should marry within week or perish ignominiously on the scaffold. A letter received by Ko-Ko from the Mikado leads him to suppose that his Imperial Highness requires an offering on the altar of a Lord High Executioner's duty, for he is “struck by the fact that no executions have taken place in Titipu for year, and decrees that unless somebody is beheaded within one month, the post of Lord High Executioner shall be abolished and the city reduced to the rank of a village. The decree produces the greatest consternation, and after passages of extravagant humour, it is ultimately agreed that Nanki-Poo shall be the victim on condition of his being allowed to marry Yum-Yum, Ko-Ko consoling himself with the thought that in month, by the operation of the law she will widow and eligible for marriage to him. This comfortable arrangement has scarcely been made when Katisha rushes on the scene to “claim her perjured lover, Nanki-Poo,” and to pronounce doom upon the pink cheek, bright eye, rose lip, sweet tongue of his intended bride. The scene receives a mock melodramatic ending from the angry denunciation and wrathful claims of the love-lorn Katisha. In the second act, whose *locale* Ko-Ko's garden, it is discovered on the authority of Pooh-Bah, who is Japanese “Attorney- General, Lord Chief Justice, Master of the Rolls, Judge Ordinary, and the Lord Chancellor” all in one, that “by the Mikado's law, when a married man is beheaded his wife is buried alive.” Yum-Yum is not quite prepared for such a fate, even in exchange for the bliss of month's married life, although whether such a fate would a draw-back either to bride or bridegroom, Pitti-Sing says “all depends.” Hence further complications arise, in which it is agreed that Nanki-Poo shall by an agreeable fiction, be supposed to be executed, and certificate to that effect be handed to the Mikado. Ko-Ko is induced to woo and wed Katisha, and so, ultimately, everything ends happily. Such is a hint of the plot. Very nonsensical but very funny; and the fun got out of it flows in a continuous stream. Mr. Lucas (in the absence Mr. Charles Conyers) who takes the character of Nanki-Poo, first as a wandering minstrel and afterwards the son Mikado, sings and plays with great effect. His first song, “A Wandering Minstrel I,” was well rendered, and he was specially noticed the succeeding duet and quartet. Mr. Edward White as Pish-Tush sang an excellent song. “Our Great Mikado, Virtuous Man.” Go-To, represented by Mr. Ferdinand Theiler, rendered some valuable assistance in the madrigal. Pooh-Bah—Lord High Everything Else—found in Mr. Edward Clowes a perfect exponent. He traces his ancestry back “to protoplasmal primordial atomic

globule," his family pride therefore being something inconceivable. He was "born sneering," and through the performance carries the sneer with scorn. The chief figure in the opera is Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner. This part was placed in the hands of Mr. Albert James, who played it with great success. His singing "Taken from the county jail," and followed by one of the songs of the opera, "They'd none of 'em be missed," and "On a tree," were well received and brought repeated encores Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo, three sisters, wards of Ko-Ko, were represented respectively by Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Miss Beatrix Young, and Miss Agnes Taylor. The singing of "Three little maids from school are we" well deserved the encore afforded them. An encore was also given them in the quartette "Brightly dawns our wedding day." The play of Miss Bessie Wilkinson as Yum-Yum was perfect, and her singing very sweet. Miss Beatrix Young as Pitti-Sing contributed delicious bits of humour and was a bright feature of the evening, while Miss Agnes Taylor's Peep-Bo was as charming a piece acting as could be wished. Miss Millie Vere appeared as Katisha, and although suffering from the effects of a cold sang in a most satisfactory manner. We cannot speak too highly of her acting throughout the whole performance. This was shown particularly in the touching recit,

"Alone, and yet alive! Oh, sepulchre  
My soul is still my body's prisoner!  
Remote the peace that death alone can give—  
My doom to wait, my punishment to live!

followed the exquisite song—

Hearts not break!  
They sting and ache  
For old sake's sake  
But do not die! &c. [*sic*]

Mr. Robert Fairbanks, the Mikado, had little to do, but that little was done well.

Judging from the manner in which the Mikado was received, we should imagine the audience was perfectly satisfied. The scenery was grand. There was not the least doubt the company will receive full support from the public of Cheltenham, as a large number of seats are already booked. We must not forget to mention the orchestra, which was augmented, and the music was played in very efficient manner. [*Gloucestershire Echo*, Tuesday 10 November 1885, p.3.]

MR. D'OYLY CARTE'S COMPANY have met with a more encouraging reception than has yet been accorded this Season to either of their precursors at the Old Wells Theatre; large and fashionable audiences each night occupying the Stalls, and the other parts the house being equally well filled to witness the performance of the *Mikado*, the latest of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's musical satires; the picturesque Japanese costumes and scenery of which have, doubtless, contributed not a little to the success which has attended its representation, as well in London as the provinces, to which, however, its charming music has been mainly instrumental. Not that this is ever likely to acquire the popularity of that of the *Pirates of Penzance* or *Patience*. But, humorously and cleverly acted as the *Mikado* is by Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Company, it may be safely booked for a long and prosperous run; the amusing incidents of its eccentric plot, the excellent acting of Mr. Albert James as the "Lord High Executioner;" of his colleague, Mr. E. Clowes, as "Pooh-Bah," and of Miss Millie Vere as the "Elderly Lady in love with Nanki Poo," as well as the singing and acting of all the other performers, ensuring this result. There is to be an afternoon representation of the piece to-day, and the *Mikado's* first visit to Cheltenham will terminate in the evening. [*Cheltenham Looker-On*, Saturday 14 November 1885, p.9.]

On Monday evening Gilbert and Sullivan's latest success was presented to Cheltenham public, and quickly received the successful seal of assent. In *The Mikado* the talented author and composer have had full scope for that display of fancy for which they are so renowned, and former has gone in for topsy-turvydom with more than his usual keenness of satire. The music is in the composer's finest vein, but it is not quite as catching and capable of being taken home as some of the previous works. We imagine that the quintette "The Flowers of Spring" will become the most popular. The dressing and general get up of the opera are perfect, and the peculiar eccentricities of Japanese life are faithfully if grotesquely depicted. The company engaged is a thoroughly efficient one, and it is not often that we find the voices so evenly balanced and producing satisfactory an *ensemble*. The chief honours of course fall to Mr. Albert James, who as Lord High Executioner increases the highly favourable opinion which he created by his performance of Bunthorne. His principal songs have been applauded to the echo, and his excellent acting has kept the house in roars. As the Mikado Mr. R. Fairbanks discharges his duties with the utmost efficiency; and Nanki-Poo has an able exponent in Mr. C. Conyers, whose agreeable tenor is heard with the best possible effect. Mr. Edward Clowes is thoroughly good as Pooh-Bah. Miss Bessie Wilkinson and Miss Beatrix Young are as charming as their Japanese costumes will permit them to look, whilst their vocalism is of the most pleasing and their acting of the sprightliest kind. Miss Agnes Taylor is ditto to match; and Miss Millie Vere gives a thoroughly clever performance of the ancient lady Katisha, her clear and powerful contralto giving full effect to some very telling music. The chorus is unusually strong, and the band is fuller than usual; both under the charge of Mr. Wilkinson discharge their duties perfectly. The costumes which have been designed from Japanese authorities, are rich and handsome. In conclusion we may remark that the opera is one that everybody ought to see, for we are sure everybody will enjoy it. There is morning performance on Saturday. [*Cheltenham Mercury*, Saturday 14 November 1885, p.3.]

***Week commencing 16 November.***

THEATRE ROYAL, WORCESTER. Six nights, Saturday matinee. *The Mikado*. [*Worcester Journal*, Saturday 14 November, p.8.]

**"THE MIKADO" AT THE WORCESTER THEATRE.**

At the Theatre Royal, on Monday, Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company entered upon a six nights' engagement for the representation of the Japanese opera "The Mikado," the latest of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's works, which is being played with such splendid success at the Savoy theatre. The piece is admirably mounted, the dresses, which are designed from Japanese authorities, are rich and elegant, and the scenery throughout effective. The opera having now been played for a considerable time, it will be unnecessary to relate the story on which it is founded. The part of the Mikado, which, however, is not called into play until the conclusion of the piece, is very ably filled by Mr. Robert Fairbanks, who has a good voice and possesses a dry humour which is very amusing. His song "A more humane Mikado never" is warmly received. Mr. C. Conyers as Nanki-Poo, son of the Mikado, disguised as a wandering minstrel, and Miss Bessie Wilkinson as Ynm-Yum, one of the three sisters who are wards of Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Titipu, with whom he is in love, join in several duets, for which they are heartily encored. Miss Beatrix Young, whose part is Pitti-Sing, another of the three wards, has also a good voice, and sings with pleasing effect. The most prominent part in the opera, however, is that of Ko-Ko, which could hardly be in better hands than those of Mr. Albert James, to whose excellent and spirited



acting is added the advantage of good singing. He is especially successful in his song in which he gives a list of “social offenders who might well be underground,” and is also very funny in his song “On a tree by a river a little tomtit.” Miss Millie Vere acts and sings well as Katisha, an elderly lady in love with Nanki-Poo; and Mr. Edward Clowes as Pooh Bah. To Miss Agnes Taylor, Mr. Edward White, and Mr. F. Theiler are entrusted respectively the representation of the parts of Peep-Bo, Pish-Tush and Go-To; and the company are well supported by a chorus of school girls, nobles, guards, and coolies. The dialogue is witty and sparkling throughout. The duets and trios with which the piece abounds are all enthusiastically received. [*Worcester Journal*, Saturday 21 November 1885, p.3.]

This week Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s opera company have appeared here in *The Mikado*. The opera was superbly dressed and mounted. The company all round is a capital one, and their performances elicited the greatest enthusiasm, the following calling for special commendation:—Mr. A. James, Ko-Ko; Mr. Fairbanks, Mikado; Mr. C. Conyers, Nanki-Poo; Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Yum-Yum; Miss B. Young, Pitti-Sing; Miss Millie Vere, Katisha; Mr. E. Clowes, Pooh-Bah; Mr. F. Theiler, Go-To; Miss Agnes Taylor, Peep-Bo; Mr. E. White, Pish-Tush. The opera was well received at each representation. [*The Era*, Saturday 21 November 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 23 November.***

WOLVERHAMPTON. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 21 November 1885, p.5.]

The visit of *the Mikado* has been looked forward to with much pleasure, and the arrival of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan’s latest creation has afforded genuine delight. Notwithstanding the turmoil of an election, in which unusual interest has been centred, the audiences have been large, and the performances of the opera have been most enthusiastically received. Miss Bessie Wilkinson is an attractive and pleasing Yum-Yum, and she is ably supported by the Misses Beatrice [*sic*] Young and Agnes Taylor as her sisters. The part of Katisha finds a very capable exponent in Miss Millie Vere. As Ko-Ko Mr. Albert James is really first rate; and Mr. Edward Clowes creates considerable amusement as Pooh-Bah. Mr. Robert Fairbanks fills the title role in capital style; and Mr. H. Lucas gives a pleasing interpretation of the character of Nanki-Poo. Messrs. Edward White and Ferdinand Theiler take care of the other parts. The dresses are rich and attractive, and a word of praise is due to the band, which under the able conductorship of Mr. W. Robinson, R.A.M., was very efficient. Mr. Welby Wallace is the acting manager. No better proof of the success of the present visit can be given than the mention of the fact that, by special desire, a morning performance will be given today (Saturday), a rare occurrence in this town. [*the Era*, Saturday 28 November 1885, p.19.]

***Week commencing 23 November.***

THEATRE ROYAL, SHREWSBURY. Monday to Wednesday. *The Mikado*.

Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s *Mikado* company gave four representations, including a day performance, this week. The crowded house on the first night evinced the sympathetic curiosity of our playgoers to witness and hear the latest combined effort of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan. The opinion formed of the piece and its exponents was apparent in the crowded and enthusiastic audiences which crammed every inch of space during the remainder of the company’s stay here. It would be tedious, and is scarcely necessary, to dilate at length on the merits of the performance. Where all was so excellent and praiseworthy, it might seem invidious to single out individuals for

special praise. But, nevertheless, simple justice demands that due mention should be made of Mr. Robert Fairbanks as the Mikado, Mr. Charles Conyers<sup>2</sup> as Nanki-Poo, Mr. Albert James as Ko-Ko, and Mr. Edward Clowes as Pooh-Bah. The two latter were irresistibly droll, and provoked roars of laughter. As Yum-Yum Miss Bessie Wilkinson sang and acted with spirit, while Miss Beatrix Young and Miss Agnes Taylor rendered the parts of Pitti-Sing and Peep-Bo with equal grace. The difficult part of Katisha found an admirable representative in Miss Millie Vere, who sang and acted charmingly. Scenery, dresses, and other appliances were all that could be desired. [*The Era*, Saturday 5 December 1885, p.18.]

LYCEUM THEATRE, STAFFORD. Thursday to Saturday. *The Mikado*.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *Mikado* company occupy the theatre the latter part of this week. [*ibid.*]

#### ***Week commencing 7 December.***

THEATRE ROYAL, HANLEY. Six nights. *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 5 December 1885, p.5.]

Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan's latest success *The Mikado* was presented at this theatre for the first time on Monday night by a company under the management of Mr. Welby Wallace, and was very favourably received by an audience which, although not so large as the occasion deserved, was most enthusiastic. Mr. Albert James's performance of Ko-Ko is marked with his usual spirit and vivacity, and Mr. W. Gilbert as Nanki-Poo possesses a sweet tenor voice, which he uses to good effect. Mr. E. Clowes is quaintly humorous as Pooh-Bah, and Mr. Robert Fairbanks is also very good in the title role. Miss Beatrix Young is a charming representative of Pitti-Sing, and sang and acted very artistically. Miss Bessie Wilkinson was also very pleasing as Yum-Yum, and Miss Millie Vere was a capital exponent of the rather thankless character of Katisha. The choruses were capitally rendered, the costumes costly and beautiful, and the local band was kept under good control by Mr. W. Robinson. [*The Era*, Saturday 12 December, p.17.]

#### ***Week commencing 14 December.***

THEATRE ROYAL, HUDDERSFIELD. Six nights, *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 12 December 1885, p.5.]

THE "MIKADO" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL— Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's new comic opera, in two acts, entitled "The Mikado, or a town in Titifu," [*sic*] was received at the Theatre Royal on Monday night by a large audience with undoubted favour. The opera is written in pretty much the same strain as those which have preceded it from the pen of the same talented *collaborateurs*; but the new ideas introduced afford all the delights for absolute novelty, and this is especially noticeable in the Japanese manners and fashions introduced, which gave a freshness and keen interest to the quaint humour of Mr. Gilbert, whilst Mr. Sullivan is quite up to his colleague in the libretto, some of the music being most fascinating. The opening scene is laid in the court yard of Ko-Ko's palace in Titipu. Ko-Ko, Lord High Executioner of Tipipu [*sic*], formerly a tailor, is anxious to marry one of his wards (Yum-Yum), who is also beloved by Nanki-Poo, son of the Mikado, and whose love she returns, but whom she only knows as a wandering minstrel. Nanki-Poo has fled from his father's court to escape a marriage, decreed by his father, with an elderly

---

<sup>2</sup> *The Era*, 5 December 1885, reports that Charles Conyers was playing Alexis &c., with "C" Company that week.

lady Katisha. A letter is received by Ko-Ko from the Mikado to the effect “that as no executions have taken place in Tipipu for a year he decrees that unless somebody is beheaded within one month the office of Lord High Executioner shall be abolished and the city reduced to the rank of a village.” This produces the greatest consternation, and it is ultimately agreed that Nanki-Poo (who is still only known as a wandering minstrel) shall be the victim, his condition being that he marries Yum-Yum, the guardian Ko-Ko consoling himself with the idea that in a month she will be a widow and will then be eligible for marriage to him. This arrangement has scarcely been completed when Katisha appears upon the scene to claim the fulfilment of the Mikado’s wishes for the marriage with her of Nanki-Poo. The second act is laid in Ko-Ko’s garden. It is declared on the authority of Pooh Bah, Attorney-General, Lord Chief Justice, Master of the Rolls, Judge Ordinary, Lord Chancellor, and Coroner, all in one, that by the Mikado’s law when a man is beheaded his wife is buried alive. This sacrifice Yum-Yum is not prepared to make for the bliss of a month’s married life. It is then proposed by Ko-Ko, who states that he has “never even killed a bluebottle,” that it is not necessary that he should really be executed, but that an affidavit to that effect, signed by Pooh-Bah, who holds the plurality of offices, will do as well. Ko-Ko relinquishes his pretensions to the hand of Yum-Yum, and is induced to woo and wed Katisha. Nanki-Poo, having been married to Yum-Yum, receives the Mikado’s pardon and everything ends happily. Mr. Robert Fairbanks gave an excellent rendering of the Mikado, his fine baritone voice being heard to advantage, his song “A more humane Mikado never did In Japan exist,” gaining him a hearty recall. The Nanki-Poo of Mr. Walter Gilbert was a pleasing performance, his solos and duets being especially fine. The grotesque character of Ko-Ko was admirably portrayed by Mr. A. James, and was productive of the utmost amusement, and Messrs. Edward Clowes, Edward White, and F. Theiler were equally successful in their respective representations of Pooh-Bah, Pish-Tush, and Go-To. Yum-Yum, Pitti-Sing, and Peep-Bo were represented with bewitching grace by Miss Bessie Wilkinson, Miss Beatrice Young, and Miss Agnes Taylor. Miss Millie Vere gave a high dramatic tone to the character of Katisha. The chorus was effective and sung in excellent time and tune, and that their efforts were duly appreciated was shown in the frequent recalls. The dresses were magnificent and the stage fittings superb, and the splendid band, under the baton of Mr. W. Robinson, added much to the enjoyment of the performance. The opera will be repeated each evening this week. [*Huddersfield Chronicle*, Tuesday 15 December 1885, p.3.]

Mr. R. D’Oyly Carte’s company, under the courteous management of Mr. Welby Wallace, have been playing *The Mikado* here. It has been a big success in Huddersfield, the houses being nightly crowded with an appreciative and delighted audience. Several artists new to local audiences have appeared. One of these, Mr. Walter Gilbert, who is possessed of a fine tenor voice and sings the allotted music to Nanki-Poo in brilliant style is a decided acquisition to the company. Mr. R. Fairbanks is well suited to the Mikado, and Messrs. A. James and E. Clowes are equally good in their respective roles. A capital representative of Yum-Yum is Miss Bessie Wilkinson, who sings and acts extremely well. Miss Vere was also effective as Katisha. The opera was splendidly mounted, and the orchestra, under the careful leadership of Mr. W. Robinson, R.A.M., well supplied the instrumental part of the music. [*The Era*, Saturday 19 December 1885, p.17.]

***Week commencing 21 December.***

ROYAL THEATRE AND OPERA HOUSE, WAKEFIELD. Monday & Tuesday, *The Mikado*.

Another treat has been provided for the patrons of the house, Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company appearing in *The Mikado* on Monday and Tuesday evenings. The opera was mounted in a most effective manner, and was a complete success. As the Lord High Executioner Mr. Albert James caused much amusement, Mr. Walter Gilbert, as Nanki-Poo, sang in a most pleasing manner. Mr. R. Fairbanks as the Mikado and Mr. Edward Clowes as Pooh-Bah were also successful. Miss Bessie Wilkinson (Yum-Yum), Miss Beatrix Young (Pitti-Sing) and Miss A. Taylor (Peep-Bo) were everything that could be desired. Miss Nellie Vere (*sic*), as Katisha, acted and sang in a satisfactory manner. [*The Era*, Saturday 26 December 1885, p.20.]

??? Wednesday & Thursday.

Christmas Day, Friday.

THEATRE ROYAL, DONCASTER. Saturday, *The Mikado*.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company drew an overflowing house on the 26th ult. with *The Mikado*. [*The Era*, Saturday 2 January 1886, p.16.]