

## ***The Grand Duke Glossary***

Compiled by Tim Riley

**Pfennig Halbpennig.** Penny-halfpenny.

**Dummkopf.** German for 'dumb-head'.

**Dr Tannhäuser.** The original Tannhäuser was a German Minnesinger and poet of the thirteenth century. There seems no special reason why Gilbert chose his name for the Notary.

**Speisesaal.** German for 'dining room'.

**Sposo.** Italian for 'bridegroom'.

***Troilus and Cressida.*** 1602 play by Shakespeare.

**We're all tiled here.** Term from Freemasonry meaning that all present are joined in secure secrecy.

**Sausage-roll.** A sausage, or a roll of sausage-meat, wrapped in puff pastry and baked.

**King Agamemnon.** Chief of the Greek army in *Troilus and Cressida*. Neither a leading nor a humorous role, and not an obvious choice for the company's principal comedian.

**Louis Quatorze wig.** Shoulder-length wig as worn by Louis XIV of France.

**Citharae.** Ancient musical stringed instruments.

**Eloia.** This word, evidently a cry of salutation, is not in Liddell and Scott's Greek lexicon.

**Opoponax.** Sweet myrrh, a fragrant herb.

**Hoydens.** Tomboys.

**A very good part in Gerolstein.** Referring to Offenbach's 1867 operetta *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, which D'Oyly Carte revived at the Savoy the year after *The Grand Duke*.

**Like turtle, her first love confessing.** Referring to the turtle dove.

**That it was 'mock'.** See mock-turtle, below.

**Jade.** Hussy.

**Agitato.** Musical term, meaning 'in an agitated manner'.

**Muckled.** A verb unknown to the Oxford English Dictionary; presumably Gilbert's elaboration of 'much' in the same line.

**A stupid muff.** Victorian word for a stupid, dilatory, inactive, and generally amiable young man.

**Candle-snuff.** The snuff or burnt wick of a candle.

**Gibbet.** Gallows.

**The code of the duello.** The established code of duellists.

**Falchions.** Originally broad, curved swords; later a sword of any kind.

**Orthography.** Conventional spelling.

**Revising Barrister.** Official charged with revising the lists of people qualified to vote in parliamentary elections.

**King's evidence.** (Or Queen's evidence.) Formerly, a common law system by which a defendant could plead guilty and offer evidence against co-defendants in return for a lenient sentence.

**Fortune's rubs.** Obstacles.

**Tuppence-ha'penny.** Twopence halfpenny: 2½ pence (equivalent to 1p in decimal currency).

**Gingerbierheim and Currantweinmilch.** Mock-German words for beverages.

**Jujube.** Hard fruit-flavoured sweet.

**Charlemagne.** Charles, King of the Franks (b. 742, d. 814) ruler of a large part of Western Europe.

**Mock-turtle.** A cheap soup, meant to resemble green turtle soup, made from calves' heads and offal.

**Two-and-six.** Two shillings and sixpence (12½ pence in decimal currency, equivalent of just under £10 in terms of current retail prices).

**Half-a-crown.** A coin with the value of two shillings and sixpence.

**Waterbury watches.** The Waterbury Watch Company, of Connecticut, used mass-production to manufacture inexpensive watches from 1880. In 1886 their watches were advertised in *The Times* at 10/6 (52½ pence in decimal terms, equal to a little over £40 in terms of current retail prices).

**Gamboge in the gill.** Yellow in the face.

**Morris wall-papers.** Wallpapers designed by William Morris were much sought-after by devotees of the late Victorian arts and crafts movement.

**'Jim-jams'**. Nineteenth century slang for a condition anywhere between delirium tremens, jitteriness and a fit of depression.

**To give this man his gruel.** Administer punishment.

**Plebeian.** Lower-class.

**Shoddy.** Cheap cloth, i.e. poorly dressed.

**Pillory.** A method of punishment whereby offenders were secured by the wrists and neck, leaving them immobilised in a public place exposed to verbal and sometimes physical abuse.

**Doughty.** Brave.

**verbum sat.** Abbreviation of *verbum sat sapienti* a word is enough for a wise man.

**Give you 'what for'.** Give you punishment.

**Spartan.** The people of Ancient Sparta in Greece were famed for their endurance and austerity.

**Grig.** An extravagantly lively person.

**Tollolish.** Passable, fairly good.

**Diergeticon.** Another one that eluded Liddell and Scott.

**Lesbian wine.** The island of Lesbos was famous for its fine wine (known as Pramnian) (*cf* Homer, *Odyssey*, X.235.)

**Cramming.** Learning by rote for an examination.

**Hyporchematic.** From the Greek ὑπορχηματικός, 'accompanied by dancing'. Relating to a choral hymn to Apollo, accompanied by dancing and pantomimic action.

**Choreutae.** Members of the chorus in Greek drama.

**Criticaster.** A petty or inferior critic.

**Choregus.** The leader or director of a Greek chorus.

**Oboloi and drachmae.** Greek coins.

**The Kalends that are Greek.** *Ad kalendas graecas* was a Latin saying meaning ‘never’ or ‘at some unspecified future date’; kalends (or calends), a term for the beginning of each month occurred in the Roman but not in the Greek calendar.

**In the period Socratic.** In the time of the philosopher Socrates (c.469 BC–399 BC).

**Every dining-room was Attic.** A play on the two meanings of ‘Attic’, the architectural feature, and the adjectival form of ‘Attica’, the region of Greece in which Athens is located.

**Recherché.** Of high quality; something worth seeking out.

**ἄριστον.** Pronounced *arriston*. Literally, ‘the best’ – the best meal of the day; at various periods applied by the Greeks to breakfast or to lunch.

**τρέπεσθαι πρὸς τὸν ποτὸν.** Pronounced *trepesthai pross ton potton*; ‘they turned to drinking’. A quotation from Plato’s *Symposium* (176a) in which there is a remarkable amount of steady and conscientious drinking.

**They mixed their wine with water.** The ancient Greeks held that drinking undiluted wine was barbaric.

**Which would shock that worthy gentleman, the Licenser of Plays.** In Gilbert’s day all plays staged in English theatres had to be licensed by the Lord Chamberlain, an official of the Royal Household.

**Corybantian.** Adjective for the Korybantes, an ecstatic sect who worshipped the Phrygian goddess Cybele with drumming and dancing

**Dionysiac or Bacchic.** Adjectives for the god known to the Greeks as Dionysus and to the Romans as Bacchus – the god of wine, and inspirer of ritual madness and ecstasy.

**Dithyrambic.** The dithyramb was an ancient Greek song to the god Dionysus, noted for its wild and ecstatic nature.

**Mrs Grundy.** Originally an invented character for Thomas Morton’s play *Speed the Plough* (1798), subsequently generally taken as the personification of interfering prudery.

**Goloshes.** Rubber overshoes

**Hardbake.** A sweet made with molasses, butter and almonds

**Butter-scotch.** A sweet made with butter and brown sugar

**Miminy-piminy.** Over-refined

**Leman.** Sweetheart

**Corse.** Corpse.

**Avaunt! Avaunt!** Go away!

**Chimerical.** Wildly fanciful

**Epithalamia.** Lyric odes in honour of a bride and groom.

**Marsala.** Fortified wine from Sardinia.

**Bumpers.** Well-filled glasses

**Pommery seventy-four!** 1874 was one of the finest vintages for Champagne in the nineteenth century. Pommery's *brut nature* champagne of that year was particularly esteemed.

**Auric'lar.** Auricular, pertaining to the ear

**Tol-lol.** Average, not particularly impressive.

**Numismatist.** One whose hobby is collecting coins.

**Allons, encore.** Off we go again.

**Garçons, fillettes.** Boys and girls (in contrast to the formal 'Mesdames et Messieurs' of other casinos)

**Louis d'or.** Gold Louis (coins).

**Roues d'charrette!** Cart-wheels (coins).

**Holà! holà!** Hello!

**Mais faites vos jeux.** But place your bets.

**Allons, la classe.** Off we go, pupils.

**Le temps se passe.** Time is passing.

**La banque se casse.** The bank is breaking.

**Rien n'va plus!** Contraction of '*Rien ne va plus!*', No more bets! (The call made by the croupier once the wheel is spinning.)

**Le dix-sept noir, impair et manque!** The pockets of the roulette wheel are numbered from 1 to 36, alternating between red and black. There is also a green pocket numbered 0 (zero). Bets may be placed on specific numbers (such as 17 here) or on groups or permutations of numbers such as odd (*impair*) or even (*pair*) or between 1-18 (*manque*) or 19-36 (*passe*).

**Holà! holà! vive la banque!** Hello! Long live the bank!

**Good lack!** Old variant of 'Good Lord' or similar mild expletive.

**Allons, la foule!** Off we go, everyone! (Lit. 'the crowd').

**Ça roule ça roule.** It rolls, it rolls.

**Le temps s'écoule.** Time is running out.

**Le trente-cinq rouge, impair et passe!** See *le dix-sept noir*, above. Thirty-five, red, odd, and in the higher half of the numbers.

**Très bien, étudiants de la classe.** Very good, students of the class.

**Prétendant.** Applicant.

**Qui perte fit, Au temps jadis.** Those who lost before.

**Gagne aujourd'hui!** Win today!

**Le double zéro!** Double zero.

**Vous perdez tout, mes nobles héros.** You lose everything, my noble heroes.

**Merovingian.** European dynasty of the fifth century.

**Gormandize.** Eat gluttonously.

**Flibberty gibberty.** Frivolous, senseless.