

The Grand Theatre and Opera House,
Leeds, under the management of
Wilson Henry Barrett, 1876 to 1895.

By
Michael Hammett

Vol. 2

Leeds, 1975

CHAPTER IX:1885

On 3 January 1885 the Clerk to the Leeds Justices sent a letter to the Grand Theatre which said that the Justices considered that 'strong hand rails' were necessary in the principal, and some of the other staircases in the theatre, and that the stage door should be made to open outwards. (It will be remembered that there had been an accident at the Theatre Royal, Leeds, in 1882, and that Watson had been asked to report on the safety of the Grand Theatre's exits in case of panic in 1883. It seems likely, therefore, that the Justices were now acting with an increased awareness of such dangers.)

Lee Anderson received the letter, but passed it on to Kingston for the consideration of the directors. They, however, anticipated this, and decided at a meeting held before Lee Anderson sent on the letter, that the Justices' demands fell upon the theatre's lessee and not the company. Kingston was accordingly instructed to send the letter back to Lee Anderson. Whatever the propriety of this move, it is clearly concordant with the company's intention dating from the 1884 Annual General Meeting to make Wilson Barrett responsible for every expense that it could.

This kind of action was no doubt necessitated by the

narrow margin of profit on which the company worked, and the strictness with which the directors controlled their expenditure is indicated by a letter to the company's auditors (Messrs John Routh) on 15 January 1885. Having completed the audit Messrs Routh had sent to the board an account for £3 17s. 6d. Kingston sent the firm a cheque for three guineas with a note which said: 'It was understood that the fee would be as usual, and I am instructed by my directors to state that they see no reason for its increase'. That the directors could see a reason for a yearly increase in charges is evident from the fact that they included such a provision in the leases of their shops (and had refused to relent on this despite Boswell's plea in 1884). It is clear, therefore, that they would not see any reason for the auditors' 14s. 6d. increase.

Wilson Barrett's rent had been paid with an average of one month's delay in 1884, and thus it continued at the beginning of 1885. Kingston applied to him for the first quarter's rent on 2 February, sent him a reminder on 27 February, and finally acknowledged receipt of the £625 on 6 March 1885.

Though Wilson Barrett paid the rent from the Princess's Theatre in London, Lee Anderson kept account of the rent in Leeds, and it was he who wrote to Kingston to say that the latter had neglected to deduct property tax

from the first quarter's demand. Kingston wrote back that the omission was Wilson Barrett's, and not his. (A total of £114 11s. 8d. was deducted from the second quarter's rent for property tax paid in 1884 (£52 1s. 8d.) and 1885 (£62 10s.).)

In March, also, James Wood, the principal building contractor, was at last induced to accept three fifty pounds shares as part settlement of his account. The face value of the shares was one hundred and fifty pounds, although in reality they must at that time have been worth just under sixty pounds. This difference, however, was a small percentage of Wood's total account which came to a little under eighteen thousand pounds.

In April Mr Swann, who supervised the Assembly Rooms, complained to Kingston that some of the lead on the Assembly Rooms' tower was 'loose and flapping about', and that some of the panes of the glass roof over the entrance to the stalls of the Assembly Rooms had been broken by falling slates. Kingston passed this on to Sagar-Musgrave, who was chairman of the repairs sub-committee which had been appointed to vet these matters. It seems that they accepted these repairs as the company's responsibility.

In May the seemingly ever smouldering question of the directors' right of admission and special courtesy during

a performance again leapt briefly into flame. It will be remembered that Wilson Barrett had supplied the directors with tickets to enable them to move from one part of the house to another. This was a sop to them after he had forced the deletion of the free admissions clause from the new lease. Sagar-Musgrave had attempted to use his ticket during Minnie Palmer's visit in June 1884 to get into the dress circle. A Mr Rogers, however, an attendant, had threatened to throw him out of the theatre unless he paid. Sagar-Musgrave had written injured letters to Wilson Barrett, but the latter had ignored them, claiming that he considered them 'rude'. Sagar-Musgrave had then involved the board in his complaints, and Wilson Barrett had been induced to make a reply to Kitson in February 1885. He had suggested that Lee Anderson attend a board meeting to explain what had happened.

The board meeting was held on 19 May, but Lee Anderson seems to have given an explanation that did not go far to clear matters up. He had explained to Mr Rogers Wilson Barrett's instructions about the directors' tickets, he said, and when Rogers had specifically asked him whether or not he was to throw Sagar-Musgrave out he had told him that he could not. Lee Anderson claimed that he had then left while Rogers was talking with Watson. However, it seemed that Rogers had then gone up to Sagar-Musgrave and demanded that he pay.

After the meeting Kingston wrote to Wilson Barrett saying that Lee Anderson was at fault in leaving Sagar-Musgrave

thus to be insulted, that the board had read the latter's letters and did not consider them rude (though in seeming contradiction of this he added that Wilson Barrett should at least have acknowledged them), and that the tickets seemed useless and the directors intended to return them. The directors would visit the theatre in future under the covenant of the lease which allowed them to inspect it, as, they claimed, Sagar-Musgrave really had been doing during Minnie Palmer's visit (though they admitted that it might have been a mistake for him to use his pass for such a purpose).

It might seem that the whole situation developed out of a misplaced sense of relative importances. But, taken with the protracted negotiations, and the dramatic postures, which accompanied the directors' repeated attempts to gain special favours at the theatre, it appears likely that a concept of the proper behaviour in a theatre, and of the ethics which underlay such a situation, of privilege, and of morality, motivated the directors' and the manager's actions and responses. Perhaps it is to over-simplify to say that the directors wanted to go to the theatre that they had built, and that they wanted to be afforded the greatest privileges that that theatre could offer, but that Wilson Barrett and Lee Anderson had to consider the larger picture - to nurture the whole audience's belief in what could be gained from the theatre, to keep privilege in the imagination rather than in petty

realities. And perhaps Rogers was simply being officious. But it is evident that these men were all strongly motivated in what they sought to gain, and in what they sought to deny, and this may give some indication of the moral and social ethos of the theatre's nightly functioning.

In the event Wilson Barrett sent a placatory note on 6 August to Kingston asking him to tell the directors that Lee Anderson had been instructed to allow them free into any part of the theatre. Tickets, he said, would be sent them as soon as possible, but until then 'their private cards would be sufficient to pass them'.

It will be remembered that in 1884 the theatre was reinsured for £22,500 directly with a number of companies. In the summer of 1885 the directors thought it advisable to insure also the rent. This was done with Les Insurances Belges at a rate of 31s 6d. per hundred pounds insured, and the £2,500 rent was insured for £1,800. (As rent was the company's sole income this seems a reasonably prudent move, although Wilson Barrett's somewhat dilatory payment of the rent may have precipitated it. The third quarter's rent, due on 1 August, was not received until 8 September, and the last quarter's rent, due on 1 November, was applied for on 9 November, 9 December, and 17 December before it was paid.)

Meanwhile in a reply to an inquiry from Messrs Ford Warren, Leeds solicitors (on 23 November 1885), Kingston estimated that a fifty pound share in the company was worth

twenty pounds, which was an increase of nearly four pounds on the 'quoted market price' that he had discovered at the end of 1884.

Two further matters were dealt with at the end of the year: Boswell was offered a three or five year renewal of his lease at a rent of £110 per annum (and, subject to approval, he might also be allowed to alter his premises), and the Chief Constable was invited to make suggestions 'in view of an inspection being made to ascertain the present conditions and efficiency of the appliances for extinguishing fire'.

The make-up of the seasons in 1885 continued to follow familiar trends. There were roughly ten and one half weeks of pantomime (there had been ten in 1884), but a decline in the number of weeks of comic opera to only four. Weeks of drama and comedy remained roughly constant at thirty-three, but only three of these were of spectacular melodrama, and there was only one double week. The Carl Rosa Opera Company gave a further double week, but of twelve performances, only two were of new works, and the other ten were of familiar pieces. The increase in the number of return visits continued, however, and twenty-one weeks were thus filled.

The pantomime, 'Bo-Peep', closed on 7 March, and it was

succeeded by a return visit of C.W. Garthorne's company in 'Impulse'.¹ In its turn 'Impulse' was followed by Miss Marriott, a 'powerful tragedienne' (that is, of the 'old', melodramatic school of acting), and she gave two pieces: 'Jeannie Deans' on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and 'East Lynne' on Tuesday, and Friday.²

'Jeannie Deans' trod familiar territory, and in it Miss Marriott exhibited the strong emotions of a 'Scotch lassie who demonstrates heroism in a sister's cause'. (Sir Walter Scott's 'Heart of Midlothian' was based on the same theme, the Yorkshire Post reviewer pointed out.³) Miss Marriott played the 'erring and repentant' Lady Isobel Carlyle in 'East Lynne'.

Miss Marriott was succeeded by a return visit of Lytton Sothorn in revivals of his father's famous creations. He gave 'Our American Cousin' all week except Saturday, when he performed 'Sam, Dundreary's Brother-in-law', and 'Dundreary Married and Settled'.⁴

Lytton Sothorn's revivals were followed by a further familiar piece, 'The Pirates of Penzance'. This time, however, it was given by D'Oyly Carte's company of children.⁵ This means of infusing a little novelty into a production in which interest was beginning to flag had been used before, and was again successful, for the 'little peoples' performance greatly impressed the Yorkshire Post reviewer, and he prophesied crowded houses for the week.

In the following week an Easter holiday audience 'crammed' the theatre for the third visit of A. and S. Gatti's company in 'In the Ranks'.⁷ No doubt its 'strong situations' and 'ingenious stage carpentry' along with its detailed and 'realistic' evocations of life in the army all appealed to the mass audience.⁸ 'In the Ranks' ran for a fortnight, and was followed by another production making its third visit - Wilson Barrett's company in what was advertised as the 'farewell visit' of 'Claudian'.⁹

'Claudian' was followed by the return of two more Gilbert and Sullivan comic operas, 'Patience' and 'HMS Pinafore', given by D'Oyly Carte's 'repertoire company'. 'Patience' was given for the first half of the week, and 'HMS Pinafore' for the second, preceded by a piece called 'Round and Square'.

The D'Oyly Carte company was followed by a return visit to Leeds of a comedian who had not played there since 1873. This was Charles Collette, who played in the style of Charles Matthews, indeed, appearing in several pieces that the latter had made famous. (He gave two of Matthews's pieces on this visit to the Grand Theatre: 'My Awful Dad', and 'The Liar'.) However, he opened the week in a part that he had 'made his own', having played it over a thousand times - the title role in 'The Colonel', by F.C. Burnand. ('The Colonel' satirised the Aesthetic Movement, though the Yorkshire Post reviewer¹⁰ thought that this was now a rather stale source of humour, and that people were tired of seeing a movement 'which never had any real life' thus ridiculed.)

Collette's acting had most nearly approached that of Charles Matthews, thought the reviewer, and it had 'airiness, finish, and delicacy'.¹¹

Charles Collette was succeeded by Messrs Bruce and Robertson's company in a new play, 'Nita's First'. (It was preceded by a curtain-raiser called 'Captain of the Watch'.)¹²

'Nita's First' had its first performance at the Grand Theatre on 11 May, having been a 'success' in London in the previous season. Nita was the sister of Fred Fizzleton, the central character of the piece, and the 'first' was her first child which she sent to her brother's house in the hope of concealing it from their father, against whose wishes she had secretly married.

Fizzleton, however, discovered the baby in his hall, and was embarrassed to know what to do with it. He rightly divined that it might compromise him, for, having been deposited in the house of a nearby elderly maiden lady who promptly rejected it, it was discovered by Fizzleton's wife who was overcome with jealousy, and was convinced that the baby was her husband's illicit progeny.

The jealous wife eventually went to see Fizzleton senior, in front of whom the whole truth emerged, just in time to discover that a nephew had placed the baby in a four-wheeler, and that it was thereafter claimed by a lady who took it to Edinburgh.

The play continued in this broadly farcical way before eventually the baby was returned to its mother.

'Nita's First' was followed by a return visit of Laura Villiers in 'Fedora' (which she played all week, accompanying it on Friday with 'The Sleep Walking Scene' from 'Macbeth' for her benefit). These performances were advertised as her 'farewell visit' in 'Fedora'.¹³

In the interval since Laura Villiers's previous appearance at the Grand Theatre in 'Fedora' she seemed to the reviewer to have gained in experience.¹⁴ Apart from that, the reviewer had little to add except that her dresses were 'greatly admired' for their 'richness and beauty'. 'Fedora' was followed by a further returning production: Harry Jackson's company presented Meritt, Pettitt, and Harris's 'The World' with the original Drury Lane scenery.¹⁵

Another returning production followed 'The World'. This was Horace Lingard and Van Biene's company in 'Falka' which they had previously given at the Grand Theatre in 1884. Lingard and Van Biene's company were followed by Madame Modjeska, who appeared in 'Adrienne Lecouvreur' on Monday and Thursday, 'Heartsease' on Tuesday, 'Mary Stuart' on Wednesday and Saturday, and 'As You Like It' on Friday.¹⁶

Madame Modjeska had not been seen in Leeds since December 1881, and she received a warm greeting from a 'well-filled' house on this return. 'As You Like It' was the only piece from her repertoire that she had not played in Leeds before, and advance bookings for it were

by the Tuesday of her week 'already very satisfactory'. The performance had what the reviewer¹⁷ called a 'pantomime audience' — dress circle, stalls and boxes fully occupied, and pit and gallery 'inconveniently crowded'.

The piece was 'noteworthily' staged, and the reviewer was pleased to find the songs done in their entirety (they were frequently omitted or curtailed, he said). However, he did not find Modjeska's performance uniformly satisfactory, for although she was good in showing the dawning of her love for Orlando, and in the 'pathetic passages' in acts three and four, her foreign accent made it difficult for her to inflect the lines to the reviewer's satisfaction, and this marred 'the parts in the forest scenes where the assumed individuality of the heroine requires the most dexterous and artistic touches of character'. Empathetic actress as she was, Modjeska was unable to invest Shakespeare's character with the intellectual sparkle that the reviewer knew underlay the lines. And this kind of deficiency was perhaps emphasised by the tendency of Henry Neville to speak his lines as though they were "full of quotations".

However, the performance was greatly appreciated by the audience, and its popularity was so great that Lee Anderson could announce that Modjeska had 'consented' to repeat 'As You Like It' on Saturday, in place of 'Mary Stuart' which had been advertised for that date, 'in deference to the expressed wish of several patrons of the Theatre'.

Madame Modjeska was followed by a further return of Shiel Barry in 'Les Cloches de Corneville'.¹⁸ In its turn 'Les Cloches de Corneville' was followed by another comic opera, Planquette's 'Rip Van Winkle',¹⁹ and 'Rip Van Winkle' was followed by a play called 'The Babes' (to the advertisement for which was subjoined the cryptic 'Whine one, whine two', which perhaps would indicate that the play was of the broadest comedy, and this may explain why the Yorkshire Post reviewer did not give it a notice). The principal actors were Willie Edouin, Lionel Brough, and Miss Atherton.

'The Babes' ended its week on Saturday, 4 July, and the theatre remained closed for the following week, but reopened on 13 July - for one week in the middle of the annual summer closure - for Charles Hawtrey's company in a new play, 'The Private Secretary'.²⁰

This piece was an adaptation by Charles Hawtrey of a play called 'Der Bibliothekar' by Van Moser. It had first been played at the Prince's Theatre, London, under the management of Edgar Bruce, where it was produced in the summer as a stop-gap. It was unanimously condemned by every paper in London, and Bruce wished to withdraw it. Hawtrey, however, persuaded him to keep it on until, after five weeks of bad business, audiences began to flock to see it. By this time Bruce had arranged for another play to replace it and it had to leave the Prince's Theatre.

Hawtrey then became his own manager, and transferred the play to the Globe Theatre where it ran for thirteen months, playing to crowded houses even when there were two or three matinees per week.²¹

The central character of the piece was a young curate who was persuaded to pretend to be the nephew of a choleric old gentleman, who had returned from India to England 'with the joyful expectation of finding his nephew something of a rake'. The curate was particularly meek and mild, and 'with his bottle of milk, his Bath bun, his goloshes, and his chronic influenza was the butt of everyone throughout the piece'. Extravagant practical jokes at his expense kept the house in 'perpetual laughter'.

The play was somewhat heavy-handed farce, then, at the expense of an easy target, and looked a little old fashioned to the reviewer who thought that he detected 'something of the farce of fifty years ago' in the indignant rage of the choleric uncle.

After 'The Private Secretary' the theatre remained closed for two weeks, to reopen on 3 August with 'Never Too Late to Mend'. This was presented by Mercer and Wainwright's company, and though Charles Reade's play must have been quite familiar to the Leeds public it had a 'very large' audience. Indeed, the reviewer asserted that this piece was always well received.²²

The principal actors were Mr J.A. Mercer, and John Wainwright, who had played Tom Robinson in this piece 'over eight hundred times'.²³

'Never Too Late to Mend' was followed by Henry Neville playing Bob Brierley in another familiar piece, 'The Ticket-of-leave Man' for the 1,379th time. He had played the part four years previously at the Grand Theatre.

'Careful attention to the minutest detail of action, splendid elocution, a quiet force, which in the most exciting scenes conveys the impression of a great reserve of power, and a beautiful voice that always has a touch of tender manliness in it, are some of the characteristics of Mr Neville's acting,' claimed the reviewer.²⁴ Clearly these were better suited to Tom Taylor's piece than the "quotations" in 'As You Like It'. Neville gave Bulwer-Lytton's 'Money' on Friday for his benefit.

Henry Neville was succeeded by D'Oyly Carte's company in the latest of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas, 'The Mikado'. The reviewer found that this was as good as all its half dozen predecessors, though he did interestingly remark that only enough Japanese-sounding music was put into the score to give 'local colour' and that otherwise the music was familiar, and in part reminiscent of the earlier works.²⁵ Musically, clearly, only a little Japanese seasoning was to be allowed, but visually the reviewer's tastes were more sophisticated, and he claimed that the Japanese setting permitted Freddie Fox and Louis Edouardes to paint 'exceedingly effective' backgrounds to 'a series of striking pictures brightened

by gorgeous dresses of brilliant hue, and novel designs', and the whole made 'exceedingly effective ... spectacular displays'.²⁶

'The Mikado' was followed by the fourth visit of 'In the Ranks' to the Grand Theatre. The reviewer²⁷ reminded his readers that the play was 'a good pit and gallery piece; it appeals to sympathies that are not difficult to rouse, and adopts means of doing it which, although not very original, are nevertheless extremely effective... Of ingenuity of plot, subtlety of character sketching or fine writing there is none in this play, the intentions of the authors having to all appearances been to hit the tastes of that class of theatre-goers who are old-fashioned enough to like "strong" situations and a dialogue which everybody can understand'.²⁸

'In the Ranks' was followed by the first visit of the 'celebrated' American actress, Mary Anderson, to the Grand Theatre.²⁹ Indeed, this was to be her only visit to Yorkshire on her short 'farewell' provincial tour before returning to America.

Though admission prices had been doubled – and in some cases trebled – the house was 'crowded' in stalls, pit, and gallery, and 'filled' in the circles for Mary Anderson's first night. Advance bookings had given some indication that the expensive risk that Wilson Barrett had taken in asking her to come to Leeds was reasonably safe.

Her repertoire included Gilbert's 'Pygmalion and Galatea', and the one-act 'Comedy and Tragedy' which he had written for her, 'Romeo and Juliet', 'As You Like It', 'Ingomar', 'The Lady of Lyons', and 'The Hunchback'. She played the first three of these in Leeds.

Gilbert's 'Pygmalion and Galatea' must have been familiar to the Leeds playgoers, but in her performance Mary Anderson endowed the statue (in a play that the reviewer obviously found emotionally inadequate³⁰) with beauty and grace, and gave it, when awakened, pathos, tenderness, and innocence, culminating in a long-drawn wail of hopeless agony at the moment of her voluntary return to marble. The reviewer praised her beauty as exquisite sculpture, and it is interesting in this context to remember that a photograph of Mary Anderson as the statue was sold popularly.

But her triumph was in the more conventional melodramatic afterpiece, 'Comedy and Tragedy'. In this she was cast as a distinguished member of the Comédie Française, and she was given plenty of scope both to impress with her beauty (her first appearance was on the broad staircase of her home 'attired in an amber coloured dress, with brocaded robes, with flowers and fan, and diamonds in her throat and hands, and all the lavish richness of the period of the French Regency'), and by the ability of her acting to run through 'the whole gamut of human emotions ... in the course of half an hour'.

This was skilfully engineered. Claire (Mary Anderson) had been lasciviously approached even to the point of attempted physical abduction by the Regent, but the latter would not permit Claire's husband the satisfaction of a duel because the husband was an actor, and consequently a vagabond.

Claire therefore gave a party to which the Regent was invited, and contrived to have his further approaches interrupted by her outraged husband. The latter tore up his contract with the Comédie Française, and the Regent could no longer refuse a duel, which they determined should take place privately in the garden.

Claire therefore had to keep the other guests amused while the duel took place, and to do this she told them that a surprise was being prepared for them which they must not anticipate, and locked the door of the room, giving the key to a Dr Choquart whom she made promise not to give it up for any reason.

Now she entertained them with her skill at improvisation, adopting the role of a strolling player arriving at an inn, and going through whatever parts were requested of her.

Suddenly she heard a cry from the garden and thought that her husband must be mortally wounded. She rushed to the door, but finding it locked, threw herself at the feet of the doctor, imploring him to give her the key. He, of course, refused and her pleadings became more desperate.

All the guests thought that this was a further demonstration of Claire's extraordinary histrionic skill. Eventually the doctor suspected that the emotion was real and allowed her to unlock the door, and rush out of the room to be clasped in her victorious husband's arms. It was the Regent who was mortally wounded.

Mary Anderson had only played in 'As You Like It' once before her performance at the Grand Theatre (at Stratford on the previous Saturday) and to this the reviewer attributed a lack of 'finish'.³¹ However, she was certainly a most beautiful Rosalind, he observed, and compared favourably with Madame Modjeska as she had no difficulty with the subtleties of the language.

Her performance really came to life, thought the reviewer, when she had put on doublet and hose to disguise herself as a man. It was here that she entered fully into the character, and the audience could have no doubt that she could look after herself. She revelled in the humour of the play with 'high spirits', 'absence of consciousness' and a 'quickness with which she seized every turn of thought'. Her gestures and facial expression were all 'charming' in a representation that was 'full of warmth and colour'. The house 'shook with laughter' at the humour of the piece, and 'rang with applause' at the 'serious passages'.

However, her Juliet was not so satisfying because, said

the reviewer, she was not as physically able to live up to his ideal conception of Juliet which was that of a 'girl full of quick generous instincts, suddenly transformed into a woman by the first breath of passion, with high-beating heart and warm blood coursing through her veins at the sound of her lover's voice'.

Mary Anderson obviously seemed too mature, too 'heavy' for this idealised picture, and the reviewer complained that she often pitched her contralto voice too low for that of a girl. It would seem that the reviewer wanted to derive an almost vicarious thrill from the agonies of Juliet's youth.

The audience were pleased enough, nonetheless, and frequently called her to be loudly cheered.

Mary Anderson was succeeded by Elliott Saler's company in his 'Drury Lane comedy drama', 'A True Story Told in Two Cities'. It was 'one of the so-called "slum" dramas which have been so long in fashion' said the reviewer,⁵² who clearly did not like it. It had first been produced at Drury Lane where it had a short run. 'It abounds in the wildest improbabilities, and contains almost every fault that could be crammed into a play' (its only redeeming feature was 'a realistic scene outside the fortifications during the siege of Paris by the Germans'). He concluded his brief notice forcefully thus: 'Even the exigences of a manager driven to the direst straits to fill up a blank week scarcely justify the production of such a piece at such a place'.

'A True Story Told in Two Cities' was followed by Mrs Langtry who, supported by Charles Coghlan,³³ appeared in Bulwer-Lytton's 'The Lady of Lyons' on Monday, 'She Stoops to Conquer' on Tuesday, 'The School for Scandal' on Wednesday, 'Peril' on Thursday, and a new play, 'A Young Tramp' on Friday and Saturday.

Mrs Langtry's Pauline in 'The Lady of Lyons' was disappointing and 'fell flatly' upon an audience which for a Monday night was exceptionally large.³⁴ Though every aspiring debutante or ambitious amateur liked to try this role (equally with Juliet), the reviewer maintained that it required an acting ability grown from much experience and a long apprenticeship which Mrs Langtry's social position had saved her from.

She was better he thought in 'genteel comedy parts' where she had no need to act, and she failed to infuse life or spirit into 'The Lady of Lyons', but was better in 'A Young Tramp'. This piece had been written for her by W.G. Wills, and in the reviewer's opinion it was 'the modern kind of melodrama' which was usually performed at the Theatre Royal in Leeds, not the Grand Theatre, and he thought that it was not up to Wills's usual standard.³⁵

The plot revolved round an actress, Jessie Daw, who attracted (unwittingly) the admiration of a gouty and moribund old Knight who willed his estate to her rather than to his wife or son who had left him, or to his machinating brother-in-law, Bland, who had striven to maintain the family schism so that he might inherit.

This much was established in a prologue. In the play itself the Knight had died, and duly left the estate to Jessie, who offered it to the son because, she said, it was rightfully his. However, the son refused to accept it, and Bland occupied the house. Jessie, however, had the support of the tenants (by her generosity to them) whom she promised that the rightful heir would be installed, and she entered the house. Bland told his servants to throw her out, but the confrontation was forestalled by Bland's daughter who told Jessie that she and the true heir were in love. Jessie also loved him, but believing the story to be true, announced that she was leaving for Australia.

She disappeared, and later, when a body which resembled her was found in a river, she was presumed dead. The peasants decided to raise a memorial to her, and she determined to attend the unveiling disguised as a young man (the 'young tramp').

At the ceremony Bland called her an adventuress, and she abandoned her disguise in order to repudiate this. She made one last appeal to the son to take what was rightfully his, and he agreed to accept on condition that Jessie married him.

The play was melodramatic, but did not require very profound acting of Mrs Langtry, and she pleased the audience, if not the reviewer's fastidious tastes.

Mrs Langtry was succeeded by Mr Calder and his company

in 'The White Slave'.³⁶ This play conveyed a picture of life in the southern States of America at the time when slavery was still permissible, and centred on the sufferings of a young white woman who was for a while suspected of being an octoroon – and therefore a slave.

The principal attraction of the piece seems to have been the negro minstrels whose singing was interspersed throughout it (and who took up the major part of the press advertising), though the burning and wreck of a steamer on the Mississippi 'made a strong appeal to the emotions of the audience'.³⁷

'The White Slave' was followed by a return visit of 'Falka' given by Horace Lingard and A. Van Biene's company. It was now advertised as being in its second year in England, America, France, and Germany.³⁸ 'Falka' was followed by a new 'musical drama' written specially for Fanny Leslie by G.R. Sims and Clement Scott, called 'Jack-in-the-box'. True to Sims's form the play dealt with 'the seamy side of human life',³⁹ and its plot was complicated and full of surprises. Edward Moreland was the hero who, the son of a rich colonist, joined a troupe of strolling players, and married an Italian girl by whom he had a child. Marrying the girl had made an enemy of one Toroni who contrived to rob and murder one of Moreland's companions, and to have Moreland blamed for it.

Moreland fled to America, where his wife died, and he then returned to England with his daughter. Here, under an assumed name, he rejoined the troupe of players.

Meanwhile Moreland senior had come to England in search of his son, and was offered assistance by his cunning nephew, Carlton, who was really after his money. Carlton, with the aid of Toroni, endeavoured to persuade Moreland senior that his son was a murderer, but Moreland would not believe it, and advertised for his son.

The hero saw the advertisement and wrote a full explanation in a letter which he entrusted to Jack Merryweather (in fact the adventuring star of the piece played by Fanny Leslie - his role was that of a catalyst). Jack took it to Carlton's house where Moreland senior was staying, but, failing to see the old man, refused to give it up or to say where it had come from. Carlton, however, could now recognise Jack, and this was the key to the play's resolution. Moreland and his daughter were about to sign a theatrical contract with Carlton when Jack entered and Carlton divined who Moreland and his daughter were.

The daughter ran off to find her grandfather, and was pursued by Carlton and Toroni. They in turn were pursued by Jack disguised as a street Arab, and an ex-showman called Professor O'Sullivan. The daughter was drugged and kept prisoner, but Jack and O'Sullivan rescued her, and took her back to her father who had fled to Croydon under fear of accusation of the murder.

Jack discovered that a companion of Toroni's, Beppo, still had the pocket-book stolen from the murder victim, and knew of the circumstances of the murder. Thus when

Carlton and Toroni denounced the hero as a murderer, Jack was able to turn the tables on them. An angry mob tore down Toroni's show (the scene was set on a fair ground), and roughly handled him. Beppo turned Queen's evidence, and the play could end happily.

Fanny Leslie, as Jack, dominated the piece in which she not only rescued the hero and his daughter, but also sang, danced, and impersonated eccentric characters. She played the part as a smart cockney lad.⁴⁰

Sims's talent for realistic degradation was shown in a scene that the reviewer thought purposefully introduced to show the suffering that young Italian organgrinders (then in fashion) were put to in the service of their profession.

Fanny Leslie was succeeded by Miss Bateman who appeared in 'Leah' on Monday and Wednesday, 'Mary Warner' on Tuesday and Thursday, and a new play, 'His Wife', on Friday and Saturday. 'Mary Warner' had been written for Miss Bateman by Tom Taylor, and 'His Wife' adapted for her by Henry Arthur Jones.

Miss Bateman had 'created' the character of Leah nearly a quarter of a century before this visit to the Grand Theatre, and had played it in many parts of the world. The play was 'a powerful story of race antipathies and religious intollerance' (particularly relevant, thought the reviewer,⁴¹ because of the contemporary persecution of the Jews in Russia) which contained the murder of Abraham by the apostate Jew, Nathan, amid a storm of thunder and lightning, and

the descent of a thunderbolt. Miss Bateman was a mature actress, and carried off with particular success 'the celebrated curse scene'. In this, said the reviewer, she was as impressive as ever.

Miss Bateman was succeeded by Minnie Palmer. This, her third visit to the Grand Theatre in 'My Sweetheart', attracted a 'house well filled in every part', and she was greeted with an outburst of cheers on her first entrance. This was her third tour of the United Kingdom, which she had begun at Hull Theatre Royal eight weeks prior to this engagement.

Some of the play's situations had been reworked and 'improved'⁴² and a number of 'very pretty ballads' had been introduced into the piece. A number of these became popular songs of the day. Minnie Palmer was still 'bright and sparkling' and 'brim full of fun and sauciness'.⁴³

Minnie Palmer was followed by the Carl Rosa Opera Company which gave nine operas — seven of them from the familiar repertoire, and two new ones. In the first of the two weeks the programme was 'Faust' on Monday, 'Bohemian Girl' on Tuesday, one of the new pieces — 'Manon' — on Wednesday, 'Mignon' and 'Il Trovatore' on Thursday and Friday, and the second new piece, 'Nadeshda', on Saturday. The second week saw a repeat of 'Manon' on Monday, 'Maritana' on Tuesday, 'Carmen' on Wednesday, a second performance of

'Nadeshda' on Thursday, and 'The Marriage of Figaro' completed the programme on Saturday.

'Manon' was by Massenet, and was first produced in England at the Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool, on 17 January 1885, twelve months after its first performance in Paris. The libretto was by MM. Meilhac and Gille, and adapted into English by Joseph Bennet.

The opera was well received in Leeds by a house that was full with the exception of one or two boxes.⁴⁴ The work was based on a conventional area of tragic human degradation within a domestic context: the gradual dissolution of the heroine was followed, as, in the process, she further corrupted a not wholly virtuous husband, and finally she died, suffering, but in the arms of the lover whom she had lost before her marriage.

'Nadeshda' was a new opera by Goring Thomas (who had also composed the frequently repeated 'Esmerelda') and this was its first performance in Leeds. It was warmly received by a large audience which included the Mayor of Leeds, and George Irwin, a shareholder and director of the theatre company.⁴⁵

Carl Rosa's Opera Company was followed by his Comedy Company⁴⁶ in a new play, 'The Silver Shield', by Sydney Grundy (it was preceded by a curtain-raiser called 'Man Proposes').

The play was a gentle satire upon orthodox comedies of the time, and relied upon 'almost perfect sketches of character' rather than plot or 'striking situations'.⁴⁷

The title and theme of the piece was taken from two legendary Knights who killed each other in a dispute over whether a shield was made of silver or of gold. (In fact the shield was half silver and half gold.) The two protagonists were set in a theatrical context, and both of their wives were estranged from them owing to misunderstandings (one wife had interpreted a letter that was in reality part of a play by her husband as a genuine love letter to the wife of the other).

The satire existed in the characterisation of these two husbands, as well as in the futility of their estrangements. One was 'an unassuming gentleman, whose modest, half-disguised humour comes forth unconsciously, with natural simplicity', and the other was 'a smart sayer of well-set, polished sayings'. In the Yorkshire Post reviewer's opinion the play had pathos, grace, wit, and 'life-likeness'.

'The Silver Shield' was followed by 'the success of the London season', A.W. Pinero's 'The Magistrate' which was preceded by 'Obliging a Friend'. The plays were performed by Mr H. Ashley and Lottie Verne, supported by Messrs Clayton and Cecil's company. 'The Magistrate' was a farcical comedy in which the magistrate and his family ended up in his own court charged with being drunk and disorderly. It was followed on 23 November by Nelly Farren, Arthur Williams, Harry Monkhouse, and a company from the Gaiety Theatre, London, in 'Ariel', a 'burlesque fairy drama' by F.C. Burnand based on 'The Tempest' (it had music by Mr F. Stanislaus). This was given for the first half of

the week, while a similar burlesque piece, 'Aladdin', was given for the second half. The latter piece was preceded by a one-act play called 'A Mere Blind'.

Nelly Farren was succeeded by the Compton Comedy Company in their annual visit.⁴⁸ They performed six of their conventional repertoire of comedies: Muskerly's 'David Garrick' on Monday, Boucicault's 'London Assurance' on Tuesday, Holcroft's 'The Road to Ruin' on Wednesday, 'The School for Scandal' on Thursday, Bulwer-Lytton's 'Money' on Friday, and a version of 'Belphegor' on Saturday.

Edward Compton was succeeded by Charles Warner, supported by Wynn Miller's company, in 'the powerful drama', 'The Streets of London'.⁴⁹ This was a classic of the late nineteenth-century melodrama 'of the ultra-sensational type, with real fires, tragic endings, frauds, and the rest'. The Yorkshire Post reviewer thought that it would be difficult to cast his mind back to the time when it was first produced.⁵⁰

'The Streets of London' was followed by a return visit of C.H. Hawtreys' company in 'The Private Secretary'.⁵¹ The piece still enjoyed popularity and kept a crowded pit and gallery, and a 'fair' dress circle in 'roars of laughter'. It closed on Saturday, 19 December, and the theatre remained closed thereafter until Wednesday, 23 December, when the pantomime, 'Dick Whittington', opened.

'Dick Whittington' was the most commonly chosen of a restricted number of pantomime subjects in 1885/6, and this was the second version of the story that J. Wilton Jones had written for the Grand Theatre. He had, however, reconstructed it, and furnished a completely new script. It played on the first night to a house which was 'filled in every part, crowded in some', and ran smoothly for a pantomime first night - though there was the occasional technical hitch.⁵²

The piece opened in Freddie Fox's 'The Fairy Forge in the Bluebell Dell' where fairies and elves were forging bells. The scene had a 'transparency' - a gauze - at the back through which Dick was shown, while Hagridoso, the witch, threatened to wreck the fairies' plans for helping Dick, and summoned King Rat to assist her. The fairies countered this by calling the Cat in opposition.

The next scene was 'Fitzwarren's Emporium', which was begun with amusing 'business' by two idle apprentices, before Dick and the other main characters were introduced. Dick was given a job in the shop, and he and Fitzwarren's daughter fell instantly in love. The idle apprentices, however, stole Fitzwarren's cash-box, and succeeded in attributing the blame to Dick, who was next seen 'At the Milestone on Highgate Hill'.

This scene, painted by Stafford Hall, provided a visually spectacular hiatus after the rumbustious action of the preceding scene. It began in moonlight, then the moon

rose in the sky, to be followed by the dawn. Eventually the whole scene was lit as by daylight. Here Dick bewailed his situation in uncomfortable topicality:

Two hundred miles to Leeds. I would I were there,
 To see the fountains squirting in the square;
 Along Boar Lane to do the la-di-la;
 To hear the eloquence of Archie Scarr;
 To hear the band on Woodhouse Moor — chep treat —
 And never throw a copper in the sheet;
 To fall asleep when nights are fine and dark,
 In the sweet sylvan glades of Paddy's Park.

Lee Anderson had arranged a ballet of twelve 'very fat schoolboys' and twelve girls ('dressed à la Kate Greenaway') in this scene which was brought to a close with a madrigal by Alfred Cellier.

The next scene was 'The Shipping Office near the River' (by Louis Edouardes). It was 'a scene full of animation', and 'painted in a vigorous style'. Several fourteenth-century ships lay at their moorings by the side of docks and wharves on which were built warehouses in various styles of English architecture, and one by one sailed out of the port. The Fitzwarrens, and Dick, boarded the last before it left. The reviewer thought that this scene alone ought to secure the pantomime a long run.

The Fitzwarren's ship was then wrecked in a 'realistic and thoroughly artistic storm' painted by Stafford Hall. This scene evoked cheers from every part of the house. The survivors were washed up on the shores of Morocco in the next scene (by Louis Edouardes) and were thence escorted

to 'The Moorish Palace' - the following scene, painted by Stafford Hall.

Hall specialised in pantomime palaces, which were usually spectacularly large and elaborate. This was no exception. The Yorkshire Post reviewer thought that Hall had excelled his previous efforts in the creation of the detailed architecture of this palace, and the audience greeted it with 'round after round' of applause. Central to its effect were two large fountains.

Lee Anderson here introduced a 'Ballet of Odalisques', which was also enthusiastically received. Professor Woodhead played on musical glasses, and several other speciality acts were incorporated in this scene.

The subsequent front-cloth scene, 'The Inventions Exhibition', was followed by 'Old Cheapside' where the audience was presented with a review of troops of different nationalities, Dick bringing up the rear on a white horse.

Another front-cloth scene (necessary for the preparation of the transformation), 'The Interior of Bow Belfry', concluded the pantomime.

The transformation scene was by Stafford Hall, and for the second time he had chosen an unconventional subject. The scene was called 'War and Peace':

War was represented by a battle-field at night; the carcasses of men and horses lie about, heaped upon each other in wild profusion, and in the distance is a smouldering ruin. The sun is setting behind the distant hills, throwing a blood-red glare over the scene of carnage. The Goddess of Peace comes forth, and the picture is instantly changed to one of brightness and great beauty.

Wilson Barrett was frequently called to be cheered (as were Lee Anderson, Henry Hastings, Stafford Hall, and Louis Edouardes) and at the conclusion of the pantomime he made a short speech in which he said that he was glad to hear that people had been grumbling because he never appeared in Leeds, for it proved he was missed, and he promised he would come in two new pieces in the following season, as well as in 'Chatterton', and 'Hamlet'. This was greeted with further cheers.⁵³

Notes

- 1 The company had undergone some changes, but was not thus impaired in the Yorkshire Post reviewer's opinion. It now included Mr C.W. Garthorne, Miss Chalgrove, Maria Daly, Mr Beverley, Miss Claridge, and Mr Chute.
- 2 The company included Alice Dore, Lizzie Scobie, Miss Huntley, Mrs W. Lowe, Henry Mayhew, Herbert Vyvyan, Mr W.S. Hartford, Mr W. Lowe, Mr C. Langley, Herbert Budd, and Mr C. Otley.
- 3 Yorkshire Post, 18 March 1885, p. 3.
- 4 The company included John Owen, Pattie Blanchard, Florence Sutherland, Mary Smith, and Annie Osborne.
- 5 The children's company, which had first performed the piece at the Savoy Theatre in December 1883, included Edward Percy, Stephen Adeson, Charles Adeson, Harry Tebbutt, Millie Farleigh, Alice Vicat, Eva Warren, Florence Montrose, Georgie Esmond, and Master Pickering.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 31 March 1885, p. 4.
- 7 Yorkshire Post, 7 April 1885, p. 3.
- 8 The company included Henry George, Sidney Charteris, James Chippendale, Edward Beecher, Annie Irish, Maggie Hunt, Sallie Turner, and Clara Dillon.
- 9 The company included (still) Leonard Boyne, John Dewhurst, Mr d'Esterre Guinness, Richard Dalton, and Laura Lindon, but other characters were in new hands including those of Mr A.B. Cross, Mr F. Spiller, Mr F. Dowse, George Sennet, Alice Belmore, and Mr J.J. Bartlett.

- 10 Yorkshire Post, 5 May 1885, p. 4.
- 11 The company included Blanche Wilton, Sidney Valentine, Mr R. Medlicott, Miss N. Hall, Miss B. Kennard, and Miss C.A. Clarke.
- 12 The company included John Rouse, Guy Merrick, Cecil Ward, Harry Charles, Mr H.H. Mowell, Evelyn May, Kate Beville, Rose Greville, Florence Harrington, Miss E. Brunton, and Mr H.J. Butler.
- 13 The company which supported her had undergone some changes, and now included Charles Vandehoff, Mr J. Annandale, and Mr Francis.
- 14 Yorkshire Post, 19 May 1885, p. 4.
- 15 The company included Harry Jackson, Mr R.S. Boleyn, Fanny Brough, Mr G. Morgan, Arthur Chudleigh, Mr J. Elmore, Mr G. Huntley, Mr J. Phipps, and Marie Illington.
- 16 Modjeska's supporting company included Henry Neville, Walter Howe, Lewis Waller, William Farren jnr, Miss Gerard, Florence West, Miss B. Huntley, Mr E.B. Norman, Mr A.G. Stuart Oliver, and Kenneth Black.
- 17 Yorkshire Post, 9 June 1885, p. 8.
- 18 The company still included Shiel Barry, William Hogarth, Edward Marshall, with Clara Merivale, Marion Erle, Mr Hilton St Just, and Mr Fowler.
- 19 The company included Frederick Leslie, Mr F. Kaye, John Child, Marion Grahame, and Edith Vane. The scenery was painted by Edmund A. Swift, and the reviewer thought that it was 'pretty and artistic'.
- 20 The company included Arthur Helmore, and W.F. Hawtrey, the adaptor's brother.

- 21 Yorkshire Post, 15 July 1885, p. 4.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 4 August 1885, p. 4.
- 23 The company further included Bernard Dale, Mr A.D. Anderson, William James, Mr W.S. Parkes, Gordon Cameron, Frank Irish, Ethel Herbert, and Carrie Coote.
- 24 Yorkshire Post, 11 August 1885, p. 4.
- 25 Yorkshire Post, 18 August 1885, p. 4.
- 26 The company included Ethel Pierson, Effie Mason, Emily Wallace, Fanny Edwards, David Fischer jnr, Charles Rowan, James Danvers, Edward Clowes, and Charles Richards.
- 27 Yorkshire Post, 25 August 1885, p. 5.
- 28 The company included Henry George, Sidney Charteris, James Chippendale, Annie Irish, Maggie Hunt, Sallie Turner, and Clara Dillon.
- 29 Her supporting company included Sydney Hayes, Mr H. Vernon, and Mrs Calvert.
- 30 Yorkshire Post, 1 September 1885, p. 4.
- 31 Yorkshire Post, 3 September 1885, p. 5.
- 32 Yorkshire Post, 8 September 1885, p. 4.
- 33 The company further included Kate Pattison, Miss A. Hardinge, Miss Erskine, Mr T. Everill, and Mr E.D. Lyons.
- 34 Yorkshire Post, 15 September 1885, p. 4.
- 35 Yorkshire Post, 19 September 1885, p. 7.
- 36 The company included Alice Finch, William Calder, and Mr J.E. Dodson.
- 37 Yorkshire Post, 23 September 1885, p. 4.
- 38 The company still included Giulia Warwick, Horace Lingard, and Walter Wright, but Louis Kelleher, Cecil Burt, and Louisa Henschal were new members of it.

- 39 Yorkshire Post, 6 October 1885, p. 6.
- 40 The company further included Harry Parker, Mr Gow Bentick, and Mr J.A. Arnold.
- 41 Yorkshire Post, 13 October 1885, p. 5.
- 42 Yorkshire Post, 20 October 1885, p. 4.
- 43 The company had undergone but one change — Annie Baldwin had replaced Elsie Carew as Mrs Fleeter.
- 44 Yorkshire Post, 29 October 1885, p. 5.
- 45 The Carl Rosa Opera Company was little changed and included Barton McGuckin, Leslie Crotty, Mr W.H. Burgeon, Mr Gilbert, Marion Burton, Miss Walsh, Julia Gaylord, Marie Roze, Georgina Burns, Jenny Dickerson, and Max Eugene.
- 46 The company included Mr J. Glendinning, John Rouse, Mr W. Fosbrook, Mrs C. Stanton, Mr W. Russell, Florence Gerard, Mr Louis Calvert, and Helen Layton.
- 47 Yorkshire Post, 11 November 1885, p. 5.
- 48 The company included Edward Compton, Virginia Bateman, Nellie Harper, and Mr Lewis Ball.
- 49 The Company (which was 'thoroughly capable') included Charles Warner, Mr E.S. Gofton, Mr Glenn Wynn, Fred Benton, Mrs R. Power, Helena Lisle, and Miss Hampton.
- 50 Yorkshire Post, 8 December 1885, p. 4.
- 51 The company included Mr Helmore, Mr Hawtrey, Mr Cannings, and Mr F.H. Laye.
- 52 Yorkshire Post, 24 December 1885, p. 5.
- 53 The company included Marie Loftus, Carmen Baker, 'Queen Mab', Ella Dean, Alice Gambier, Mr C.E. Stevens,

Mr J.W. Rowley, Mr Austin Melford, Messrs Folley and O'Neil, Mr Gow Bentick, and the Jarratt Troupe with Mdlle Zante (who contributed trap performances). The leader of the orchestra was Sidney James.

CHAPTER X:1886

In 1886 Kingston received two complaints from Lee Anderson: the first was in a letter of 10 March which said that there had been trouble with the theatre's heating installation from the very beginning because the work had been badly done and the apparatus was cracking incessantly. Now, he said, they could not heat the front of the theatre without running the risk of flooding the place with water. Kingston passed on this complaint to Sagar-Musgrave, but while waiting for the board to deal with the matter, he wrote to Lee Anderson (22 March) to remind him that Wilson Barrett was required to keep the apparatus in proper repair under the covenants of the lease.

The second complaint was that rain was coming through the roof in various places. Lee Anderson drew this to the directors' attention on 13 May.

But these were the only two matters of maintenance discussed in 1886, for Kingston and Lee Anderson's time was substantially taken up through the year with administering the payment of Wilson Barrett's rent.

Kingston had written to Wilson Barrett on 2 February asking for the first quarter's rent which was due on 1 February. On 20 March he sent a further reminder, but it became clear that Wilson Barrett would not pay the rent. The company issued a writ on Wilson Barrett, but he demonstrated to the company that though he was unable to

pay at that time, he was willing to pay, and eventually an arrangement for the paying of the rent was come to.

The first step along this road was an agreement that Lee Anderson should provide the theatre's weekly accounts for Kingston's inspection. On 7 April Kingston called on Lee Anderson to look over the previous year's accounts in order to verify the balance sheet that the directors had been sent. Kingston was given a sequence of cash books, and began to work through them. On 26 April he wrote to Lee Anderson asking for another book (beginning at 14 February 1885), for statements of account from White, Reid, and Burnett, and for 'Charker's weekly pay sheets'. He also asked for statements from previous years which he believed showed large profits to Wilson Barrett. (It seems reasonable to infer from this that Wilson Barrett had claimed that 1885 had not been a profitable year, and that an examination of the accounts bore this out.)

The company held several board meetings to discuss the situation and eventually it was agreed that the writ would not be executed on four principal conditions: firstly that the rent which A.C. Millwaters paid to Wilson Barrett for the saloons (£137 10s. per quarter) would be paid direct to the company as part settlement of the rent; secondly that Wilson Barrett would pay to the company whatever profit he made from the operation of the theatre; thirdly that the company should have the right to inspect Lee Anderson's accounts to check on this; and fourthly

that Wilson Barrett would pay off what further sums he could when he could. The directors were confident that they would recover their rent in this way. The arrangement began to work on 1 May 1886. Its long term consequences were that Wilson Barrett operated the Grand Theatre at a loss during the year, but made enough money from the pantomime to pay off the arrears of rent, and also to take a profit. It also means that an indication of receipts for the various companies that played at the Grand Theatre throughout the year are available, and I propose to incorporate them in a summary of the year's programme.

In 1886 there were ten and one half weeks of pantomime, the same as in 1885, but the number of weeks of comic opera increased from four in 1885 to seven in 1886. There were two weeks of opera proper in Carl Rosa's now customary fortnight. There were therefore thirty-three and one half weeks of dramas and comedies, but with no fortnightly runs, and only two weeks of spectacular or panoramic melodrama. The high number of return visits in 1885 (twenty-one of them) was reduced to sixteen weeks in 1886 - though this still represented nearly half the programme for the year, and if the 1885 figure is taken as an aberration, 1886 still showed a continuation of the upward trend in return visits.

'Dick Whittington', the 1885/6 pantomime closed on 6 March.

It had proved to be one of Wilson Barrett's most successful pantomimes, and in the ten weeks of its run nearly two hundred thousand people had been brought into Leeds (in excursions organised by Alfred Anderson) to see it. It was followed by a return visit of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Mikado' which had undergone very little change since its previous visit, although two of the principals, Fanny Edwards and George Gordon, had severe colds, and were replaced on this occasion by Ada Rose and Harold Poole.¹

The reviewer thought that 'The Mikado' improved with acquaintance, and it was 'thoroughly enjoyed' by a house 'well-filled in several parts' on the Monday night.²

'The Mikado' was followed by another return visit — Fanny Leslie in 'Jack-in-the-box'.³ The play was written for her, and she had 'a unique' variety of talents; 'she has a pleasing voice and knows how to use it, she is an admirable dancer, can turn "cart-wheels" like a veritable gamin; as a burlesque actress she has few rivals, while in melodrama she has the power of exciting the sympathies of her audience in a remarkable degree'.⁴ All these were suitably exhibited in this 'musical drama' (which also included a 'very clever transformation dance' by Ida Heath), which, in the reviewer's opinion, otherwise did little credit to its joint authors (Sims and Clement Scott).

This was the second visit of the play to Leeds: it first appeared in October 1885 — a few weeks after its original production at Brighton. It was well received on the Monday night.

Fanny Leslie was succeeded by Henry Neville and Augustus Harris's company (supported by 'over two hundred and fifty' auxiliaries) in a play called 'Human Nature'.⁵ The piece was written by Henry Pettitt and Augustus Harris, and it was first performed at Drury Lane where, as at the Grand Theatre on this occasion, Henry Neville and Isabel Bateman played the hero and heroine.

The plot was of a conventional kind: Captain Temple, his wife and child lived in happiness, but while the Captain was away at war, an erstwhile school-friend (Cora Grey) of his wife came to stay with her. The wife was unaware of this friend's disreputable character, but the Captain was not, and when he returned he threw her out. In revenge Cora succeeded in convincing the Captain that his wife had been having an affair with one Paul de Vigne of the Egyptian service.

The Captain must return to war, and so he left a relative who was a solicitor to arrange a separation between his wife and him. The solicitor, however, had his own plans, and exceeded his brief, conspiring with (the spurned) Paul de Vigne to get the Captain a divorce. A consequence of the divorce as opposed to a separation was that the Captain acquired custody of the child, which effectively meant that the solicitor, having the Captain's power of attorney, was able to try to have it done away with (and thereby become next in line to inherit the Captain's fortune).

He gave the child to an unscrupulous baby-farmer. However, the mother rescued it, and they took refuge in

a parsonage. Meanwhile in the Sudan Paul de Vigne was killed by his own side for betraying it to the Mahdi, but in a dying confession affirmed to the Captain his wife's fidelity. Thus the Captain could return to England and right all wrongs.

This, then, was the basis of the play, but it was Harris's genius to invest the piece with visual spectacle, and he had succeeded in doing this, in the reviewer's opinion,⁶ while maintaining an unusual degree of relevance to the plot. Thus among the fourteen scenes were 'stage pictures' of 'Zereba at Night', 'The Desert City', 'The Wells', and 'Trafalgar Square', all of them 'full of life and activity, and vividly picturesque'. (The 'stage picture' of Trafalgar Square showed the return of the Guards: in a large realistic set crowds of sightseers cheered troops as they marched past headed by military bands.) The play also contrived to balance strongly emotional 'striking situations' with some degree of comedy (principally in the character of a 'rhyming lawyer's clerk'). Though 'the audience lacked something in numbers in the best parts of the house' it was appreciative and made several calls for the actors.

'Human Nature' was followed on 29 March by Miss Lingard and a 'London company' in a new play, 'Sister Mary', by Wilson Barrett and Clement Scott.⁷ (It was said that

Wilson Barrett had originally written the play in a shorter form for his wife, Caroline Heath, and that Clement Scott had extended it.)

'Sister Mary' had first been performed on 8 March at Brighton, and had since played weeks at Hull and Liverpool. In all these places it attracted large and enthusiastic audiences, and the Yorkshire Post reviewer pronounced it a 'success'.⁸

The problem that the play posed had an effective simplicity in its treatment of a rather conventional theme. Captain Walker Leigh had led, before the action of the piece began, a somewhat dissolute life, and had, unknown to himself, an illegitimate child by Rose Reade, a dressmaker. At the beginning of the play he was rescued from drunkenness by Mary Lisle (Sister Mary) with whose 'sprightly, dignified, earnest' sweetness he fell in love.

Mary, however, had taken an interest in Rose's child, whom she had offered to educate, and the two women became firm friends. Mary knew the child was illegitimate, but did not discover the child's paternity until Rose told her on the morning of her intended marriage to the Captain. The lovers separated at the church door.

The resolution of the problem was rather more heavily melodramatic. Sister Mary and Rose were serving as nurses at two proximate outposts in the Boer War. Rose's outpost was attacked by the Boers, and despite Captain Leigh's attempted rescue, she was mortally wounded. Before

she died, however, she had time to tell Mary to forget the past, and thus a reconciliation could be brought about.

The play had pathos and power, thought the reviewer, and though the situations were 'striking', they did not err into sensationalism. The piece was 'heartily appreciated' by the audience.

'Sister Mary' was followed on 5 April by a visit of John S. Clarke who appeared in 'The Widow Hunt' on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 'Heir-at-law' on Friday, and 'Cousin Johnny and Toddles' on Saturday.⁹

Clarke was an American comedian who nonetheless had a 'thoroughly English tone' and managed to combine the styles of Charles Matthews, J.L. Toole, and Edward Terry, and yet to make of them one that was distinctively his own.¹⁰ He was well known in London and 'some of the other principal English towns', but it had been several years since he had appeared in Leeds. His 'The Widow Hunt' on the Monday night 'kept the audience in the best of humours' and at its finish he received 'such an ovation as is rarely dealt out to an actor in Leeds'. Clarke had played Dr Pangloss in 'Heir-at-law' eight hundred times in London. ('The Waterman' was given as an accompaniment to the main piece on Tuesday and Thursday.)

J.S. Clarke was succeeded by a return visit of Clayton and Cecil's company in 'The Magistrate'. The company had

very little altered since its previous visit in November 1885. 'The Magistrate' was in its turn followed by Louise Moodie who appeared in a new play, 'Peer or Pauper', which was given for four nights only.¹¹

The piece, which was written by A. Macdonnell-Green, centred on the fact that marriage with a deceased wife's sister (which was much debated in the press at this time) was against the law. The reviewer thought that this play might have been written with the intention of hastening the amendment of that law,¹² but in fact the author only exploited the problem for his play, and managed to contrive a happy ending.

Sir George Ferguson, the Australian Premier, was married, and had a son, Alfred. At the beginning of the play Alfred was about to leave for the Sudan with the army. Sir George received a cablegram telling him that he had inherited the title and estates of Lord Talgarth, but he suffered a heart attack. Just before he died he told his wife that she was the half-sister of his first wife - thus their marriage had no legal force in England, and their Alfred was illegitimate.

However, the mother and son came to England and took possession of the estates. This provoked the antagonism of the Baronet Spavinhawk, who was next in line to inherit the estates, and Alfred made matters worse by winning the affections of Alice Cheston, whom the Baronet had hoped to marry for her fortune.

A villainous parson, the Rev. Dr Pettigrew, now entered the story. He was the only person that Sir George had told about the circumstances of his second marriage. Pettigrew sought to marry Mrs Ferguson but she repulsed him, and when during the interview in which this took place he accidentally fell down a disused quarry, she presumed him dead.

However, he was not, and lived to plot further. The mother and son were about to be dispossessed of the title and the property, when a former mistress, whom Pettigrew had abandoned, came forward and proved that the second Mrs Ferguson was not really the half-sister of the first.

In the reviewer's opinion this made a natural conclusion to the play, but the author was not satisfied, and developed further machinations in a fifth act — hence Pettigrew's failure to die in the quarry. Though the reviewer thought that this fifth act should therefore be curtailed, he otherwise considered the play well written, 'healthy', 'distinctly English in tone', and he thought that it had 'strong enough incidents to sustain the interest of the audience without being too sensational'.

'Peer or Pauper' was followed by 'Wedded, Not Wived', a new play by John Coleman, and presented by himself and Miss Alleyn.¹³ It was advertised as an 'enormous attraction for the Easter Holidays'.

This new 'romantic' drama had been played at Hull by the same company three weeks prior to this visit to the Grand Theatre. 'Romantic' in this context meant melodramatic, though the reviewer asserted that the play 'illustrated a story of the present time'.¹⁴ Perhaps this was so in the sense that the piece dealt (however emotively) with marital contract – and fairly liberal, though moral, feelings in this connexion.

The heroine was Olive Linden, the village schoolmistress in Cwrfylla, in South Wales. She loved and was loved by the village blacksmith, Ewen Meredith. However, the villain of the piece, Gilbert Lloyd, had designs upon Olive. Two more characters require introduction: David Morgan, a gamekeeper, and Jim, a waif.

Morgan caught Jim poaching, and had him beaten and consigned to the 'Bridewell'. Meredith thought that this was excessive, and the play began with a stormy argument between these two. Shortly afterwards Morgan was lying in watch on a moonlit night, when he saw his sister (whom he believed to be in Bristol) and the villain, Lloyd, making their way to join the other young people of the village in salmon spearing. He overheard their conversation, and discovered that the villain had 'wrought' his sister 'ruin'. He attempted to shoot them both, but, instead, was himself mortally wounded. He managed to drag himself to the place where the salmon spearing was going on, and there, seeing Meredith in a guise that resembled Lloyd,

accused him of being his attacker. He snatched the mask from Meredith's face and realised his mistake, but he died before he could correct it. Meredith was thrown into prison too.

Lloyd then told Olive that he would help Meredith to escape if she would marry him. After some agonising she agreed, but unknown to her Meredith and Jim escaped unaided and managed to get to Olive's brother's ship. The marriage took place, but at the church door Olive discovered that Lloyd had not kept his side of the bargain, and she flung away her wedding ring, declaring the contract void.

Presently Meredith, Jim, Olive, and Lloyd were all aboard the brother's ship, which was soon drifting dismasted and helpless in Arctic seas. Lloyd led a drunken mutiny, shooting the captain, and throwing Meredith overboard. The ship collided with an iceberg and began to sink. Jim threw out luminous life-buoys, and he, Olive, and Meredith managed to make their way ashore, where they were marooned at 'Desolation Point'.

Lloyd was rescued by Esquimaux, and, wandering crazed in the snow, came across the three. He stabbed Meredith, and 'hobbled off' chuckling.

None of them died, however, and eventually they all returned to South Wales where Morgan's sister and another witness, until then kept in thrawl by Lloyd, proved Meredith innocent and the villain guilty.

The reviewer thought that these were exciting enough incidents, but did not consider that Coleman had made as good a use of them as he could, because of 'inconsistencies and improbabilities' in the plot, and a 'wordy' dialogue which at times was 'out of place'. An example of improbability was the manner of Meredith's escape from the prison 'where half a dozen stalwart policemen and a whole host ... of "civilians" are rendered hors de combat in an attack of the most feeble character'. The scenes in the Arctic, too, he thought were a little extravagant.

On the credit side, however, were originality and constructive skill, and some effects which were 'marked by a boldness and ingenuity quite out of the common'. This was so, for example, of 'the catastrophe in the Arctic sea where the ship disappears, and the crashing of icebergs is succeeded by the development of a magnificent scenic display, in the centre of which is vividly represented the rescue of Olive'.

It seems clear here that improbability attached not to scenic wonders, but rather to psychological motivation. The reviewer seems to have found some of the characters' behaviour absurd (the policemen, the mutiny, perhaps, and the crazed Lloyd hobbling off chuckling), but no objection to the incidents themselves.

'Wedded, Not Wived' was followed by a return visit of C.H. Hawtrey's company in 'The Private Secretary'. This

play ran from 3 May for a week for which the theatre's total receipts (via the box office) were £314 18s. A small portion of this would have been from the sale of programmes, advertising space in those programmes, and other small charges — but this rarely amounted to more than five pounds. The performing company received half of the money paid in admission charges — in this case roughly £155. The theatre's total expenses for the week, however, (for scenery, wages, and similar outgoings) were £289 15s. 4d. Thus in that week the theatre made a profit of £25 2s. 8d.

'The Private Secretary' was followed by a new comic opera, 'Erminie', which was performed by Violet Melnotte's company.¹⁵ The piece dealt with the practices of a gentleman villain and his coarse and vulgar pickpocket assistant.¹⁶ Their 'Whitechapel slang' mixed 'humorously' with the continental society in which the gentleman villain impersonated a Count, and thus captivated an 'eccentric Princess' (Erminie). The work relied upon 'amusing antics', funny situations, and 'humorous character sketches' rather than the unoriginal score of E. Jacobowski and Harry Paulton's 'weak and commonplace' libretto.

'Erminie' was well received by a large audience, and the company received roughly £220 out of total receipts of £457 15s. 9d. The theatre's expenses for this week amounted to £375 18s. 11d., so that a profit of £81 16s. 10d. was left.

'Erminie' was followed by another return visit of Shiel Barry and William Hogarth's company in 'Les Cloches de Corneville', which was given on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and 'La Mascotte' which was given on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.¹⁷

The piece was 'highly appreciated',¹⁸ and its share of the total receipts of £302 18s. 5d. was roughly £150, while as the theatre incurred expenses of £268 7s. 6d. in that week, the theatre's profit was £34 10s. 11d.

William Hogarth's company was succeeded by Harriet Jay, Herbert Standing, and a 'London company' in 'Alone in London'.¹⁹ This was a new play to Leeds, written by Robert Buchanan and Harriet Jay, and had met with success in London and America.

It was rather conventional in its sensation and sentiment, and revolved round a long-suffering heroine who discovered after marrying that her husband was 'a swell thief and an adventurer'. However, she was befriended by thinly disguised stock characters - a benevolent old gentleman, a London waif, and a country lover ("up from Suffolk").

The piece was sufficiently strong emotionally to win the sympathies of its audience, which, averred the reviewer,²⁰ boded well for its future. It contained some incidents that were 'decidedly picturesque and effective', he added.

The company's share of receipts, however, can only have been roughly £140, for the total receipts were £283 12s 10d. The theatre's expenses for that week were £258 10s., and

so the theatre's profit was £25 2s. 10d. Thus for the four weeks of May the theatre made a total of £166 13s. 3d. profit. As Wilson Barrett's rent for a quarter was £625 (that is, £208 6s. 8d. per month) the profit was clearly not adequate to cover the operating costs of the theatre.

'Alone in London' was followed by another visit of Charles Sullivan and his company in 'The Shaughraun' which was played on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

'The Colleen Bawn' was given on Thursday and Friday.

Charles Sullivan's company gave an excellent and admirably mounted performance of Boucicault's 'well-worn' piece, said the reviewer,²¹ but he went on to complain that Wilson Barrett seemed to be filling the Grand Theatre with the sensational melodramas that should have appeared at the Theatre Royal, Leeds, when there were other pieces of the Grand Theatre's wonted 'higher class' available.

The receipts for Charles Sullivan's week were £119 14s. of which the company's share was £44 17s., leaving the theatre £74 17s., plus £4 16s. 1d. taken for programmes etc. The theatre's total expenses for the week were £124 12s 4d. Thus the theatre made an overall loss of £44 19s. 3d. for that week. (The accounts, however, show five pounds expenses for the week which were attributed to the pantomime, but it seems clear that a decision had been made not to include this with the general expenses for the week — perhaps because it seemed wiser to keep the pantomime account entirely separate, and so the theatre's overall loss for the week was £39 19s. 3d.)

Charles Sullivan's company was succeeded by T. Robertson's company in three of his father's plays, 'Caste' on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 'Ours' on Wednesday, and 'School' on Friday.²²

The fact that a 'large and delighted audience' greeted the first night of 'Caste' on this visit to the Grand Theatre (which was advertised as the company's farewell visit in these plays), even though the play had been popular for twenty years, indicated to the reviewer the important position that Robertson's work occupied in the contemporary dramatic literature.²³ There was 'intense human interest' in the plot, which was 'artistically developed' he said.

Receipts for the week were £237 17s. of which the company's share was £108 18s. 6d. The theatre's expenses for the week were £141 9s. 6d. and £15 12s. 6d. for the water rate, while the theatre took £8 3s. 7d. for programmes etc. thus making an overall loss of £14 19s. 11d. (when five pounds, attributed to the pantomime, but again not included in the week's account, had been deducted). By the end of this week Wilson Barrett had paid off all but 3s. 4d. of his first quarter's rent. The second quarter's rent had, of course, become due on 1 May.

T.W. Robertson's company was succeeded by William Calder's company and his negro Jubilee Singers who returned in 'The White Slave'.

The reviewer thought that the play had a large audience for a night in June, and he also added to the list of

attractions which he considered that the play possessed and which he had made on its previous visit a scene called 'The Red Devil's Island - by Moonlight', and a scene which furnished a 'faithful' representation of an evening entertainment aboard a river boat. But he still wondered why the Grand Theatre had seen fit to bring back the piece 'considerably within the twelve months'.²⁴

The answer may have lain in the fact that receipts for the week were £404 15s. of which the company's share was only £120, while £9 0s. 9d. was taken for programmes etc., and the theatre's total expenses for the week were £142 9s. 2d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £173 1s. 7d. for the week (since £21 15s. was attributed to expenditure on the pantomime), and on 22 June Wilson Barrett paid £135 of his second quarter's rent.

William Calder's company was followed on 21 June by 'the celebrated' Mrs Wheldon in a new play, 'Not Alone'. In it she sang 'selections from her repertoire'.²⁵

Mrs Wheldon was co-author of the play with George Lauder. She had been an energetic litigant, and had at one time been taken into an asylum. However, she succeeded in proving her sanity, and was discharged. It was reported that the play was written during regular visits by Lauder to Mrs Wheldon while she was in prison.²⁶

It is not surprising, therefore, that the play was a piece 'with a purpose', and was 'aimed as a protest against the English lunacy laws'. Mrs Wheldon was well received,

particularly when she sang, by an audience which the reviewer thought was undoubtedly attracted by her notoriety (this was her first visit to Leeds).

The play had some strong situations, but much of the dialogue was weak, and some of the characters were 'ill-drawn' and uninterestingly conventional (particularly the villainous husband, opined the reviewer).

The receipts for Mrs Wheldon's week were £161 19s., of which her share was £80 19s. 6d. Programmes etc., brought in £2 14s. 2d., but the theatre's expenses were £124 6s. 3d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £30 12s. 7d. on the week. (Ten pounds of the total expenses were attributed to the pantomime.)

Mrs Wheldon was succeeded by William Duck's company in a new play, 'On 'Change''. It was preceded by a curtain-raiser, 'Sunshine'.²⁷ 'On 'Change'' was an adaptation of a farcical comedy by Van Moser. It had had a successful run in London and in the provinces. It was a piece most likely to please a Leeds summer audience, said the reviewer (though he did not think it as funny as the same author's 'The Private Secretary'), and it concerned a 'Scotch professor who got into no end of trouble through his amateur stock-jobbing'.²⁸

The receipts for 'On 'Change'' were £106 6s., of which the company's share was only £38 3s. The programmes etc. brought in £1 15s. 4d., but as the theatre's expenses were £111 17s. 1d., the theatre made a loss on the week of £41 18s. 9d.

'On 'Change' was followed by Wilson Barrett's company in 'Hoodman Blind' on 5 July.²⁹ The reviewer complained that other Yorkshire towns had had the opportunity to see this play long before the Grand Theatre was allowed this variation in its melodramatic diet.³⁰ Nonetheless a 'by no means crowded house' gave it an encouraging reception.

The plot of the play incorporated many elements already favoured in the plays that Wilson Barrett produced. The hero was Jack Yeulett, a farmer, who, though otherwise a good fellow, got into financial difficulties and fell foul of two villainous mortgagees, Kridge and Lezzard. Lezzard, it turned out, was a former lover of Yeulett's wife, Nance, and so he had a jealous hatred of Jack that drove him to revenge. Before he had quite succeeded in foreclosing the mortgage, Lezzard came across a gipsy and his lass, and the latter bore a strong resemblance to Nance Yeulett. Lezzard persuaded the gipsies to enact a love scene for Yeulett to observe, and this successfully persuaded Yeulett that his wife was unfaithful.

The home was broken up 'with astounding rapidity', Jack behaving 'like a madman', and the Yeuletts drifted separately to London. There, in a fit of desperation, Jack was about to drown himself in the Thames when he stopped to rescue a wretched woman who was making a similar attempt. It was the gipsy lass, Jess, and she explained the deceit to Jack. Further she added that she and Nance were sisters, though unknown to each other.

Jack set off in vengeful pursuit of Kridge and Lezzard, and eventually it transpired that as well as shady financial deals they had been involved in the 'getting out of the way' of Nance Yeulett's father. The culprits were run to earth in the Yeulett's farmhouse whence, in a 'powerful' scene, they were roughly handled by the villagers and taken by the police. The hero and heroine then returned to a happy normality.

The story, thought the reviewer, was of 'absorbing interest' and though containing 'striking situations' avoided sensationalism. Receipts for the week were £290 6s. 6d., of which the company's share was £159 13s. The programmes etc., brought in £12 15s. 6d., and since the theatre's expenses were £145 14s. 4d. the theatre made a profit of £24 12s. 5d. on the week. (£26 7s. 9d. of the total expenses was ascribed to pantomime expenses.)

'Hoodman Blind' was succeeded by another visit of Minnie Palmer in 'My Sweetheart' which was given all week with the exception of Friday when 'The Little Treasure', and 'The Ring and Keeper' were given instead for Minnie Palmer's benefit.

Receipts for the week were £400 0s. 6d., of which £240 0s. 3d. was the company's sixty per cent share. The programmes etc. brought in £6 4s. 2d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £137 16s. 2d., the theatre made a profit of £28 8s. 3d.

Minnie Palmer's week ended the summer season and the

theatre remained closed for the following fortnight. For the whole of June, and that part of July in which it was open, the theatre made a nett profit of £98 11s. 9d. - clearly not enough to pay two months rent.

In July also the theatre company drew up its annual balance sheet for the Annual General Meeting. The income account for the year showed a balance of £1,185 4s. 2d., £437 1s. of which was brought forward from the previous year. Thus despite Wilson Barrett's financial difficulties the theatre company had an income surplus of £748 3s. 2d. in 1886. The directors' report recommended that this should be transferred to a reserve fund, or at least £442 13s. 5d. of it, and the remainder carried over to the next account. At the end of July Wilson Barrett still owed £474 12s. 8d. of his second quarter's rent.

The theatre reopened on 2 August with Violet Cameron's company in a new comic opera, 'The Commodore'.³¹ The opera's plot simply concerned the intrigues of two sets of lovers (of whom three were the daughter, the nephew, and the ward of the Commodore) to outwit the Commodore's marriage plans for them. Violet Cameron played 'the dashing Capitaine René, the devil-me-care nephew of the Commodore', and in this role she interpolated several songs that were, in the reviewer's opinion, of a higher standard than the rest of the music.³²

Receipts for the week were £634 16s. 6d., of which £349 3s. was the company's share. Programmes etc. brought

in £10 17s. 11d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £147 0s. 6d., the theatre made a profit on the week of £149 10s. 11d. (Four other expenses were recorded which were not taken into account for the purposes of reckoning profit which could go to paying the rent, and these were £63, against which was written 'rent, taxes and manager'; £17 against which was written 'Ingham pantomime'; £19 3s. 11d. against which was written 'Rowell ditto' (meaning pantomime); and £7 against which was written 'Carpenters Hull'. It seems possible that apart from Wilson Barrett's £63, the rest were expenses related to the preparation of the pantomime.)

'The Commodore' was succeeded by S.P. Hawtrey's company in 'the latest London success', 'The Pickpocket', which was preceded by a curtain-raiser, 'Barbara'. 'The Pickpocket' was another adaptation from Von Moser. However, the reviewer thought that it was inferior to 'The Private Secretary' in characterisation, construction, novelty, and in ingenuity of humour and of plot. Very often, he said, it operated at the level of pantomime.³⁵

The central character of the piece was a somewhat conventional jealous husband. Mr and Mrs Hope lived happily with a maiden aunt and an attractive lady friend of Mrs Hope. Osmond Hewett was in love with this lady friend (who was called Freda Grumbledon), and visited the Hopes' house in order to see her so often that Mr Hope thought that he had designs on his wife.

His suspicion was unsuppressable when he discovered that Hewett had followed his wife, the aunt, and Freda to Southbourne-on-sea. He disguised himself by shaving off his moustache, and followed them all under an assumed name. Unfortunately the name he had borrowed was that of an escaped lunatic, and his jealousy drove him to such behavioural excesses that he was taken to be that lunatic and arrested by the police.

Mrs Hope thought that his face might be familiar, however, and prevailed upon Hewett to pick his pocket. With the handkerchief thus gained she thought she might identify him. The aunt, in search of further proof, persuaded Hewett to break open the 'lunatic's' portmanteau. However, he was observed doing these things, and moreover discovered in possession of a pocket-book that was not his own. Thus he was taken for a pickpocket.

Mrs Hope, however, proved her husband's identity, and once he was released Hewett's behaviour could be explained. Eventually he was allowed to marry Freda, and the play reached an acceptable conclusion when the lunatic was captured also.

With this slim plot, much was required of the actors, averred the reviewer, and they were not always up to it — though generally they kept the audience laughing. Two of the minor characters of the piece were 'a crusty old curmudgeon who fancies himself afflicted with all the ills that flesh is heir to', and 'a characteristic sea-side waiter who is continually dragging his wife into the

conversation'. The piece was further characterised by the fact that it had a catch phrase, 'Rippin'', which the reviewer thought was humorously enough used, though in principal he did not approve of it.

The one-act 'Barbara' was a new piece by Jerome A. Jerome, and revolved round a girl's efforts to bring two lovers together. In the process she discovered that one of them was her brother.

Receipts for 'The Pickpocket' were £204 3s. of which £102 1s. 6d. was the company's share. Programmes etc. brought in £4 4s. 1d., and as the theatre's expenses for the week were £132 9s., the theatre made a loss of £26 3s. 5d. (Four other expenditures were not taken into this calculation: 'Rent, taxes and manager £63; Hull work £11 1s. 6d.; Pickard pantomime £5; 'Clito' £2 3s. 9d.' Again, it seems likely that these were expenses that the directors considered Wilson Barrett's own responsibility.)

'The Pickpocket' was followed on 16 August by 'Famine', a new 'Irish' play presented by Hubert O'Grady's company.³⁴ The play was not as 'thoroughly Irish' in character and sentiment as that kind of play generally was, and indeed there was only one really 'Irish' character in the piece, which O'Grady himself played (he was 'a sort of emergency man, who is willing to do the dirty work of the less pronounced villains in order to get money, and to revenge himself on his former employer').³⁵ The audience for it was small.

Receipts were £235 16s. 6d., of which £92 18s. 8d. was the company's share. Programmes etc. brought in £5 8s. 8d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £128 10s., the theatre made a profit of £17 16s. 6d. (Five unaccounted expenses were listed: 'Rents, taxes, and manager £63; Pickard pantomime £10; work 'Claudian' £15 8s. 3d.; material £5; repairs properties £2 8s. 3d.')

'Famine' was followed on 23 August by a return visit of Elliston and Wynn Miller's company in 'Alone in London'.³⁶ The play had a large audience, 'if not as profitable as could have been desired' (that is, principally in the pit and gallery), and it was highly appreciative.³⁷

Receipts for the week were £196 4s., of which the company's share was £98 2s. The programmes etc. brought in £6 5s. 3d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £141 14s. 8d., the theatre made a loss of £37 9s. (Unaccounted items of expenditure were 'Rents, taxes, and manager £63; Pickard pantomime £5; 'Claudian' £6 1s. 1d.; Yorkshireman April and May £2 16s. 4d.')

The theatre therefore had made a total profit in August of £103 15s. 0d.

'Alone in London' was followed by the Messrs Gatti company in 'the new Adelphi success', 'The Harbour Lights', on 30 August.³⁸ This play was written by Sims and Pettitt to follow up the success of 'In the Ranks'. The hero of both pieces was played (in the touring company) by the

same man, who invested them with very similar characters, and whereas 'In the Ranks' offered 'realistic' pictures of life in the army, 'The Harbour Lights' did the same service for the navy.

The plot was sensational without going to excess, in the reviewer's opinion,³⁹ though it attracted an audience 'which could hardly be called large'. (The reviewer suggested that this might be attributable to the hotness of the night.)

The hero was Lieutenant Kingsley, whose fiancée, Dora Vane, was the adopted daughter of an old sea-captain called Nelson, and in the first scene she was waiting for his arrival on HMS Britannic. Kingsley had been away for two years during which time Dora's foster-sister, Lina Nelson, had been seduced by 'a typical "respectable" stage villain', Frank Moreland, who had enticed her to London for the purpose. Lina's former lover, Mark Helstone, a sailor, had been 'driven to the bad' by losing her, and had sworn to kill her seducer.

Meanwhile Moreland had determined to marry Dora for her money, and when Lina arranged a meeting with him to demand reparations for her betrayal, and Dora rushed to the spot because Lina had threatened to kill herself if unsuccessful, Moreland laid a trap for her.

At the meeting Lina was dismissed by Moreland, and so she tried to shoot him, but he took the gun, left it on a table, and locked Lina in a room. Mark Helstone, hot

for revenge, now entered, and not knowing Moreland's identity, asked him who had been with him. As Dora arrived at that moment, Moreland said it was she. Helstone seemed to be satisfied, and made to leave, but changed his mind and hid behind a curtain. Thus he overheard Moreland declare his passion to Dora, and swear she should not leave the house that night. At that moment Kingsley rushed in to save Dora, but Helstone had now identified Moreland and shot him dead.

Frank Moreland's death left room for his cousin, Nicholas Moreland, to take over the role of chief villain. He hated Kingsley, and accused him of the murder of Frank. A warrant was issued for Kingsley's arrest. (Moreland had bribed Helstone, the only witness, to leave the country.)

Kingsley, who had by this time married Dora, had been called away to sea, and Moreland had to pursue him onto the deck of his ship to serve the warrant on him. Kingsley was alarmed at the prospect of leaving his new wife open to attack from this villain, and begged for leave of absence. A posting to a shore duty came just as the signal was given for visitors to leave the ship before it sailed.

This ended the third act, and the fourth opened in Helstone's cottage (he had not left the country after all). Helstone had brought Lina there, delirious since her encounter with Moreland. Helstone's mother, angry at the ruination that Lina had brought to her son's life, called the police and accused Lina of the murder. Helstone

and Lina tried to escape, but Kingsley arrived to prevent it. In the process, however, Lina fell from a cliff, and was trapped on rocks below. Kingsley climbed over the top of the cliff to try to rescue her, and 'by a clever mechanical change' the scene changed to show him climbing down the cliff. He reached her, but the tide was coming in apace, and it seemed they would not be rescued, when a lifeboat arrived, 'and a very powerful and effective scene is brought to a climax'. The last act was devoted to dismissing the charges against Kingsley and his wife, and punishing the villain.

Receipts for the week were £238 8s. 6d., and the company's fifty-five per cent share of this was £131 2s. 9d. Programmes etc. brought in £6 17s. 8d., and as the theatre's expenses for the week were £145 11s. 1d., the theatre made an overall loss of £31 7s. 8d. (Items of unaccounted expenditure were 'Rent, taxes, and manager £63; pantomime outlay £32 17s. 5d.')

'The Harbour Lights' was followed on 6 September by Wilson Barrett, Miss Eastlake, and the Princess's Theatre company in 'Hamlet' on Monday and Tuesday, 'Clito' on Wednesday and Thursday, 'Claudian' and 'Chatterton' on Friday, and 'Clito' and 'The Colour Sergeant' on Saturday. The performance on Friday and Saturday began half an hour early, at seven o'clock, in view of its length.

Wilson Barrett had not acted in Leeds for six years prior to this visit, and it caused some excitement. He was met at the Great Northern Railway station when he arrived on Sunday, 5 September, by a cheering crowd of 'some thousands of persons', and in a speech after his first performance he said that he did not think that any other actor had been afforded such a reception which more properly belonged to a victorious general or the first visit of an important statesman.⁴⁰

Wilson Barrett had made his reputation in 'the higher class of melodrama', and consequently, the reviewer said, his Hamlet was anticipated with mixed feelings. Irving's Hamlet was still fresh in his mind, he confessed, and he decided not to make any comparison.

In the event, Wilson Barrett's performance was 'dignified, powerful, pathetic, and marked with a certain freshness'. The reviewer thought that he was best in the emotional scenes - with the ghost and with his mother - though his interpretation was not an ordinary one, and, seeming to have been carefully thought out, it had 'originality', 'subtlety and power', here and there interpretations that 'came upon one with surprise but to which one could not help applying the description of beautiful', and 'pauses full of meaning, attitudes graceful and expressive, splendid pieces of bye-play, impassioned oratory, and a sustained impressiveness and tenderness'. He played the whole with a special intensity, and the audience watched

with wrapt attention, stifling their tendency to applaud, and saving their enthusiasm for the ends of the acts.

The performance ended at half past eleven.

'Clito' was written by Sydney Grundy and Wilson Barrett, and this was its first performance in Leeds. The plot gave a simple illustration of the kind of moral dilemma that Wilson Barrett liked for his plays. The hero was Clito, an accomplished sculptor, who publicly denounced the behaviour of Helle, the beautiful mistress of Critias (a wealthy and powerful man in the Athens of the Thirty Tyrants).

Helle resolved upon revenge, and so she contrived to meet him, having failed in a plot to snatch his 'fair and pure foster-sister' through Glaucias, an old admirer, because Clito was able to arouse the populace to such a pitch that the sister was set free. Clito did not know Helle by sight, and so at this meeting she was able to ensnare him with her charms. 'Her object is first to win his love, that she may outrage and scorn it, and then to expose him to his friends as a traitor and betrayer'.⁴¹

In this she succeeded, but her infamous behaviour at last aroused the people against her, and they pursued her with the intention of killing her. She was driven to seek refuge with Clito who reproached her with 'passionate vehemence'. But she pleaded for forgiveness, 'crying piteously for her life', and he relented, and was on the point of helping her to escape, when the mob broke in and

killed her. At this Clito was stricken with remorse and he died at her feet.

The play had a quality of vigour and power, and contained also cynical and ironical allusions which the audience appreciated. It tended, however, to drag a little, especially in the first two acts, when Wilson Barrett was not on the stage. He was perfectly in his element, impressive and effective, not a point being lost (especially in declamatory passages), and the play achieved in the fourth and fifth acts what to the reviewer was a tragic intensity. Wilson Barrett's performance embraced tenderness, 'passionate frenzy', and 'terrible despair'.⁴²

During the week 8,702 people attended the theatre (the theatre had an estimated potential capacity of 17,640 for six nights' performances), the largest single audience being of 2,104 persons on the Friday night, and the weeks receipts were £1,118 9s. 6d. Of this the company's two thirds share was £745 13s. Programmes etc. brought in £18 7s. 7d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £202 4s., the theatre made a profit on the week of £189 0s. 1d. (Items of unaccounted expenditure were 'Rent, taxes, and manager £63; pantomime outlay £56 3s.')

Wilson Barrett's welcome to Leeds extended beyond the demonstration at the station. On Wednesday, 8 September, he was given a 'complimentary luncheon' at the Great Northern Hotel, Leeds, which was attended by about ninety

people including the Town Clerk (Sir George Morrison), the Mayor (Alderman Edwin Gaunt), the Rev. T.W.R. Pearson, George Irwin, several Aldermen, George Barrett, Byron Webber, Henry Herman, and J.Wilton Jones. Sir James Kitson, Sir Andrew Fairbairn, and W.L. Jackson, M.P. did not attend, but sent apologies for their absence.

Irwin expressed surprise that the drama met any opposition and claimed that the people demanded it, and that this demand would have to be met. Byron Webber asserted that Wilson Barrett was one of the greatest friends of art and literature in London.

Alderman Woodhead declared that there was a growth in 'artistic taste' in the middle and lower classes as well as the upper class, and this he ascribed to education. People must therefore cultivate artistic tastes or be left behind, he said, and Wilson Barrett had done much for the advancement in art in Leeds during the past fourteen years.

Sir George Morrison said that Wilson Barrett had done much to 'refine, elevate, and ennoble the English stage' and he always acted with dignity and 'extreme naturalness ... which were rare things among actors'. In Wilson Barrett's hands, he said, 'the stage had become an undoubted instrument for the good'.

In reply Wilson Barrett claimed that he was unable to put his feelings into words and that he was overcome by his welcome. He professed humility, and recalled how things had changed for 'the friendless lad of years ago'

for whom, now, financial success was almost certain. But he had achieved this, he declared, without compromising his artistic or moral integrity. His plays he always aimed to make more than mere amusements, and he had been assured in letters from all over the world that good had been done by the plays that he produced.

The demonstration on Sunday and the luncheon, he said, were proofs that the drama could not be impeded in its upward progress, and he ended by referring to the help that the Leeds clergy had given him.

The Rev. T.R. Walton Pearson said that his presence proved that there was no 'deep-rooted antagonism' between the English Church and the Theatre, and he claimed that good plays were a 'glorious intellectual refreshment' which allowed him to do twice the work on the following day.⁴³

Wilson Barrett applied in person for the renewal of the theatre's dramatic license at the Leeds Borough Police Court on Friday, 10 September 1886. There was no objection, and Alderman Spark and J.R. Watson were sureties.

Wilson Barrett's week was followed by another visit of Messrs Lingard and Van Biene's company in 'Falka'.⁴⁴ This was its fourth visit to Leeds, but it still attracted a large audience which demanded frequent encores.

Receipts for the week were £432, of which the company's sixty per cent share was £259 4s. Programmes etc., brought

in £15 8s. 10d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £169 13s. 4d., the theatre made a profit on the week of £18 11s. 6d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay for this week was £38 18s. 10d. The 'rent, taxes, and manager's' £63 remained constant.)

'Falka' was followed on 20 September by Nelly Farren, Mr Leslie, and the Gaiety Theatre company in the burlesque 'Little Jack Sheppard'.⁴⁵ The reviewer thought that nothing duller than the libretto of this piece could be imagined, but that nonetheless, the excellence of the company, 'clever acting, bright music, graceful dancing, pretty dresses, and effective staging', combined to make it 'a brighter piece of burlesque' than had been seen at the Grand Theatre for 'many a day'.⁴⁶

Receipts were £467 18s., of which the company's sixty per cent share was £280 14s. 9d. Programmes etc. brought in £8 3s. 5d., and since the theatre's expenditure for this week was £126 7s. 6d., the theatre made a profit of £68 19s. 2d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay for this week was £29 5s. 2d.)

'Little Jack Sheppard' was followed on 27 September by Messrs Cecil and Clayton's company in 'The Schoolmistress', which was preceded by a curtain-raiser, 'The Husband in Clover'.⁴⁷

'The Schoolmistress' was a three-act farce by A.W. Pinero. It was first presented at the Royal Court Theatre, but it was a touring company that brought it to Leeds.

The reviewer⁴⁸ thought it very slender of plot. 'There is a kind of story of two injudicious marriages by "the proprietor of a ladies' seminary" and the school girl daughter of a ferocious Admiral,⁴⁹ but this ... serves simply as an excuse for a number of ludicrous incidents, which, of course, are wildly improbable'. He did admit, however, that the 'fun' did not flag from beginning to end, and that the dialogue had frequent sallies of wit and repartee.

Receipts for the week were £290 19s., of which the company's share was £145 9s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in £5 13s. 9d., and since the theatre's expenses for this week were £126 2s. 4d., the theatre made a profit on the week of £25 0s. 11d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay for this week was £30 10s.) The theatre's profit for the whole of September was £270 4s. This was the first month under the arrangement for paying Wilson Barrett's rent in which the profit over a month had even equalled the rent for that month.

'The Schoolmistress' was followed on 4 October by the second visit of Violet Melnotte's company in 'Erminie'. There was a 'fairly large' audience to see the first night of this visit, and the company was substantially unchanged.

Receipts for the week were £349 19s., of which the company's fifty per cent share was £174 19s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in £4 2s., and since the theatre's expenses

were £136 1s. 1d. for this week, the theatre made a profit of £43 0s. 5d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay for this week was £38 9s. 3d.)

'Erminie' was followed by Captain Bainbridge's comic opera company ('numbering over fifty') in 'the successful' comic opera, 'The Beggar Student'.⁵⁰

This work had first been seen in Leeds in 1884 when it was performed by the Carl Rosa Opera Company. (The music was by Carl Millocker, and the English libretto was by Mr Beatty Kingston.) It was first produced at the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, in which town Captain Bainbridge was lessee of the Theatre Royal.

Receipts for the week were £415 8s. 6d., of which the company's share was £229 11s. Programmes etc. brought in £8 11s. 5d., and since the theatre's expenses for this week were £147 19s. 2d., the theatre made a profit on the week of £46 9s. 9d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay was £25 14s. 5d.)

'The Beggar Student' was followed by the Carl Rosa Opera Company which appeared in the first week of a fortnight in 'Carmen' on Monday, 'Don Giovanni' on Tuesday, 'Ruy Blas' on Wednesday, 'Faust' on Thursday, 'Lohengrin' on Friday, 'The Bohemian Girl' as a matinee on Saturday, and 'Esmerelda' on Saturday night.

Of these only three had any novelty. Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' had not been performed in Leeds for many years,

and never before by the Carl Rosa Opera Company. On this occasion it attracted a large audience, although the reviewer thought that its plot was unacceptable to English sensibilities.⁵¹

'Ruy Blas' was based on Victor Hugo's play of the same name. The opera was composed by Marchetti, and the libretto of this production (which was the work's first in Leeds) was an English adaptation by W. Grist of the Italian version by Carlo d'Orneville. The house was crowded despite thunderstorms.

'Lohengrin', the last of Wagner's operas, was given for this its first time in Leeds in the English version that Carl Rosa had first presented in 1882. The house was 'overflowing'.

Receipts for the week were £1,306 5s. 6d., of which the company's two thirds share was £870 17s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in £15 8s. 6d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £220 7s. 4d., the theatre made a profit on the week of £230 9s. 2d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay was £37 3s. 7d. for this week.)

In his second week Carl Rosa gave no new works: 'Il Trovatore' was given on Monday, 'The Marriage of Figaro' on Tuesday, 'The Bohemian Girl' on Wednesday, 'Lohengrin' on Thursday, 'Mignon' on Friday, 'Don Giovanni' as a matinee on Saturday, and 'Carmen' on Saturday night.

Receipts for the week were £1,292 11s. 3d., of which the company's share was £861 14s. 2d. Programmes etc. brought in £12 1s. 2d., and since the theatre's expenses

for the week were £259 5s. 9d., the theatre made a profit in this second week of opera of £183 12s. 6d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay was £35 10s. 9d.) The theatre's profit for October was therefore £503 11s. 10d.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company were succeeded by Charles Wyndham's company in 'The Man with Three Wives', with 'Cupid in Camp' given as a curtain-raiser.⁵² The major piece was a three-act farce adapted by Mr Rae from M. Grenet-Darecourt's 'Trois Femmes pour un Mari'. It had run for several months at the Criterion Theatre in the early part of 1886. The subject of the piece was not polygamous, as the English version of the title might seem to suggest.

The play's principal characters were Jack and Ralph, two bachelors bent on marriage. However, they both had uncles with opposing views on marriage. Jack's uncle was called Mullins and he threatened to disinherit Jack if he married. Ralph's uncle was an American called Troutenwetter, and he firmly believed in the practice.

Jack had an entanglement with a young lady named Polly, of which he wished to disembarass himself so that he could marry someone else. When that someone else's father came to visit Jack, therefore, and found Polly in his lodgings, Jack said that she was Ralph's wife. Thus Ralph acquired wife number one.

The two uncles then descended on the lodgings of their nephews, bent on inculcating their prejudices. Troutenwetter

brought with him a suitable object for matrimony, and to get out of marrying her, Ralph presented the landlady's daughter as his wife. Thus he acquired wife number two.

Jack meanwhile had made preparations to get married, and when his uncle, observing some of the preparations, asked who the bridegroom was to be, Jack declared that it was Ralph. Thus wife number three was acquired.

Jack's future father-in-law (unaware of all the deceptions) then invited everyone to Jack's wedding, thus preparing the way for a farcical resolution of the plot which the Yorkshire Post reviewer called 'an extremely novel and diverting situation'.⁵³

Receipts for the week were £178 15s., of which the company's fifty per cent share was £89 7s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in £16 17s. 5d., and since the theatre's expenses were £146 19s. 10d., the theatre made a loss of £40 14s. 11d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay for this week was £12 17s. 3d.)

Charles Wyndham's company was succeeded by that of J.S. Clarke who thus visited the Grand Theatre for the second time in eight months.⁵⁴ His programme was different, however, for he presented a new play, 'The Alps', with 'Toddles', on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 'A Widow Hunt' on Thursday, 'Heir-at-law' on Friday, and 'Cousin Johnny' with 'Toddles' on Saturday.

'The Alps' had recently been produced at the Cambridge Theatre, London, and the reviewer thought that it had been

'suggested' by 'Le Voyage de M. Perichon'.⁵⁵ The action of the play took place on a tour of the Continent by Mr and Mrs Perriwinkle and their nubile daughter, and was mainly inspired by the rivalry of two young Londoners, Messrs Wesdon and Dashwood, to marry the daughter.

Wesdon had the sympathy of the daughter and the mother, but he had saved Mr Perriwinkle's life in an accident in the Alps, and the latter, a vain 'embodiment of that ancient type of Englishman who was always writing to The Times, and who made himself obnoxious by his vulgarities and insular traits' resented this. Dashwood, seeing here his opportunity, contrived to allow Perriwinkle to rescue him from such a situation, and bribed a London paper to print an account of the incident which he himself had written. The article referred to Perriwinkle in glowing terms. (Clarke played Perriwinkle, and his 'self-complacent strut' while Dashwood read out the article from the paper was 'admirably humorous, and fairly brought down the house'.)

The scene then changed to a hotel in Paris where Perriwinkle was threatened with a demand for a duel by a 'fire-eating' Parisian, Baccarac (whose basis for the quarrel seemed to be that Perriwinkle had spelled Mont Blanc with a 'k' in a visitors' book). Meanwhile a detective suspected an elderly and invalid friend of Dashwood of a London robbery. Fearing that the shock of arrest would kill his friend, Dashwood persuaded the invalid's children to identify Perriwinkle as their father, and he was thus

mistakenly arrested. In this way the invalid was not frightened to death, and Perriwinkle escaped his quarrel. Eventually normality was restored, and Wesdon married the daughter.

Receipts for the week were £196 9s. 6d., of which the company's fifty per cent share was £98 4s. 9d. Programmes etc. brought in £11 0s. 9d., and since the theatre's expenses for the week were £146 17s. 4d., the theatre made a loss of £37 11s. 10d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay was £13 17s. 2d.)

J.S. Clarke was followed on 15 November by the third visit of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Mikado'.⁵⁶ The opera attracted a 'well-filled' house on the Monday night. Receipts for the week were £636 7s. 6d., of which the company's sixty per cent share was £381 16s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in £8 2s. 10d., and since the theatre's expenses were £165 10s. 4d., the theatre made a profit of £97 3s. 6d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay was £19 15s. 7d.)

'The Mikado' was followed by another visit of Charles Hawtrey's company in 'The Private Secretary', and it seemed to the reviewer to have lost very little of its attraction.⁵⁸ Receipts for the week were £274 5s 6d., of which the company's fifty per cent share was £137 2s. 9d. Programmes etc. brought in £4 10s. 5d., and since the

theatre's expenses were £145 11s. 10d., the theatre made a loss of £3 18s. 8d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay was £25 14s. 10d.)

'The Private Secretary' was followed on 29th November by 'Jim, the Penman'. This play, by Sir Charles Young, had first been produced as a matinee at the Haymarket Theatre, London, in April 1886, having been turned down by many managers (including Mrs Kendal). Messrs Russel and Bashford (who had taken over the Haymarket Theatre from the retiring Bancrofts) had had a run of unsuccessful productions, but this piece was well received at the matinee, and was given an evening performance at which it was again well received, and looked likely thereafter to have a long run.

The central character of the piece was James Ralston, a wealthy philanthropist, seen at the beginning of the play living happily with his wife and grown up children. At the end of a dinner party he was asked to buy tickets for a charitable amateur performance, and seeing his wife's cheque book on the escritoire, asked if she minded his writing a cheque for her. She thought that he was making out the cheque to her, but in fact he was forgetfully lapsing into his familiar practice, for the secret source of his wealth was in reality the product of his skill as a forger. He was part of a gang run by one Baron Hardfelt.

Meanwhile a former suitor of Mrs Ralston turned up from

America in search of the author of a forged cheque which had robbed him of his fortune. He visited Mrs Ralston, and in conversation it transpired that they each believed the other to have broken off their engagement. In fact they were duped by forged letters. Mrs Ralston kept them both for purposes of comparison.

The Baron compelled Ralston to make one more forgery before the gang was to be dissolved. He was to write an order that would allow the Baron to acquire diamonds which were an heirloom of the Drelincourt family, whose scion was about to marry Ralston's daughter. (The diamonds would thus have come to her.)

The Baron acquired the jewels, but Drelincourt, anxious to show them to his fiancée, had gone off to fetch them also. This caused Ralston so much anxiety that he collapsed on a sofa, for he had heart disease.

The scene then changed to the Ralston's country seat where they busied themselves with their daughter's imminent wedding, and Ralston's election to Parliament. Here Mrs Ralston slowly connected the signing of the cheque at the dinner party with the forged letters in her possession, and confronted her husband. He admitted the truth, and she declared that she was no longer his wife. He protested that she was the mother of his children, and asked if she would tell them that he was a notorious forger. She sank into a chair crying despairingly "I can't! I can't!" 'Here,' said the reviewer, 'the curtain fell upon the strongest situation found in modern drama'.⁵⁹

In the meantime the former suitor had employed a detective who had discovered the identity of the author of the suitor's misfortunes. For the sake of Mrs Ralston and the children, however, the suitor would not proceed against Ralston. His was the only case in which a conviction might have been secured.

But the Baron's plans had been foiled, and he angrily pursued Ralston into the latter's drawing room. As a consequence Ralston had a heart attack from which he died. Mrs Ralston entered to find his corpse in the arms of her former suitor and a doctor, and flung herself to the floor as the final curtain fell.

The reviewer praised the mounting of the play, and Mrs Bernard Beere's costumes which he said were 'veritable triumphs of the modiste's art'. But, though the Leeds public here had an opportunity to see an accomplished actress in a 'remarkable' play, he had to observe that they were greeted with relatively empty benches.

Receipts for the week were £390 14s. 6d., of which the company's share was £228 11s. 3d. Programmes etc. brought in £10 4s., and since the theatre's expenses were £156 0s. 7d., the theatre made a profit of £16 6s. 8d. (The unaccounted pantomime outlay (the last of these figures for 1886) was £16 9s. 2d.) The theatre's total profit for November and the first four days of December was therefore only £31 4s. 9d.

'Jim, the Penman' was followed by another visit of Cecil and Clayton's company in 'The Magistrate' for the

week beginning 6 December. Receipts for this week were £139 4s. 6d., of which the company's share was £69 9s. 3d. Programmes etc. brought in £3 9s., and since the theatre's expenses were £178 15s. 6d., the theatre made a loss of £105 11s. 3d.

'The Magistrate' was followed by another returning production: Marie de Grey in 'Woman against Woman' (she concluded the performance with 'the Helen and Modus scenes from 'The Hunchback' in which she was seen as a comedienne).

Receipts for this week were £125 4s., of which the company's share was £62 12s. Programmes etc. brought in £7 19s. 7d., and since the theatre's expenses were £259 8s., the theatre made a loss of £138 16s. 5d. After this week the theatre closed for the preparation of the pantomime.

The pantomime, 'Sinbad the Sailor', opened on Thursday, 23 December. It was as usual written by J. Wilton Jones, and the reviewer thought that it provided excellent opportunities for the scenic artist, but suffered from not having a fairy story base.⁶⁰ Its cast was also inferior to that of previous pantomimes, he added, and on the first night a lack of rehearsal was apparent.

The production of the pantomime had been supervised by Henry Hastings, the stage manager, and Lee Anderson had contributed his usual ballets and pageantry — there was a

ballet of ladies dressed in the jerseys of the major Yorkshire football clubs, and there was a procession of English Kings and Queens, each heralded by a banner-bearer, from William the Conqueror to Victoria in celebration of the latter's jubilee.

The strong narrative line of the story that formed the basis of the pantomime (despite the reviewer's reservations) seems to have created some rationalisation of the sequence of scenes. The conventional initial demon scene was dispensed with, and after an overture which comprised of 'some of the newest, most taking tunes of the year', the curtain rose upon 'The Market Place of Balsora'. This was 'a glowing, Eastern scene, with a brilliant sky and an expanse of blue sea in the background. Fisher-girls of many nations plied their calling, and the strutting to and fro of the Oriental swells and belles imported vivacity and life to the scene'.

The main characters of the story were then introduced: Mrs Sinbad (the Dame, and played therefore by William Morgan), Sinbad himself (played by Mary Loftus), Nichodemus Brown ('an idle scamp'), and Rajah Rhum, king of neighbouring Serendib, who had come to collect his annual tribute. Mrs Sinbad led the people in revolt against paying this tribute, but to no avail, and she was seized and taken aboard the Rajah's ship. Sinbad fell in love with the Rajah's daughter, Princess Irza, and they all embarked on the Rajah's ship which, in full sail, was wrecked by a storm. Sinbad, his mother, and Nichodemus

climbed up the sinking ship's rigging onto what they took to be an island, but turned out to be the back of a whale. 'After some striking adventures' the whale disappeared, but the survivors were washed ashore in the next scene (painted by Stafford Hall) - 'a cavern by the sea shore, by moonlight, with the waves gently breaking on the sands'.

When the Rajah learned of Sinbad and Irza's love, he banished the former to the mountainous interior of the country. There he was met by the good fairies Adventure, Industry, and Energy who promised to help him get to a Diamond Valley. The Old Man of the Sea set up in opposition, with the witches, demons, horrid gnomes, and sprites which guarded the valley.

In scene four Sinbad found himself with Roundaparko, the Princess's Yorkshire page, in 'The Rocky Retreat of the Roco', where the latter found a huge egg which he broke open with a hatchet. A young roc stepped out, and Sinbad jumped into the shell, to be carried off by a great roc which descended, grasped the egg, then flew off with it to a nest in the mountains.

Thus Sinbad eventually arrived in the Diamond Valley which was 'a deep and gloomy gorge which forms a beautiful and picturesque stage picture'. Adventure waved her wand, and instantly 'sparkling diamonds flash out all around'. Sinbad set to work to pick up as many as he could. Other characters arrived sliding down the mountain and joined the collecting, afterwards trying to catch and tame a donkey to carry away their spoils.

Demons and witches then came from every side. Mephistopheles appeared on a jutting crag, a red, lurid light was cast on the scene, and the demons and witches indulged in a wild dance. The whole scene was a parody of the Brocken scene in Henry Irving's 'Faust'. 'Some extraordinary effects' were produced — for some of which steam was used.

Returning to the Rajah's court, the Princess was forced by astrological predictions to marry within the day, but chose to marry Nichodemus instead of the Prince whom her father had intended her to marry. The ceremony was performed, and celebrations took place in 'The Pavilion of the Palace' (a scene painted by Stafford Hall). Here Sinbad returned laden with jewels to find his Princess already married. The Princess feigned illness, Sinbad disguised himself as a girl attending her, and shortly afterwards the Princess took a sleeping potion that made her appear dead for a few hours (a device borrowed from 'Romeo and Juliet').

The laws of the kingdom demanded that her husband be buried with her, but Nichodemus, once led to the mausoleum doors, made extravagant offers in the hope of finding a substitute. At the last moment a cloaked figure offered to take his place. It was Sinbad disguised. He entered the mausoleum, but after a few moments the doors flew open again to reveal Sinbad and the Princess 'in rich bridal array' clasped in each other's arms.

Everyone desired an annulment of the marriage with

Nichodemus, but this could not be done under the laws of the kingdom, so the entourage voyaged to England to have it done (by Sir James Hannan, and Lord Justice Butt). The pantomime was wound up in a scene which represented Boar Lane, Leeds, (it was painted by Freddie Fox), and concluded after Stafford Hall's 'novel transformation scene, "The Power of Love" ... which contained many beautiful tableaux, and, moreover, consistently worked out a poetical idea', in a Harlequinade.⁶¹

The pantomime played for only two nights in its first week (23 and 24 December) and for these the receipts were £159 13s. Programmes etc. brought in a further £3 1s. 9d. The theatre's expenses were calculated as £382 1s. 3d., so that a loss was made on these two days of £219 6s. 6d. (These expenses seem likely to have been comprised mainly of salaries, wages, and incidental running costs, for provision was made to pay off the pantomime expenses already incurred during the year — mainly for the construction of scenery and properties, and the making of costumes etc. — in ten instalments of £37 13s. 3d. during the pantomime's run.)

Receipts for the pantomime's first full week were £1,438 2s. plus £26 18s. 4d. for programmes (in fact, programmes and books of the pantomime, £10 12s. 10d., and £16 5s. 6d. respectively). Expenses for this week were reckoned to be £679 10s., so that the theatre made a profit for this week of £785 10s. 4d.

By the end of December Kingston calculated that Wilson Barrett had made £545 5s. 10d. profit which had not then been paid to the company for arrears of rent, and at the end of the year Wilson Barrett owed the company a balance of £809 6s. 9d.

Notes

- 1 The company further included Charles Rowan, James Danvers, David Fischer jnr, Mr Furneux, Ethel Pierson, Effie Mason, and Emily Wallace.
- 2 Yorkshire Post, 9 March 1886, p. 4.
- 3 The company included Harry Parker, Mr J.A. Arnold, Mr J.B. Ashley, James Harwood, Mr C.M. Yorke, Lilian Gilmore, Louise Dalby, and Grace O'Malley.
- 4 Yorkshire Post, 16 March 1886, p. 5.
- 5 The company included Mrs Alfred Maddick, Mr F. Shepherd, Mr E.D. Lyons, Lizzie Claremont, Mr E. Chessman, Alice Esden, Mr W.H. Pennington, Mr G. Huntley, and two children, Gretchen Lyons and Freddie Farren.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 23 March 1886, p. 5.
- 7 The company included Leonard Boyne (who had not quite managed to throw off his 'Roman noble' learned for 'Claudian', in the reviewer's opinion), Miss Lingard, Maggie Hunt, Mr H. Cooper-Cliffe, Mr W. Holman, Mr A.T. Darwin, Blanche Horlock, Mrs A.M. Moore, Marie Fraser, Mrs G. Cannings, and Retta Walton.
- 8 Yorkshire Post, 30 March 1886, p. 8.
- 9 The company included Henry Walsham, Mr Reeves Smith, Harry Crouch, Miss Vane, Marie Hudspeth, Miss C. Elwell, and Florence Lavender.
- 10 Yorkshire Post, 6 April 1886, p. 4.

- 11 The company included Mr T. Balfour, Louise Moodie, Frank Macdonnell, Arthur Elwood, Mr Gifford Stacey, Mr W.E. Richardson, Mr T. Mowbray, Mr C. Harries, Mr W. Stanyer, Agnes Knight, and Constance Abbott.
- 12 Yorkshire Post, 26 April 1886, p. 6.
- 13 The company included Mr J.A. Rosier, Mr C.W. Somerset, Bertha Dawes, Mr A.T. Hilton, Mr E. Price, Mr W.E. Blatchley, and Mr F. Robinson.
- 14 Yorkshire Post, 26 April 1886, p. 6.
- 15 The company included Esme Lee, Benjamin Wilson, Mr W.H. Rawlins, Tom Paulton, Marie Wynter, Carrie Lee Stoyale, Julia St George, Delia Merton, Sophie Lingwood, Lizzie Collier, George Mahler, Maurice de Sola, George Peyton, Arthur Walcot, Mr C.A. Randolph, and Charles Herbert.
- 16 Yorkshire Post, 11 May 1886, p. 8.
- 17 The company included Shiel Barry, Annie Poole, Marion Erle, William Hogarth, and Mr Hilton St Just.
- 18 Yorkshire Post, 18 May 1886, p. 6.
- 19 The company included Harriet Jay, Herbert Standing, Arthur Lyle, Louisa Gourlay, Mr W.H. Gilbert, Fred Harland, and Nellie Palmer.
- 20 Yorkshire Post, 25 May 1886, p. 6.
- 21 Yorkshire Post, 1 June 1886, p. 5.
- 22 The company included Mr T.W. Robertson, Richard Younge, Edward Sass, Mr W.T. Lovell, Cora Stuart, Miss F. Robertson, and Louise Strathmore.
- 23 Yorkshire Post, 8 June 1886, p. 6.

- 24 Yorkshire Post, 15 June 1886, p. 4.
- 25 The company included Annie Merton, Ada Melrose, George Edwards, and Charles Sennet. The songs were 'Cradle Song' (Mrs Wheldon's own), Gounod's 'Song of Ruth', and 'I Dream of Jeannie'.
- 26 Yorkshire Post, 22 June 1886, p. 6.
- 27 The company included Mr J.B. Lawson, Charles Langley, Mr J. Findlay, Mr Stanley, Mr Hewson, Mr H. Halley, Mr D.G. English, Mr J. Morton, Miss Ashford, Lizzie Scobie, Fanny Moore, and Emilie Grattan. 'Sunshine' was written by F. Broughton.
- 28 Yorkshire Post, 29 June 1886, p. 5.
- 29 The company included Mr Bucklow, Maud Milton, Mr J.S. Haydon, Mr H.C. Arnold, and Mr E. Cathcart. The scenery was painted by Hann, Scotter, and Fox.
- 30 Yorkshire Post, 5 July 1886, p. 5.
- 31 The company included Lionel Brough, Arthur Roberts, Constance Loseby, Edith Brandon, and Violet Cameron.
- 32 Yorkshire Post, 5 August 1886, p. 4.
- 33 Yorkshire Post, 10 August 1886, p. 4.
- 34 The company included Mr W.H. Hallatt, Marcus Hydes, Frank Stephenson, Mr W. Rogers, Miss Steele, and Emily Hughes.
- 35 Yorkshire Post, 17 August 1886, p. 4.
- 36 The company had 'materially' changed: Alice Yorke had taken Harriet Jay's role, Clarence J. Hague had replaced Herbert Standing, and the company further included Mr W.H. Brougham, Louisa Gourlay (still), Fred Harland, Percy Bell, and Bessie Foote.

- 37 Yorkshire Post, 24 August 1886, p. 5.
- 38 The company included Henry George, Mr Dalton Somers, Sallie Turner, May Whitty, Daisey England, Jeny Rogers, Sophie Miles, Clara Dillon, Ada Rogers, Mr Leigh, Mr C.M. Yorke, Mr Jones-Finch, and Sidney Hayes. This was substantially the 'In the Ranks' company.
- 39 Yorkshire Post, 31 August 1886, p. 4.
- 40 Yorkshire Post, 7 September 1886, p. 4.
- 41 Yorkshire Post, 9 September 1886, p. 5.
- 42 Miss Eastlake's acting 'put her in the front rank of the great actresses of the day' averred the reviewer. The company further included Lila Garth, Mr J.H. Clynds, and Mr H. Cooper-Cliffe.
- 43 Yorkshire Post, 9 September 1886, p. 5.
- 44 The company included Walter Wright, Horace Lingard, Charles Mannes, Louis Keller, Fanny Wentworth, Constance Lewis, and Miss L. Clayton.
- 45 The company included Nellie Farren, Fred Leslie, Miss Delaporte, George Stone, George Honey, and Miss Birdie Irving.
- 46 Yorkshire Post, 21 September 1886, p. 4.
- 47 The company included Helen Kinnaird, Mr J.E. Dodson, Horatio Saker, Edith Kenward, Miss N. de Silva, Mabel Hardinge, Lilian Price, Henry Dana, Mr H. Besley, Alexander Knight, Willie Black, and Mary O'Shea.
- 48 Yorkshire Post, 28 September 1886, p. 5.
- 49 There was also an impecunious aristocrat.

- 50 The company included Ada Lincoln, Lina St Ives,
Lucy Franklein, Fred Merion, John Child, and Henry Bracey.
- 51 Yorkshire Post, 20 October 1886, p. 5.
- 52 The company included Mr W.E. Gregory, Cyril Maude,
Mat Robson, Mr Sherman, Alma Stanley, and Miss E. Vining.
- 53 Yorkshire Post, 2 November 1886, p. 8.
- 54 The company included John S. Clarke, Marie Hudspeth,
Mr H. Reeves Smith, Richard Purdon, and John Vallorie.
- 55 Yorkshire Post, 9 November 1886, p. 5.
- 56 The company had undergone several changes. Allen Morris
now played the Mikado in place of James Danvers, who
now took the role of Pooh-Bah. Charles Hildesley,
George Thorne (who had replaced David Fischer jnr),
Haidee Crofton and Siddie Symonds had come into the
company, which further included George Gordon, Ethel
Pierson, and Fanny Edwards.
- 57 Yorkshire Post, 24 November 1886, p. 3.
- 58 The company had undergone some changes, Arthur Helmore,
remaining, however, in the role of the curate.
- 59 Yorkshire Post, 30 November 1886, p. 4.
- 60 Yorkshire Post, 24 December 1886, p. 8.
- 61 The company included Marie Loftus, William Morgan,
Charles Stevens, James Manhill, Marion Grahame,
Mary Maden, Miss Tilley, Jessie Gerald, Florence Dene,
Edith Gwynne, Miss Harfleur, Mr G.W. Nicholson,
Messrs Folley and O'Neil, Mr Gow Bentinck, and Mr E. Griffin.
The Griffin troupe concluded the pantomime with an 'old
familiar type' Harlequinade. J. Sidney Jones was
responsible for the music, and Mr Tollerton the novel
steam, electric, and gas effects.

CHAPTER XI:1887

The 1886/7 pantomime closed on 12 March 1887. The profit that had by that date accrued to Wilson Barrett from the operation of the Grand Theatre since Kingston had been able to inspect the accounts was £1,766 10s. 1d.

Messrs Pearpoint (agents for Wilson Barrett in London) were therefore able to send on his behalf £317 13s. 5d. on 25 March, and this paid off all of the rent arrears.

However, after the close of the pantomime there was the new year's rent to be found. On 2 May Kingston sent Wilson Barrett a demand for the second quarter's rent, which was due on the first of that month. He had no response by 26 May, and sent a reminder.

Meanwhile the company were able in May to pay a two per cent dividend which had been declared at the Annual General Meeting held on 26 April. Despite this first dividend, however, when Messrs Barling and Hird, solicitors, wrote to Kingston inquiring (apropos the shares of J.R. Watson, who had died in the new year) into the value of the company's shares, he had to reply that at the last registered share transfer the value was five pounds per fifty pound share.

But the important matter of the year was again to be Wilson Barrett's rent, and, still having had no response, Kingston wrote on 15 June demanding £487 10s. (Millwaters's

£137 10s. had been paid direct to the company under the arrangement, and was therefore deducted from what Wilson Barrett owed). On 25 June Kingston asked Lee Anderson for the account books so that he could inspect them as he had done during 1886, and on 28 June he wrote for a fourth time to Wilson Barrett asking for the £487 10s. that was owing of the second quarter's rent. As of the preceding Saturday, he added, Messrs Pearpoint must have had on hand £1,200 profit made from the operation of the Grand Theatre, and the outstanding rent should be paid out of that sum forthwith.

However, Wilson Barrett replied that he was unable to meet the directors' demands at that time, though he would at the earliest possible date. He would be in Leeds on 11 July, he said, when he would be glad to attend a board meeting to discuss 'some matters of importance'.

In fact he claimed that he had made a loss of £1,670 in the operation of the theatre in the period 13 March 1886 to 2 July 1887, and he could not pay. But Kingston differed. In a letter of 15 July he said that Lee Anderson admitted an error in his book keeping for the period in question, and that expenses of £3,217 had been deducted wrongly. In fact there had been a profit of 'upwards on six hundred pounds'.

For eight years, he went on, there had been an average profit of £2,067 per annum. Further, Pearpoint at that time held £1,200 out of which he, Kingston, considered the

rent then due should be paid. (On 1 August the rent owing would amount to £1,112 10s.)

In view of these facts the directors insisted on payment. They would not wait unless more security than their simple right of distress was provided. If Wilson Barrett could provide some security they would be glad to consider it. However, if he could not, then they wished to find another tenant for the theatre at once.

To this Wilson Barrett replied (on 23 June 1887) in more specific terms, saying that he wished to renew the arrangement begun in 1886. Though he claimed that there would be very little profit since the close of the 1886/7 pantomime once three hundred pounds had been deducted for unpaid accounts and expenses, he did offer to hand over the profits that had accrued from March 1887 to the time of his writing. He further offered to inform the directors of his future engagements with travelling companies, but asserted that it would be 'obviously unfair' to deprive him of the results of his arrangements for the future.

Kingston felt that there had been an adequate profit left over from 1886 to pay Wilson Barrett's rent (the £1,200), but that Wilson Barrett was trying to conceal this, and to begin a renewal of the arrangement as though it had never existed. (This would mean that Wilson Barrett kept the £1,200 while the directors had to wait for their rent.)

Kingston made this clear in a letter to Wilson Barrett on 26 July 1887. The accounts up to the end of the 1886/7

pantomime clearly showed that there had been a surplus of £1,200, he said, which was in the hands of Messrs Pearpoint. If the arrangement during which this money had accrued had continued, the arrears of rent would have had first call on it. If Wilson Barrett wanted to renew the arrangement it was 'manifestly unfair' that this surplus should be 'kept out of view'.

It was the 'spirit and intention' of the arrangement, he went on, that 'after paying the ordinary working expenses of the theatre' the rent should have first consideration. 'Other obligations,' he said, now clearly had precedence.

Further, since the end of the 1886/7 pantomime there had been a profit of £644 which, minus the approximate three hundred pounds which Wilson Barrett claimed, left £206 10s. But two months rent had been deducted before this profit had been calculated, and since this had not been paid, that amount should be added to the profit, which, after allowing £137 10s. rent of the saloons which had been credited but not yet received, left a net profit for the period in which Wilson Barrett claimed that there was none of £623 3s. 4d. The £487 10s. then due for rent should have first claim on this amount, said Kingston. Wilson Barrett's offer to hand over the profits that had accrued since March was disingenuous, he implied, since there had been in fact a loss of roughly two hundred pounds in that period, and not a profit.

The directors would give due weight to Wilson Barrett's claim that it would be unfair to deprive him of the

results of his future engagements (as we have seen from the monthly accounts, Wilson Barrett's was one of the few companies that consistently made large takings at the box office) when their rent was secured, said Kingston, and the directors were not so much interested in his future engagements as those that he had made for the Grand Theatre.

Kingston finished emphatically with the statement that the board was not prepared to wait until the close of the next pantomime for settlement, and reminded Wilson Barrett of their proposal to find a new lessee.

The directors had adopted a strong negotiating position, and Wilson Barrett had to make some concession. Accordingly he wrote back on 15 August, offering to the directors:

'To pay by Thursday or Friday (if telegraphed to upon their receipt of this letter) a sum of five hundred pounds on condition that they would arrange to await the remainder of the amount of their rent until the pantomime - they taking as arranged the average monthly profits over expenses'.

After discussing this offer with several of the directors, Kingston telegraphed acceptance, saying 'Under the circumstances the directors desire to assist you'. Kingston received the five hundred pounds on 18 August.

However, Wilson Barrett still had difficulty in meeting his obligations under the arrangement to hand over the profits from the operation of the Grand Theatre to the company. At the end of the first month of this renewed

arrangement there had been a net profit of £67 18s. 9d., for which Kingston duly applied to Messrs Pearpoint. He wrote on 16 September, and sent a reminder on 27 September. On 6 October he wrote to Wilson Barrett saying that he had had no response from Messrs Pearpoint, and accordingly asked him to pay the money. Wilson Barrett replied that he would write to Messrs Pearpoint at once. On 14 October Kingston again wrote to Wilson Barrett to ask him if he had had any reply from Messrs Pearpoint. (On 1 November Kingston calculated that Wilson Barrett's rent arrears amounted to £1,054 3s. 4d.)

On 12 November Kingston wrote to Wilson Barrett once more saying that he had heard nothing of the £67 18s. 9d. But he could now add that there was no profit for the period ending 8 October (in fact there was a small loss, but he did not disclose this), though there had been a profit of £153 1s. for the period ending 5 November. Having deducted the £37 12s. 8d. Poor Rate (paid the previous week by Lee Anderson) there was now a balance of £183 7s. 1d. owing to the company.

Kingston still saw none of this money, and on 25 November he wrote to Wilson Barrett asking him to meet the directors in the afternoon of that day. Wilson Barrett again pleaded inability to pay, and asked that 'in order not to cripple him in the production of the coming pantomime' the directors should wait until the new year before demanding any money from him.

In a letter of 28 November the directors accepted this

on condition that Wilson Barrett should pay them £250 on 2 January 1888, and on every Monday thereafter up to and including 13 February. This would clear up the rent arrears up to that time.

Wilson Barrett telegraphed on 29 November to say that he accepted this arrangement, and thanked the directors for their consideration. The year ended amicably enough, for Wilson Barrett paid the first instalment of £250 several days early. Kingston acknowledged it on 31 December, and wished him the compliments of the season and a successful new year.

At the end of 1887 Wilson Barrett owed the company £795 3s. 2d. in arrears of rent.

Parenthetically, it is perhaps worth observing that the only other major item in the theatre company's correspondence in 1887 had to do with the hiring out of the proscenium, or 'drop' curtain. This was done in September to a Mr Goodricke, of the Cliff Bridge Company, The Spa, Scarborough, for a sum of five pounds. It may seem curious that the company was prepared to hire out what might seem to be a quite fundamental part of the theatre's equipment at a time of the year that was generally the theatre's most profitable and busiest (apart, of course, from the pantomime). However, Lee Anderson appears to have concurred with the arrangement, and this would seem to suggest that a much greater reliance was placed upon the act drop (the

painted scene of the ruins of Kirkstall Abbey) for beginning and ending scenes, than on the drop curtain itself. (Though this inference might seem at variance with the Yorkshire Post reviewer's frequent statements that actors were 'called before the curtain' at the ends of scenes or acts, and, of course, the division between the curtains would make it possible for the actor to slip out in front while the scenery behind was being changed, whereas the act drop would have had to be raised and lowered, leaving no masking of the scenery behind. Goodricke only hired the curtains for a few days, however, and perhaps this difficulty was temporarily overcome. The curtains were large - each forty feet high by twenty-six feet wide - and it is not stated what Goodricke used them for. He did not find them entirely satisfactory for his purpose, however, and he asked for a reduction in the hire fee on these grounds, though this application was turned down.)

Wilson Barrett gave up his management of the Princess's Theatre at the end of 1886, and toured in America in the early part of 1887. Thereafter, on his return, he began to tour the provinces more extensively than he had been doing, and visited the Grand Theatre on three occasions, but he had not introduced any new pieces into his repertoire. Otherwise the seasons at the Grand Theatre were made up in a way that continued to follow identified trends: there

were eleven and one half weeks of pantomime (an increase of one week on 1886), ten weeks of comic opera (which equalled the average for the years of Wilson Barrett's management, and thereby represented a recovery from comic opera's nadir in 1885 when only four weeks of it were included in the programme), two weeks of opera — given by the Carl Rosa Company — as there had been since 1883, a reduction in the number of weeks of dramas and comedies to twenty-six from thirty-three and one half in 1886, no weeks of panoramic or spectacular melodrama which had declined from its peak in 1883, and there was a decline in the number of returning productions from sixteen in 1886 to fourteen in 1887.

The pantomime ran until 12 March 1887. For its first four weeks in that year it made a profit of £1,480 12s. 8d. — takings from admission charges were £830 3s. 3d. in the first week, £973 3s. 3d. in the second, £1,119 6s. in the third, and £1,065 16s. 3d. in the fourth. The sale of programmes, books, and advertising space in them, brought in £18 5s. 2d. in the first week, £19 9s. 5d. in the second, £21 7s. 9d. in the third, and £18 10s. 8d. in the fourth. The theatre's expenses (which would primarily have been salaries, but also included £37 13s. 3d. allowed every week against the cost of preparation of scenery, costumes etc., and though incurred in the months prior to the pantomime not allowed as weekly expenditure then)

were £650 5s. 7d. in the first week, £677 17s. 4d. in the second, £633 15s. 7d. in the third, and £623 10s. 7d. in the fourth. Thus the theatre made a profit of £198 2s. 10d. in the first week, £314 15s. 4d. in the second, £506 18s. 2d. in the third, and £460 16s. 4d. in the fourth.

Clearly the third week (ending 22 January) was financially the most successful, and profits declined from there to a loss of £145 5s. 10d. in the pantomime's last week.

For the first week in February (the pantomime's sixth week) the receipts from admissions were £923 11s. 3d. For the rest of the month they were £931 15s. 6d. for the second week, £735 13s. 6d. for the third week, and £666 11s. for the fourth. In these weeks programmes, books, and advertising brought in £32 2s. 6d., £57 4s. 5d., £13 3s. 7d., and £44 13s. 5d. respectively. The theatre's expenses were £679 19s., £642 11s. 7d., £645 1s. 10d., and £642 5s. 10d. for each of the four weeks, £75 5s. 5d. for the Poor Rate deducted in the third week, and £92 6s. 11d. deducted in the fourth week for Improvement Rate. As in January, £57 13s. 3d. was allowed each week to cover the cost of the preparation of the pantomime.

Weekly profits were therefore £275 14s. 9d., £326 8s. 4d., £103 15s. 3d., and £68 18s. 7d., making a total for the four weeks of £774 16s. 11d.

For the two weeks that the pantomime played in March receipts were £521 13s. 9d., and £400 2s. 6d., augmented by £19 8s. 4d., and £19 9s. 9d. brought in by the sale of

programmes, books, and advertising space. Expenses were £614 11s. 10d., and £564 18s. 1d. Thus for the first of those weeks the theatre made a loss of £73 9s. 9d., and for the second, a loss of £145 5s. 10d.

At the end of the run of the pantomime there was still an expected £120 to come in from the sale of advertising on the curtain, and in the programmes, and so the total profit at the close of the pantomime was calculated as £1,766 10s. 1d. The expenses of mounting the pantomime had been met, and Wilson Barrett's arrears of rent had been paid.

The pantomime was followed on 14 March by a return visit of Violet Melnotte's company in 'Erminie'.¹

The performance of 'Erminie' on the Monday night was greatly enjoyed by a 'fairly good' audience, and the Yorkshire Post reviewer regarded the piece as a proven success, though he attributed this more to the quality of its 'amusing episodes', and 'gags' interpolated by the actors, than to the music.²

The company also gave the first performance of a new farcical comedy, 'The Barrister', by George Manville Fenn and G.H. Farnley, as a matinee on Saturday, 19 March. This was watched by a 'fairly large' audience which enjoyed it sufficiently to call the company at the end of each act, and the authors (for whom Violet Melnotte had to deputise) at the end of the play. The reviewer thought that this augured well for the success of the play, which

he thought 'sparkling', 'invested with briskness and humour', and suffering only minor blemishes. The company had been unusually well rehearsed by Tom Paulton, for this first performance went surprisingly smoothly.

The plot of the piece was complicated. It was founded on a device reminiscent of 'The Alchemist'. The servants of a Captain Walker let his house while he was away (with his regiment) to a barrister who was appearing locally in an important case.

The barrister's wife was not with him, and he drove home one night with a young lady. In the process a bag full of documents on which his case was built was exchanged with the young lady's.

The action warmed up when the barrister's wife arrived but was turned away by the servants who took her to be a potentially troublesome mistress. Then the owner of the house sent a letter to his fiancée giving her instructions for his servants against his imminent return. The barrister's wife took this fiancée to be her husband's mistress, and the fiancée was led to believe that her husband-to-be was already married.

The young lady with the wrong bag then advertised in the press for the barrister, and her fiancée (an elderly major who was the barrister's father-in-law) thus gained grounds for suspecting her of faithlessness.

Complications multiplied though needless to say the confusion was eventually (after a move to London) satisfactorily unravelled.

Receipts for the week were £287 10s. Programmes etc. brought in a further £5 13s. 2d. The company's fifty per cent share was £143 15s., and the theatre's expenses were £145 1s. 7d., leaving the theatre a profit of £5 6s. 7d.

'Erminie' and 'The Barrister' were followed on 21 March by another visit of the Compton Comedy Company which gave 'She Stoops to Conquer' on Monday, 'Wild Oats' on Tuesday, 'The Rivals' on Wednesday, 'David Garrick' on Thursday, 'The School for Scandal' on Friday, and 'The Road to Ruin' on Saturday.³ The reviewer thought that the performance on the Monday night deserved a much better audience than it got, though those few people who did attend frequently applauded the performance which they 'greatly relished'.⁴ Compton forsook his usual role of Tony Lumpkin in 'She Stoops to Conquer', and appeared as Charles Marlow - a part which the reviewer thought suited him perfectly.

Receipts for the week were £310 10s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in a further £10 19s. 10d., while the company's share (after £40 guaranteed to the theatre) was £186 5s. 1d., and the theatre's expenses were £143 8s. 7d. Thus the theatre made a loss for the week of £8 3s. 4d.

The Compton Comedy Company was succeeded by Harry Monkhouse and his 'specially selected company' in J. Wilton Jones's 'enormously successful farcical comedy', 'Larks'.⁵ This was a new piece which had been touring in

the provinces for some time before it came to the Grand Theatre (a fact that the reviewer registered).

It revolved round a cathedral organist, Dr Lambe, who in his youth had written a tragic opera which was not performed, but which, in the first act set in his drawing room, the doctor discovered was to be put on as a burlesque (entitled 'Julia Sneezer') at the 'Frivolity Theatre'.

The second act was set in the theatre's green room where the piece was in production. Lambe was prevailed upon to play the part of Caractacus, and he formed the butt of humour of the piece, 'cutting a sorry figure' dressed as an ancient warrior.

Harry Monkhouse played this principal role, and kept the audience laughing 'uncontrollably', but for the short moments when he was off the stage, the piece flagged in the reviewer's opinion.⁶

Receipts for the week were £229 16s., and programmes etc. brought in £8 7s. 5d. The company's forty-five per cent share was £103 8s. 2d., while the theatre's expenses were £182 8s. 7d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £47 13s. 4d.

'Larks' was followed on 4 April by C.H. Hawtreys' company in 'Harvest'.⁷ This play was written by H. Hamilton, and first performed at the Princess's Theatre, London, where it had a 'successful' run.

The plot hinged upon differences between marriage laws in Scotland and England. Because of them Noel Musgrave was able to renounce his wife and five year old son, after their love had suffered the attrition of five years of poverty. This was established in a prologue which was set in Wales. The first act of the play took place in Ireland, thirty years later. There Musgrave lived, knighted, and married to a rich widow. They had a daughter.

But Mrs Musgrave has also become wealthy from a bequest, and she went to Ireland also (under an assumed name) with her son. The son and daughter fell in love, and eventually the parents met at a picnic. Musgrave, however, though longing for his former wife and son, did not recognise them. And in fact he went off to England to begin a search.

Mrs Musgrave did recognise her erstwhile husband, and in his absence plotted a revenge. When he returned, by then apprised of the facts, he was presented with his son's request to marry the daughter and he was delighted to allow it. But Mrs Musgrave forbade the marriage, having extracted an oath of obedience from her son to secure the success of the plan.

The rest of the play was devoted to reconciling the parents so that eventually it might have a happy ending.

The reviewer thought that though the author dealt with a hackneyed theme, he had not treated it in a hackneyed way, and that the play was full of freshness and 'interest'.⁸ The dialogue was of a sustained excellence, he said, the dramatic situations well created, and the play was never

commonplace or vulgar. The piece was 'splendidly' staged with scenes of 'The Glen', 'Rossmoyne', 'Connemara', and 'The Ruins of Castle Bally-na-hough' which specially merited the reviewer's commendation.

Receipts for the week were £162 5s. 6d., and £13 5s. 2d. was brought in by programmes etc. The company's fifty per cent share was £81 2s. 9d., and the theatre's expenses were £147 5s. 7d. Thus the theatre made a loss on the week of £52 17s. 8d.

'Harvest' was followed by William Calder and C.H. Beryl's company in a new American drama, 'Shadows of a Great City'.⁹ This piece was written by Mr L.R. Sherwell, and was first performed in Britain in Glasgow in March 1887, when it met with 'considerable success'.

The play's five acts spanned a period of over fifteen years, and told a story 'of the usual sensational order'.¹⁰ It was 'a popular admixture of crime, romance, mystery, love, bad and good fortune, the innocent suffering for the guilty, and each reaping his due reward in the end'.

The reviewer considered the most successful situation of the play to be a tableau at the end of the fourth act where an escaped convict (who was of course innocent) was arrested in the presence of his 'young girl-love' who, learning that she was heiress to a million dollars, vowed to devote her fortune to establishing the convict's innocence.

The piece was well mounted with 'pretty and realistic' scenery by R.S. Smythe and R.C. Durant, and mechanical effects.

The play had a large 'holiday' audience, and receipts were £458 13s. Programmes etc. brought in a further £20 8s. 6d. The company's share was £209 6s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses were £190 17s. Thus the theatre made a profit on the week of £78 18s.

'Shadows of a Great City' was followed on 18 April by Lingard and Van Biene's company in 'Pepita'.¹¹ This was a new comic opera by Charles Lecocq with a freely adapted English libretto by Mostyn Tedde, and replaced 'Falka' which it was asserted, was to be withdrawn after thousands of performances.

The plot was concerned with the rival attempts of two generals to put their own protégés upon the throne of the Canary Isles. Innes, the daughter of the former king by a peasant woman, and the foster-sister of Pepita, was championed by one general, while Prince Guzman was championed by the other. The latter was in possession of the castle.

In the second act Innes's champion hatched a plot that required Innes and Pepita to enter the castle surreptitiously. Their husbands found out and followed them, but as their presence was embarrassing to the plan they were locked in a cupboard. Prince Guzman's champion detected the plot, but Pepita donned the royal robes and proclaimed herself

queen, and was arrested by the villains of the piece, thereby allowing Innes to escape.

Eventually Innes was proclaimed Queen at the annual bull fight, her general judging that this was a propitious occasion to make the attempt, and finally the opera was brought to a proper conclusion.

Receipts for the week were £510 14s. 6d., and programmes etc. brought in a further £8 14s. 3d. The company's sixty per cent share was £306 8s. 7d., and the theatre's expenses were £218 7s. 1d. (this included £15 13s. 4d. rates). Thus the theatre made a loss of £5 6s. 11d. on the week.

'Pepita' was followed on 25 April by Fred W. Sidney and his 'selected' company in Dion Boucicault's new play, 'The Jilt'.¹²

The subject of this piece (which the author asserted in a programme note would be his last) was horse racing. Boucicault's treatment of the theme did not altogether please the reviewer who thought that 'a female trainer of horses, with a daughter capable of mounting an unmanageable brute that has just thrown its rider and winning the race' was difficult to accept.¹³ The audience, however, felt no such objection, and received the play with an enthusiasm that reached its highest pitch when, at the end of the fourth act, two horses rushed on stage.

Despite his reservations the reviewer thought that the play had a greater proportion of Boucicault's 'fresh',

'witty', and 'never dull' dialogue to incident than the author's earlier pieces, though he did not think that 'The Jilt' would attain the success of 'London Assurance', 'The Colleen Bawn', or 'The Shaughraun'.

Receipts for the week were £139 8s. 6d., and programmes etc. brought in a further £12 4s. 3d. The company's fifty per cent share was £69 14s. 3d., and the theatre's expenses were £145 1s. 4d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £63 2s. 10d. on the week.

'The Jilt' was followed (on 2 May) by 'Turned Up', a 'new and highly successful original melodramatic farcical comedy' by Mark Melford (who was also the author of the one-act 'Blackberries' which began the evening). It was performed by Willie Edouin's company.¹⁴

'Turned Up' was based on the complicated matrimonial relations of a Captain Medway and his wife: Mrs Medway, believing that her husband had died at sea, married an undertaker named Bones, while the Captain, recovering after a long illness, was brought to believe that he had married a negress. Thereafter husbands and wives continually turned up at inconvenient moments to everyone's consternation, and, in fact, the rest of the piece seemed principally devoted to trying to keep the two chief characters apart.¹⁵ In the end the negress married Mr Bones.

Receipts for the week were £226 1s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £9 0s. 8d. The company's fifty per

cent share was £113 0s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses were £155 8s. 4d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £33 7s. 2d. on the week.

'Turned Up' was followed by a return visit of Horace Lingard and Van Biene's company in 'Pepita' which they gave for the first half of the week, and 'Falka' which they gave for the second. The advertising claimed that there had been a 'wonderful' demand for seats (the Monday night audience filled nearly all parts of the theatre), and warned that the company was booked up until after the pantomime, so that this would be its last visit to Leeds for over twelve months.

Receipts were £468 3s. 9d., and programmes etc. brought in a further £9 12s. 3d. The company's sixty per cent share was £280 18s. 2d., and the theatre's expenses were £169 5s. 11d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £27 11s. 11d. on the week.

'Pepita' and 'Falka' were followed on 16 May by a return visit of Captain Bainbridge's company in 'The Beggar Student'.¹⁶ Receipts were £341 1s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £8 1s. 9d. The company's fifty-five per cent share was £187 11s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses were £183 4s. 5d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £21 13s. 2d. on the week.

'The Beggar Student' was followed by another comic opera,

'Dorothy'. This was a new work by Alfred Cellier, with a libretto by B.C. Stephenson, and though the reviewer had some reservations about the amount of comic opera that was being presented at the Grand Theatre at that time, he thought that no one could be other than grateful for the opportunity to see this one.¹⁷

Dorothy was the daughter of a squire in Kent, and the piece opened in a hop garden where the pickers were celebrating the end of their harvest. Dorothy's father had decided that she should marry his nephew and heir, Geoffrey Wilder, but Dorothy had rebelled against this idea, and she and her cousin Lydia had vowed never to marry.

Into the celebrations came Wilder and his friend Sherwood. Wilder was fleeing from London and the Sheriff's Officer who was pursuing him for his debts. Dorothy and Lydia recognised these two, but the process was not mutual as the girls were disguised as rustic maidens. There was some amorous bye-play, and the girls gave the men rings which they asked them to keep safe until the following day as a test of their fidelity.

The Sheriff's Officer caught up with Wilder, but the latter saved him from a ducking which the villagers wished to give him, and a friendship resulted from which sprang a plot to extract the money that Wilder owed from his uncle (the squire).

The second act was set in the squire's Hall. There the Sheriff's Officer broke into a dancing party and declared that he was the Duke of Berkshire's secretary, and that

the Duke had met with an accident in his carriage nearby. The Duke and his companion (Wilder and Sherwood in disguise) were welcomed into the dance. Wilder and Sherwood did not recognise Dorothy and Lydia, dressed now as befitted their station, though the girls were more perceptive. Dorothy and Lydia set out to coax each other's rings from the two men, and in this they succeeded.

After everyone had retired to bed, the Sheriff's Officer, Wilder, and Sherwood staged a robbery of the 'Duke'. The squire was so upset that a noble should be robbed under his roof that he offered him a loan to cover the amount that he claimed to have lost. With this money Wilder was able to pay the Sheriff's Officer, and in the last act the plot was resolved into a happy ending.¹⁸

Receipts were £406 16s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £9 17s. 5d. The company's share was £224 1s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses were £196 7s. 4d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £3 15s. 5d. on the week.

'Dorothy' was followed (on 30 May) by a return visit of O'Grady's company in 'Famine'. It attracted a 'holiday' audience which crowded pit and gallery, but left the other parts of the house but thinly patronised. Receipts for the week were £355 11s., and the programmes etc. brought in a further £7 11s. 3d. The company's share was £137 15s. 6d. while the theatre's expenses were £186 17s. 4d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £38 9s. 5d.

'Famine' was followed on 6 June by Luigi Lablanche and company in a new play, 'Blind Justice', by E.C. Bertrand.¹⁹ It was 'an old tale told in a new manner',²⁰ its mainspring being a 'striking piece' of circumstantial evidence that wrongly convicted an innocent man. The play was saved from excessive sensationalism by the 'high tone' of Luigi Lablanche's 'good parson', the Rev. Gilbert Glenthorpe. In the reviewer's opinion the piece had a favourable reception from a 'fairly good' house, though the receipts were only £95 18s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in a further £6 18s. 5d., while the company's share was £27 19s. 3d., and the theatre's expenses were £158 9s. Thus the theatre made a loss of £83 11s. 4d. on the week.

'Blind Justice' was followed on 13 June by Wilson Barrett, Miss Eastlake, and the Princess's Theatre company, who, returning from their American tour, gave 'Claudian' on Monday and Saturday, 'Hamlet' on Tuesday, 'Clito' on Wednesday and Thursday, and 'The Lady of Lyons' and 'Chatterton' on Friday.²¹

The prices of admission to the dress circle and the stalls were raised to four shillings, and the upper circle, reserved, to three shillings, though other prices were unchanged. However, this did not seem to deter an audience which crowded the theatre for 'Claudian' on the Monday night.

Wilson Barrett's interpretation of the part had not changed, though the reviewer thought that his performance

had grown in power and intensity.²² Similarly his performance as Hamlet, presented to an above average audience on the Tuesday night, remained 'picturesque', and endowed with 'grace and finish' of 'action and elocution'.²³

The chief attraction of the week, however, was 'Clito' for which there was a full house. The reviewer thought that Wilson Barrett and Miss Eastlake infused an earnestness of purpose into their parts in this piece, and though he claimed to be unable to say which of them 'carried off the palm', he expended more of his brief notice in a description of Miss Eastlake's Helle than he did on Wilson Barrett's Clito.²⁴

Wilson Barrett's melodramatic roots were shown in his performance as Claude Melnotte in Lord Lytton's 'The Lady of Lyons' (given to a crowded house on the Friday night, despite a temperature in the theatre of eighty-five degrees).²⁵

In this piece Wilson Barrett was 'vigorous, finished', and 'consistent', and he was particularly successful in showing his 'earnest, undying passion' for the woman he misled, but for whom 'he was prepared to yield himself up body and soul'. His 'pure affection ... charmed away all thoughts ... of deceit or misdoing', and he was strong both in 'tracing remorse through its various gradations, and in the noble resignation he showed in opting for the soldier's life in the hope of dispelling 'the reproach of his lowly birth'.

Miss Eastlake, too, gave a powerful performance, and was 'all that could be hoped or desired' as the 'high-born, pure-hearted' Pauline. She was particularly strong in showing the effect that the sudden knowledge of her bridegroom's peasant origins had upon her.

However, the reviewer saved his most intense praise for Wilson Barrett's performance in 'Chatterton' in which 'with singular realism and vivid colouring ... Wilson Barrett showed the dreadful picture of the young poet starving to death and finally poisoning himself in his lone garrett'.²⁶

At the end of the Friday night's performance Wilson Barrett made a short speech in which he announced that his tour would end on 9 July, and that he would then return to Leeds to give a single performance on 11 July as a benefit performance for a Leeds artist, Mr Fountain, who was ill.

Receipts for Wilson Barrett's week were £632 16s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £12 18s. The company's share was £421 17s. 4d., and the theatre's expenses were £240 7s. 4d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £16 10s. 8d. on the week.

Wilson Barrett was followed on 20 June by D'Oyly Carte's company²⁷ in Gilbert and Sullivan's latest comic opera, 'Ruddigore', which had first been produced in London five months previously.

The reviewer thought that the title of this piece was striking for its coarseness, and went on to regret that Gilbert should have found it necessary to rely upon an 'old and unsuccessful idea' for the mainspring of the second act, which he thought had come from Gilbert's 'Ages Ago'.²⁸ In mitigation he supposed that this early piece (which apparently had 'fallen flat') was one that many of Gilbert's contemporary admirers would not have seen.

Moreover, Gilbert's 'ingenious satire' was, in the reviewer's opinion, 'a little beyond the comprehension of the casual hearer', though he could not praise Sullivan's music enough.

Receipts for the week were £367 13s. 6d., and the programmes etc. brought in a further £23 12s. The company's fifty-five per cent share was £202 4s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses were £194 11s. 3d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £5 10s. 3d.

'Ruddigore' was followed on 27 June by Charles Arnold and company in the new 'Musical Comedy Drama', 'Hans, the Boatman'.²⁹ This piece was written by Clay M. Green, who was part author of 'My Sweetheart', in which Charles Arnold, who played the German-Swiss hero of this play, had played the German Toni. There were more than passing similarities between the two plays, and it seems clear that the one was written to exploit the success of the other.

'Hans, the Boatman' was first performed at the Sheffield Theatre Royal a little over three months prior to this visit to the Grand Theatre, and was due to transfer to London the week after it. The reviewer thought that this was probably the first instance of an American play having its first production in England.³⁰

The character of the title was 'humble, simple', and 'indolent', barely making a living at his trade in 'an American watering-place'. He spent most of his time 'romping with a big dog and all the children of the neighbourhood'. He was beloved by a 'rough and ready ... country beauty', Jeffie Thursby, but loved the daughter of a rich New York merchant, Gladys Farewell. He married the latter (whom her father therefore cast off) and they lived for six years with hardly enough income to keep the wolf from the door.

At the end of this period Hans decided that he must turn over a new leaf. He lit a fire to burn the toys that he had made for the children, in order to remove temptation, and then just as he heard that his wife had eloped with a former lover, he was blinded by the explosion of a powder horn that his young son had put in the grate.

Gladys, however, was merely guilty of indiscretion, and eventually the two were reconciled, Hans's sight returned, and Jeffie Thursby married a Naval Lieutenant.

The reviewer thought that the large part that children took in the play gave it an especial charm, and found that

the play throughout appealed to 'the tenderest human feelings'. A large audience gave the piece an enthusiastic reception.

'Hans, the Boatman' was followed on 4 July by Rollo Balmain, Sarah Mignon, and 'London company' in 'Secrets of the Police'.³¹ This was an untypical work of the dramatically prolific (and adventurous) Mark Melford, and it was given a favourable reception on its first production at Leeds, by an audience that 'lacked something in numbers' - owing, in the reviewer's opinion, to the heat.³²

The piece was sensational, and the reviewer remarked that it did not, therefore, always give a faithful picture of constabulary life and practice. Its principal ingredients were 'a police superintendent, his scamp of a son, a woman's devotion, the eccentricities of a well-intentioned victim of sunstroke, a betting man, a clergyman, and four acts well sprinkled with thrilling situations'.

The main sensational situation, which motivated the action of the rest of the play, came at the end of the first act when the superintendent's son 'slew the betting man after one of the most desperate and prolonged encounters that ever roused popular applause'.

'Secrets of the Police' ran from Monday to Friday, and on Saturday, 9 July Sarah Bernhardt, who had then returned

from a tour of America (reportedly one hundred thousand pounds the richer, said the reviewer³³) appeared in 'Fedora'.³⁴ She had a house that was but thinly attended in the upper circle and balcony, though the dress circle, its tier of boxes, the stalls, and the pit were filled. The reviewer attributed this less than crowded house to the hotness of the weather (as was his wont) and, perhaps more probably, to the increase in the prices of admission — though neither of these factors seem to have had much influence on the audiences that Wilson Barrett had recently drawn.

The performance began half an hour late, and though Sidney Jones's orchestra filled in with 'The Siege of Rochelle', and 'Patience', the audience was impatient, and there was much stamping and clapping.

The reviewer thought that Laura Villiers's performance of the piece had enabled the audience to get an understanding of it, and despite the delay in starting Sarah Bernhardt soon had the audience's sympathies. Her cry of anguish on discovering Vladimir dead went to every heart, said the reviewer; her burst of passion that closed act two brought enthusiastic cheers; her impassioned appeal to Loris not to leave her, throwing herself across his path, brought down hearty cheers.

Something of her technique in working the audience's feelings to this pitch of intensity is revealed in the mild surprise that the reviewer expressed at the pace with which

she played her final tragic denouement. She snatched a poison phial from her bosom with lightening rapidity, swallowed it, confessing all the wrongs she had done Loris, then died upon the couch, and rolled onto the floor. The reviewer seemed taken aback at the speed with which she got over the production and swallowing of the poison, but this very speed, compared with the relatively slow consequences of the action which wound down to a final tableau, seems likely to have contributed to the excitement that the audience was led to.

Sarah Bernhardt brought the season to its end save for the single 'testimonial benefit' performance that Wilson Barrett returned to give for Joseph Fountain. This performance attracted, in the reviewer's opinion, the largest audience that had been seen at the Grand Theatre since the close of the pantomime.³⁵ Nearly every seat was filled with the exception of the gallery.

Wilson Barrett gave a 'triple bill' - one that had been one of his most successful programmes on his tour of America. The evening began with 'A Clerical Error' in which Wilson Barrett played the Rev. Richard Capel, and this seemed to the reviewer to be the most interesting item on the programme. Austin Melford then took the principal role in 'The Colour Sergeant', and the evening concluded with 'Chatterton' in which Wilson Barrett played the poet.

After the performance Wilson Barrett made a brief speech of thanks (Joseph Fountain was too ill to attend), which he closed by saying that he would return to Leeds on 19 September 1887 if he was not engaged to play in London. (In fact he was to return on 21 November.)

The theatre remained closed for the rest of the week, and for the following two weeks. It was advertised to reopen on Monday, 1 August with Mr Douglas's London company in 'A Dark Secret', but owing to some misunderstanding with the company 'over dates' the theatre had to remain closed for that week too, and did not in fact reopen until 8 August, when Miss Hayes and her 'specially selected' company appeared in 'the Olympic success', 'The Golden Band'.³⁶

'The Golden Band' was written by Henry Herman and the Rev. Freeman Wills. It had first been performed two months prior to this visit, at the Olympic Theatre, London, and was in the second week of its provincial tour. Herman's influence seemed strong in the development and construction of the play, thought the reviewer, and there were some 'noticeable similarities' with 'The Silver King'.³⁷

The villain of the piece impersonated a clergyman, and married the object of his designs to an army officer who then had to go off to fight in the Zulu war. When the impostor revealed that he was not a proper clergyman great consternation ensued, but this was eventually set right by the discovery that the marriage was valid as long as the bona fides of the contracting parties was beyond dispute.

The reviewer thought that the play was well mounted, but that some of the acting might have been better.

Receipts for the week were £134 15s. 6d., and the programmes etc. brought in a further £1 12s. 2d. The company's share was £60 13s., and the theatre's expenses were £158 3s. 11d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £82 9s. 3d.

'The Golden Band' was followed on 15 August by a visit of the Vokes family who appeared in 'the two-act musical comedy', 'In Camp', preceded by the 'screaming comedy', 'Domestic Jealousy', all the week with the exception of Friday, when 'Rough Diamond' and 'Fun in the Fog' were given.³⁸

The reviewer thought that 'In Camp' was structureless and devoid of plot, but that it contained enough songs and choruses to show off the company's talents.³⁹

Receipts for the week were £291 3s., and programmes etc. brought in £19 12s. 7d. The company's share was £145 16s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses were £157 16s. 11d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £7 2s. 2d.

The Vokes family were followed on 22 August by Miss Wadman, Arthur Roberts, and the Avenue Theatre company in the comic opera 'Indiana'.⁴⁰ The piece was composed by Audran, and had a libretto by H.B. Farnie.

Its basis was, in the reviewer's opinion, a plot that

was far from original, the music uninspired, and the dialogue only relieved by the 'gagging' of the actors, whose all round excellence succeeded in making the piece work despite its catalogue of deficiencies.⁴¹

The plot may not have been original, but it was certainly complex. Matt o' the Mill married Nan, who was pretty, but shrewish, and for their wedding feast Matt shot some of Lord Dayrell's partridges. The game was on the point of being eaten when Dayrell, Lady Prue (his sister), and Sir Mulberry Mullitt made an appearance. Dayrell learned of the poaching, and decreed that the bride must seek his pardon.

In view of her character this was unthinkable, but Lady Prue's American cousin, Indiana, and the latter's maid, Annette, arrived (disguised as cavaliers), and Indiana volunteered to impersonate Nan. She had an ulterior motive: she was betrothed to Philip Jevraulx (though they had never seen each other) and since he was disguised as a steward in Dayrell's mansion, she hoped by this stratagem to see him.

Philip came to escort Indiana (now disguised as Nan) to the mansion, and the two fell in love - in mutual ignorance of real identity. Indiana impressed Dayrell, but Lady Prue conceived alternative marriage plans for her (taking her to be the cavalier of the first disguise). Sir Mulberry Mullitt meanwhile, mistakenly thought that he scented a Jacobite plot. He solicited the aid of Philip

(who in fact really did have some Jacobite connexion), and the latter agreed.

The scene then reverted to the mill where Matt found Nan disconsolate in the chimney corner, Sir Mulberry Mullitt arrived to find the cavaliers whom he suspected of being Jacobites to have disappeared, and Dayrell, in pursuit of the girl he took to be Nan, was furious because he could not find her.

In the midst of the resultant confusion, Indiana arrived as herself to meet her betrothed whom she had summoned by letter, and was able to untangle the web of confusion.

Receipts for the week were £408 19s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £11 10s. The company's share was £225 6s., while the theatre's expenses were £153 0s. 9d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £42 2s. 3d.

'Indiana' was followed on 29 August by 'the enormously successful Operatic Burlesque', 'Monte Cristo Jnr'. The company was that of Nelly Farren, Mr E.J. Lennon, and Fred Leslie,⁴² and the piece, essentially burlesque, had, in the reviewer's opinion, little more than its title in common with the story on which it purported to be based.⁴³

Receipts were £594 17s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £8 8s. 6d. The company's share was £361 13s., while the theatre's expenses were £172 15s. 7d. (The first recorded expenditure on the 1887/8 pantomime - £27 11s. - was not allowed as part of these expenses.) Thus the theatre made a profit of £68 16s. 11d. on the week.

'Monte Cristo Jnr' was followed on 5 September by the 'farewell visit' of Hawtrey's company in 'The Private Secretary'.⁴⁴ (It was preceded still by 'Sugar and Cream'.) The piece had now had over 2650 performances, and though it still maintained much of its popularity, the reviewer thought that it had lost some of its piquancy, and some of the jokes seemed to fall flat.⁴⁵

Receipts for the week were £288 11s. 6d., and programmes etc. brought in a further £18 10s. The company's share was £144 5s. 9d., while the theatre's expenses were £141 9s. 1d. (£18 7s. 7d. was recorded as expenditure on the pantomime, but not allowed in these expenses.) Thus the theatre made a profit of £21 6s. 8d.

'The Private Secretary' was followed on 12 September by a return visit of 'Sister Mary' given by Miss Lingard, Frank Cooper, and 'London company'. The reviewer found little new to say about the play, but he did observe that those who liked thoroughly 'just' resolutions to plays would find this one unsatisfactory, since Rose's suffering did not seem to be adequately compensated.⁴⁶ Indeed, it was eventually brought to a tragic culmination, and the play was pathetic in that it was an example of 'the unsolved problem of every day'.

Though the play was advertised as having been a great success on its previous visit to Leeds, the public did not seem stimulated to attend by the 'unsolved problem' and

receipts were only £226 13s. 6d. Programmes etc. brought in a further £9 0s. 2d., while the company's share was £111 0s. 5d., and the theatre's expenses were £141 12s. 1d. (£13 10s. 7d. was spent on the pantomime but not allowed in this). Thus the theatre made a loss of £16 18s. 10d. on the week.

'Sister Mary' was followed on 19 September by Charles Warner's company in a new play, 'Held by the Enemy' (it was preceded by 'The Conjugal Lesson').⁴⁷

'Held by the Enemy' was written by an American, William Gillette, and was set in the American Civil War. It was one of the exceptional American plays to find favour in Britain, and it had first been produced in England at the Princess's Theatre, London, thereafter transferring to the Vaudeville Theatre. It was still running in London when Charles Warner's touring company brought it to the Grand Theatre.

The plot was relatively simple. Rachel McCreery was the daughter of an 'aristocratic' Southerner, and she was engaged to her cousin, Gordon Hayne, who was serving in the Southern Army. Rachel, her sister Susan, and a maiden aunt (the only three women in the piece) were alone in the McCreery residence when it was surrounded by the Northern army. Colonel Prescott, who led this force, offered the women his protection, was struck with their courage, and eventually his admiration turned to (a reciprocated) love for Rachel. At the moment when Prescott was declaring

his passion to Rachel, Hayne, 'having forced his way . through the enemy's lines disguised as a soldier of the Confederate army, appeared on the scene. He was at once arrested, court-martialled, and sentenced to death.

Rachel pleaded earnestly for his life, and Prescott endeavoured to prevent the execution. Touched by his rival's generosity, Hayne, on the brink of acquittal, confessed himself a spy. He was confined at head quarters, and when the prison wall was blown down in an engagement, he was prevented from escaping by Prescott. There was a struggle in which Hayne was shot, and he was taken to hospital.

He was reported dead, and arrangements made to remove his body through the Northern lines. The audience was made confident that this was but a stratagem, but when the brigade surgeon, suspecting such a ruse, insisted on examining the body, he discovered it to be genuinely dead. (Hayne had died from shock while the escape plans were being put into effect.) The pallid face of the dead officer was exposed before the audience, and the 'daring originality' of this twist in the plot, and the 'realistic' manner of its exposition, produced a powerful and exciting climax to the fourth act.⁴⁸ Thus in the fifth act, Rachel, relieved of her obligation to Hayne, could respond to Prescott's overtures with conventional propriety.

Unlike most contemporary melodramas, said the reviewer, this play afforded some scope to at least half a dozen

actors, and was of the best of melodramatic form, though he accused one of the actors of 'ranting a little'.

Receipts for the week were £307 4s. 6d., and programmes etc. brought in a further £10 17s. The company's share was £168 19s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses were £159 4s. 6d. (£9 2s. was recorded as spent on the pantomime). Thus the theatre made a loss of £10 2s. 6d.

'Held by the Enemy' was followed on 26 September by a return visit of the D'Oyly Carte company in 'Ruddigore'.⁴⁹ The reviewer conceded that this comic opera improved with acquaintance,⁵⁰ and receipts for the week were £380 15s., programmes etc. bringing in a further £14 14s. The company's share was £209 8s. 3d., while the theatre's expenses were £177 0s. 9d. (in addition £29 8s. 9d. was spent on the pantomime). Thus the theatre made a profit of £9.

'Ruddigore' was followed on 3 October by another returning comic opera, 'Dorothy'. There had been two substitutions of actors who played major roles in Henry Leslie's company (Mr Phillis-Tomes for Mr Redfern-Hollins, and Frank Thornton for Harry Fischer), but the reviewer⁵¹ thought that this was no great impairment. The piece had now been played over three hundred times, and received a 'hearty' welcome at the Grand Theatre.

Receipts for the week were £503 11s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £9 9s. 8d. The company's share

was £302 2s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses (not including £16 1s. 9d. spent on the pantomime) were £190 15s. 3d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £20 2s. 11d.

'Dorothy' was followed on 10 October by a return visit of Willie Edouin's company in 'Turned Up'. There had been several replacements in the company (Charles S. Fawcett had taken Mr G.H. Harker's role, and George Mallett and Mary Wolgar Mellon were also new to it), but the reviewer thought that this was 'an accession of strength' rather than a detraction.⁵²

Receipts for the week were £200 11s., and programmes etc. brought in a further £9 19s. The company's share was £100 5s. 6d., while the theatre's expenses (not including £12 16s. 5d. spent on the pantomime) were £158 14s. 6d. Thus the theatre made a loss of £48 10s.

'Turned Up' was followed on 17 October by a return visit of 'Monte Cristo Jnr', for which the company was mostly unchanged, with Nelly Farren still the principal actress. The burlesque's popularity was little abated, and receipts for the week were £413 17s. Programmes etc. brought in a further £11 13s. 3d., while the company's share was £248 6s., and the theatre's expenses (not including £42 14s. 1d. spent on the pantomime) were £174 1s. 8d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £3 2s. 7d.

'Monte Cristo Jnr' was followed on 24 October by the

annual visit of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, which gave two weeks of performances, introducing one new opera, and two fresh ones to the Leeds audience. In the first week 'Carmen' was given on Monday, 'Nordisa' on Tuesday, 'Galatea' on Wednesday, 'Masaniello' on Thursday, 'Mignon' on Friday, 'Carmen' as a matinee on Saturday, and 'The Bohemian Girl' on Saturday evening.

The new works were 'Nordisa', 'Galatea', and 'Masaniello'. 'Nordisa' was composed by Frederick Corder whom Carl Rosa had commissioned to write it. The plot was taken from an old French melodrama, and this had been turned into a 'romantic light opera ... such as Wagner recommended all beginners to write'⁵³ (this was Corder's first opera, and he announced his indebtedness to Wagner in an author's preface).

The work was set in Norway where Nordisa, a young shepherdess, was conducted with ritual solemnity to a mountain hut where she must keep a solitary vigil over the cattle until spring. Count Oscar, who was bound to marry Mina, his cousin (and Nordisa's foster-sister), by an oath extracted by his dying father, was in love with Nordisa, and scaled the mountain to bid her farewell. He was about to leave the hut when a sudden storm snowed them in, and there they were incarcerated until spring.

The injury to Nordisa's reputation was repaired when it was discovered that Nordisa and Mina were confused as babies. Thus Oscar could marry Nordisa in fulfilment of his oath, and Mina could marry a lieutenant for whom, all along, she had harboured some affection.

Victor Masse's 'Galatea' (his first opera) had its initial production in Paris in 1852, but was not performed in Britain until 1887 when it was given in Bristol in September. In its original form it had only two acts, and no chorus. In order to suitably extend the work for this British performance, Carl Rosa had added a third act taken from Massé's last opera, 'Cleopatra' – despite stylistic inconsistencies that were not lost upon the reviewer.⁵⁴ (However, he had no doubt that some such extension of the work was necessary.)

The music was 'of the lighter style of French opera', and the plot differed from the received version of the story (exemplified in Gilbert's play) by making Galatea something of a venal coquette.⁵⁵

'Masaniello' was a 'grand opera' by Auber (its original title was 'La Muette de Portici'). Carl Rosa's performance was a revival of this work which, in the reviewer's opinion, may have owed its many years of neglect to the fact that Auber and his librettists, Scribe and Delavigne, had overcome their lack of a prima donna by making the heroine a mute, and giving the role in the original production to a 'clever pantomimist'.⁵⁶

The third act closed with a scene at the barricades where, in their fighting with the soldiers, the chorus attracted loud applause, and their fervent acting meant that the 'feeble' music of this passage of the opera was 'fortunately drowned by the bustle prevailing on the stage'.

And though he was impressed by this 'clever piece of stage management', and also liked a cloth painted with a view of Naples, Vesuvius in the background, the reviewer was not so taken with 'a dioramic effect' of the volcano's eruption in the last act.

In its second week the Carl Rosa Opera Company performed no new works, giving 'Il Trovatore' on Monday, 'Maritana' on Tuesday, 'Carmen' on Wednesday, 'The Bohemian Girl' on Thursday, 'Nordisa' on Friday, 'Galatea' as a matinee on Saturday, and 'Masaniello' on Saturday evening.

Receipts for the first week were £948 4s. 6d., with programmes etc. bringing in a further £7 11s. 8d. of which the company's share was £632 3s. The theatre's expenses (not including £50 17s. 1d. spent on the pantomime) were £258 6s. 3d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £70 6s. 11d.

Receipts for the second week were £1,058 0s. 6d., with programmes etc. bringing in a further £10 15s. 5d. The company's share was £723 7s., while the theatre's expenses (not including £42 4s. 8d. spent on the pantomime) were £254 7s. 5d. Thus the theatre made a profit of £91 1s. 6d.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company was followed on 7 November by that of D'Oyly Carte in a return visit with 'The Mikado'.⁵⁷ This was its fourth visit to Leeds with the piece, and

that its popularity was beginning to wane was shown both in the substitution of what the reviewer thought were markedly inferior performers in the cast, and in the fact that 'Patience' was given on the Friday night.⁵⁸

'The Mikado' was followed on 14 November by Genevieve Ward, Mr W.H. Vernon, and company, who appeared in 'Forget Me Not' on Monday, Friday, and Saturday, and 'The Queen's Favourite' on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.⁵⁹

During the five years since Genevieve Ward had last appeared at the Grand Theatre she had 'won golden opinions' all over the world.⁶⁰ She must, therefore, said the reviewer, have been disappointed with the unsympathetic reception that a thin house gave her on the Monday night.

'Forget Me Not' was written by Herman Merivale and F.C. Grove. The reviewer thought that it was not a very good piece: the play upon words and distortion of ideas that it 'foisted off as art and epigram' were, he said, unworthy of Merivale, and the picture it gave of contemporary manners and usages seemed but a vulgar travesty.

The piece concerned the attempts of an adventuress, Stephanie, a 'shameless and abandoned woman' who had been a 'decoy' at a gambling hall, to rehabilitate her character by exploiting her dead son's wife.

She compelled the compliance of the wife by threatening to make a revelation that would invalidate her marriage, but a 'typical Englishman' who knew Stephanie's former character turned up, and the play became a duel between the two personalities and wills.

The piece allowed Genevieve Ward to display her powers — in the second scene she attempted first to cajole the 'phlegmatic and imperturbable Englishman', and then to spurn and defy him.

The two main actors worked admirably as foils for each other, thought the reviewer, and the piece had a 'singularly powerful' close in which Genevieve Ward became an object of abject terror to which even the 'cold and spiritless' audience warmed.

Genevieve Ward was succeeded on 21 November by Wilson Barrett, Miss Eastlake, and the Princess's Theatre company who appeared in 'The Silver King' on Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday, 'Hamlet' on Wednesday, 'Hoodman Blind' on Thursday, and 'Claudian' on Friday.⁶¹

'The Silver King', which had played at the Princess's Theatre for some while, was given in Leeds with substantially the same cast and 'accessories' as it had had in London, thereby attracting a large audience which filled nearly all parts of the theatre.

The reviewer thought that many subtle nuances were brought out in the performance by the original cast that had only been suspected in the versions of the touring company.⁶²

Wilson Barrett was particularly good in the portrayal of Denver's 'drunken recklessness and frenzy', and he imbued the later affluent, but still wretched Denver with 'dignity and naturalness' here giving the character's potential pathos its full weight.

Miss Eastlake 'thoroughly enlisted the sympathies of the audience for the faithful and suffering wife'.

The reviewer thought that Wilson Barrett's Wilfred Denver had given the Leeds public more pleasure than any other of his roles, but that his Hamlet gained with further acquaintance. However, he did not think that any detailed notice of this latter play was required, which seems to suggest that Wilson Barrett's interpretation neither changed substantially, nor was expected to change. It was possible to find some blemishes in Wilson Barrett's Hamlet, the reviewer thought, but on the whole the performance was to be judged by the highest standards.

In 'Hoodman Blind' Wilson Barrett, playing Yeulett for the first time in Leeds, attracted a packed house, and people had to be turned away. Wilson Barrett's talents were particularly suited to playing a 'flesh and blood' character, 'swayed by human passions and sentiments', and in a 'domestic' drama. His performance, said the reviewer, was faultless, and he carried the audience with him to enthusiasm, and Miss Eastlake, playing with 'high intelligence and refinement ... enlisted the sympathies of the audience in a powerful degree'.⁶³

Wilson Barrett's company was followed on 28 November by John Clayton's company which appeared in 'the latest London success', 'Dandy Dick' (preceded by 'Woman's Wrongs').⁶⁴

'Dandy Dick' was a 'very diverting' farce by A.W. Pinero. It followed up 'The Magistrate' in choosing

another respectable character to involve in debauchery. In this piece it was a dean who became involved in horse racing. He was arrested along with his butler on a false charge of administering a poisoned bolus to Dandy Dick who was a favourite, and was stabled at the dean's home. The dean was thrown into the village lock-up as a rogue and a vagabond, but was ultimately rescued 'by his horsey sister, with the aid of touts and welshers, and a scoundrelly "three-card-trick" knave'.

The piece met with the 'unstinted approval' of the Leeds audience.

'Dandy Dick' was followed on 5 December by Austin Brereton's company in 'The Red Lamp'.⁶⁵ This was a piece full of sensational situations, and was based on Nihilism in Russia. General Morakoff and his young wife, Princess Claudia, were engaged in rooting out the Nihilists of St Petersburg. The Princess, however, discovered that her young brother, Prince Alexis, was among the conspirators, and so she, though a loyalist, warned the latter of intended raids by displaying a red light in her boudoir window.

The head of the secret police, Demetrius, became suspicious of the Princess, and aroused Morakoff's jealousy of her, with the result that she was forced to give up her signal. Thus the Princess was torn between terror for her brother and grief at her husband's distrust. Eventually marital confidence was re-established, though the happy ending did not extend to all the characters.

'The Red Lamp' was followed on 12 December by the Compton Comedy Company which appeared in 'David Garrick' preceded by 'I'm Noddy's Secret' on Monday, 'The Road to Ruin' on Tuesday, 'Money' on Wednesday, 'The School for Scandal' on Thursday, 'The Actor and the Critic' on Friday, and 'The Lady of Lyons' on Saturday.

Compton's familiar round of the 'classical' comedies brought the season to an end on Saturday, 17 December, and thereafter the theatre remained closed until Thursday, 22 December, when the run of the pantomime, 'Cinderella', began.

As usual for the pantomime the scenery was by Stafford Hall, Freddie Fox, and Walter Hann. Much of the music had an American flavour, and was selected by J. Sidney Jones, though some of it was written by a local composer, Alfred Christensen. The book was by J. Wilton Jones, and the company seemed to the reviewer to be capable, though to have no particular star.⁶⁶ The pantomime was put together by Henry Hastings.⁶⁷

The scenic structure of the pantomime very much determined the nature of the production, as was the norm. The first scene found Cinderella in the darkness by the side of the fireplace, the whole partially obscured by a giant cobweb. Crickets, blackbeetles and rats crawled about, and they danced wildly around Cinderella's chair. Furioso, the witch, appeared, and irked by not having been invited to Cinderella's christening, vowed vengeance

for this slight. Titania, the good fairy, however, resolved to protect and assist her.

The spider's web was borne away, the fairies disappeared, and the impecunious Baron, the ugly sisters, the Baron's attendants (Tweedledum and Tweedledee), and Butterina, the dairymaid, then came on in turn to begin the story, enlivening the scene with their 'drolleries'.

Cinderella was driven out of the house and the scene changed to a glade in the Royal forest. This was painted by Stafford Hall who, the reviewer thought, had been inspired by Roundhay Park in Leeds. A rustic bridge spanned a stream which cascaded over a waterfall.

'To the cheery notes of the horn' the Prince's hunting party came on. Shepherds and shepherdesses entered and gave an Arcadian ballet. The Prince announced his intention of marrying a maiden who loved him for himself alone, and to this end exchanged identities for the nonce with his 'saucy valet'. Cinderella was then seen picking up sticks in the forest, and was promptly arrested. Claiming that she was merely following Gladstone's example was of no avail to her, but the Prince engineered her release, and the 'valet' escorted her home. The scene concluded with 'the martial strains of "The Boulanger March"'.

The following scene was painted by Freddie Fox, and it showed the Baron's estate. This was a carpenter's scene, and its principal feature was 'comic business by the Rowella troupe'.

In the succeeding scene the preparations at the Baron's for the Royal Ball were shown, after which Cinderella dressed up a mop and danced with it, and with her own shadow in moonlight which was streaming in through a window.

Titania, dressed at first as an old woman, then as her real fairy self, came to Cinderella's aid, creating a ball dress, and a red and gold carriage pulled by six smart ponies with 'dapper little coachmen and footmen'. A grand procession was formed, and Cinderella, escorted by an army of elves and fairies bearing lanterns, was seen progressing to the palace which was 'brilliantly illuminated in the distance'. (It was 'a fine piece of architectural painting' by Stafford Hall.)

The next scene (by Walter Hann) represented a quadrangle bounded by Jacobean and Elizabethan styles of architecture, 'happily blended'. In this scene the guests were seen arriving. Among them were 'a well-known civil dignitary ... a distinguished exponent of the fistic art', and other 'heroes of the day'. This constituted a front-cloth scene which allowed preparation of the Ballroom scene which was to follow.

The Ballroom scene began with an elaborate ballet involving deputations in national costumes from all over the world. 'The brightly coloured scene changed with kaleidoscopic variety and rapidity'. The scene had 'rich magnificence' and as a visually spectacular set piece was warmly applauded by the audience.

'In the midst of the gaiety' the fatal hour struck, and

to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning Cinderella dashed from the darkened hall, shedding her glass slipper.

In the next scene she was seen lost in a forest in a terrible storm, from which she took shelter in a cave. There followed a Royal proclamation, and at 'The Trial of the Slipper' in 'The New Law Courts', the plot was resolved.

This was followed by Stafford Hall's transformation scene, 'Night and Morning', which 'expressed a striking allegorical conception of the descent of Luna and the ascent of Phoebus'.

The reviewer thought that the first night had gone exceptionally smoothly, and though the Ballroom scene might in his view have benefited from compression, nonetheless the audience did not seem to tire of it, and they were roused at times to 'genuine enthusiasm'. Lee Anderson, Henry Hastings, and the scenic artists were all called, but Wilson Barrett was not there to take his customary bows.

Notes

- 1 The company included Mr W.H. Rawlins, Tom Paulton, Marie Rawlins, Julia St George, Miss F. Pierrepoint, Delia Merton, Benjamin Wilson, and George Marler.
- 2 Yorkshire Post, 15 March 1887, p. 4.
- 3 The company included Edward Compton, Virginia Bateman, Margaret Terry, Elinor Aicken, Mr W. Young Stewart, Mr Lewis Ball, and Percy F. Marshall.
- 4 Yorkshire Post, 22 March 1887, p. 8.
- 5 The company included Lilian Francis, Hetty Chapman, Marie D'Alvera, Nellie Melrose, Edith Orme, Catherine Moxon, Blanche Percival, Nita Graham, Grace Reynolds, Alfred Young, Arthur Lawrence, Herbert Stanley, George Lyttleton, Mr L. James, Hugh Power, and the Wallace sisters (who danced). The music was composed by Oscar Barrett, Alfred Lee, and John Crook.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 29 March 1887, p. 5.
- 7 The company included Adria Hill, Mr J.F. Darnley, John Benn, Miss Herman, Mr C.W. Garthorne, Miss O. Nethersole, Mr W.S. Buist, and Mr Nicol Pentland.
- 8 Yorkshire Post, 12 April 1887, p. 6.
- 9 The company included Mr W.H. Day, William Calder, Alice Finch, Miss Chippendale, George T. Minshull, Albert Lucas, and Stanley Rogers.
- 10 Yorkshire Post, 12 April 1887, p. 4.
- 11 The company included Fanny Wentworth, Maude Albert, Horace Lingard, Louis Kelleher, Mr Westlake Perry, and Frank Seymour.

- 12 The company included Fred W. Sidney, Mr W.J. Robertson, Mr A.A. Wallace, Mr A. Alexander, Mr Ogilvie Keith, Mr S.T. Pearce, Mr A.L. Ferrault, Muriel Aubrey, Clara Donne, and Lillie Young.
- 13 Yorkshire Post, 26 April 1887, p. 8.
- 14 The company included Ramsay Danvers, Mr W.F. Stirling, Mr G. Nelson Wallace, Mr Coventry Davies, Lilian Seccombe, Kathleen O'Connor, Emily Armstrong, and Miss Cartwright.
- 15 Yorkshire Post, 3 May 1887, p. 5.
- 16 The company included Clara Thompson who had replaced Lina St Ives as Stephanie, but otherwise was substantially unchanged.
- 17 Yorkshire Post, 25 May 1887, p. 6.
- 18 The company included Mr Redfern Hollins, Charles Ryall, Miss Carr-Shaw, Marion Cross, Mary Webb, Frank Thornton, Sophie Lingwood, Madge Fowler, Albert Christian, Mr W.T. Helmsley, and Cecil Burt. The orchestra was conducted by Sidney Jones jnr.
- 19 The company included Luigi Lablanche, J. Denis Coyne, Mr T. Park, Miss Emerson, and Bertha Burton.
- 20 Yorkshire Post, 7 June 1887, p. 4.
- 21 The company included Charles Hudson, Austin Melford, Mr J.H. Clynds, Charles Fulton, Mr H. Cooper-Cliffe, Alice Belmore, Lily Belmore, and Mr A.H. Bernage.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 14 June 1887, p. 5.
- 23 Yorkshire Post, 15 June 1887, p. 6.
- 24 Yorkshire Post, 16 June 1887, p. 8.

- 25 Yorkshire Post, 18 June 1887, p. 7.
- 26 Yorkshire Post, 18 June 1887, p. 7.
- 27 The company included John Wilkinson, Miss M. Cockburn, Fanny Edwards, George Temple, Kate Forster, Mr Herve D'Egville, Mr R. Harvey Edgar, and Olivia Benyon.
- 28 Yorkshire Post, 21 June 1887, p. 8.
- 29 The company included Jennie Rogers, Agnes Knight, Walter Russel, Robert Medlicott, Mr J.E. Pearce, Robert Morgan, and Charles Arnold. Mr F.Moir Bussey was the manager.
- 30 Yorkshire Post, 28 July 1887, p. 6.
- 31 The company included F. Rollo Balmain, Sarah Mignon, Mr H.W. Hatchman, Mr J.J. Lloyd, Mr F. Knott, Henry Arncliffe, Mr A. Davidson, Mr G.H. Fulford, and Miss C. Conway.
- 32 Yorkshire Post, 5 July 1887, p. 6.
- 33 Yorkshire Post, 11 July 1887, p. 5.
- 34 The company included MM. Philippe-Garnier, Angelo, Decori, Fraasier, Thefer, Mmes Malvan, Fontagnes, and Vallot.
- 35 Yorkshire Post, 12 July 1887, p. 4.
- 36 The company included Mabel Haynes, Wilfred Bredbell, Mr M.H. May, Mr J.B. Ashley, and Fred Eastman.
- 37 Yorkshire Post, 9 August 1887, p. 4.
- 38 The company included Fred Vokes, Mr Fawdon Vokes, Annie F. Vokes, Alice Aynsley Cooke, Marie Williams, and Katie Lee.

- 39 Yorkshire Post, 16 August 1887, p. 5.
- 40 The company included Arthur Roberts, Miss Wadman, Phyllis Broughton, Mr Collini, Joseph Tapley, Percy Compton, Jessica Dene, Flora Wilmos, and Ruby McNeil. An augmented orchestra was directed by John Crook.
- 41 Yorkshire Post, 23 August 1887, p. 8.
- 42 The company further included Sylvia Grey, Addie Blanche, and Miss Marston Hood.
- 43 Yorkshire Post, 30 August 1887, p. 4.
- 44 The company included William Hargreaves, Arthur Helmore, Harold Constable, Mr C. Levenson Lane, Mr Wilmot Eyre, Frederick Tyrell, Alice Brice, Grace Baring, and Hilda Temple.
- 45 Yorkshire Post, 6 September 1887, p. 4.
- 46 Yorkshire Post, 14 September 1887, p. 8.
- 47 The company included Marion Lee, Georgie Esmond, Marie Brewer, Mr J.R. Crawford, Gerald Godfrey, Henry Renouf, and James Nelson.
- 48 Yorkshire Post, 20 September 1887, p. 4.
- 49 The company included Henry A. Lytton (who had replaced John Wilkinson), Paula Gear (who had replaced Fanny Edwards), Mr Cadwallader, Miss M. Cockburn, George Temple, Kate Forster, and Mr H. D'Egville.
- 50 Yorkshire Post, 27 September 1887, p. 5.
- 51 Yorkshire Post, 8 October 1887, p. 4.
- 52 Yorkshire Post, 12 October 1887, p. 3.

- 53 Yorkshire Post, 26 October 1887, p. 5.
- 54 Yorkshire Post, 27 October 1887, p. 5.
- 55 The English libretto was by W. Grist and Frank Wyatt.
- 56 Yorkshire Post, 28 October 1887, p. 5.
- 57 The company included George Thorne, Allen Morris, Charles Hildesley, Elsie Cameron, Mr H.M. Imano, George de Pledge, Ivy Bonheur, Katie Chen, and Rhoda Maitland.
- 58 Yorkshire Post, 8 November 1887, p. 6.
- 59 The company included Genevieve Ward, Mr Vernon, Mr J.C. Buckstone, Arthur Gillmore, and Adela Mearn.
- 60 Yorkshire Post, 15 October 1887, p. 5.
- 61 The company included George Barrett, Austin Melford, Charles Hudson, Mr Cooper-Cliffe, and Mr S. Carson.
- 62 Yorkshire Post, 22 November 1887, p. 5.
- 63 Yorkshire Post, 25 November 1887, p. 5.
- 64 Yorkshire Post, 1 December 1887, p. 3.
- The company included Mr W.F. Hawtrey, Marie Illington, Miss Seccombe, and Miss Leysbon.
- 65 The company included Mrs Austin Brereton, and Charles Fabert.
- 66 Yorkshire Post, 23 December 1887, p. 5.
- 67 The company included the Blanche sisters: Addie, Ada, and Edith, who played Cinderella, the Prince, and the Prince's private tutor (though their main accomplishment was dancing), Agnes Oliver (who played the valet), Mr J.G. Taylor (the Baron), George Vokes and Mr F. Eastman (the ugly sisters), Mr Kenny,

Colin Coop, the Brothers Haytor (who performed 'wonderful contortions'), Messrs Stebbs and Trepp ('eccentric musical guests'), and the Rowella troupe (who furnished the opening scene and the Harlequinade).

CHAPTER XII:1888

The year 1888 was dominated by the attempt of the directors of the theatre to remove Wilson Barrett from the management of it, and to find a tenant who would be a resident manager. In fact the directors' move provoked considerable hostility, and the merits and demerits of local rather than London management were argued in the press, as was the quality of the plays and companies that Wilson Barrett had brought to Leeds. The concensus seems to have been that Wilson Barrett had on the whole elevated the quality of drama produced in Leeds, although for the recent seasons there had been some relaxation of standards, and that in view of the ascendancy that touring companies had gained (which operated from London), a manager who was in London stood a better chance of engaging the newest and most desirable of productions than a provincial manager.

In the course of the discussion some light was thrown on the reluctance of some major artists (for example the Kendals and Mr Hare, J.L. Toole, Henry Irving) to come to Leeds, when they were prepared to make visits to neighbouring towns such as Halifax, Huddersfield, Dewesbury, and Hull. Their objection seems to have been principally financial: prices of admission to the Grand Theatre were regarded as the lowest in the provinces; if they were raised, then in most cases the

public stayed away; if they were not raised, then the manager made a loss, so great were the percentages that famous actors could demand (we have seen evidence of this in the accounts for 1886/7). In some of the correspondence in the press it was tacitly admitted that Leeds was a peculiar and theatrically unrewarding town.

Several letters objected to the quality of the plays that had been given recently. There seemed to have been an unrelieved diet of melodramas. One writer even suggested that the theatre should remain closed rather than put on such pieces. Lee Anderson answered these objections by saying that melodramas they might be, but they were mostly current London successes; that no provincial theatre could entice actors out of London in the summer; that the theatre often made losses on these melodramas which it would not willingly make if it could be avoided; and that to close the theatre would put over one hundred people out of work, and still leave rent, rates, and taxes to be paid.

Whatever the practical considerations, it does seem that there was some feeling that the Grand Theatre was not maintaining the standards that the public (at least, that part of it which would write to the papers) required. However, most of these accepted that the causes were outside any manager's control (whether it be the prejudices of actors or the public's reluctance to pay the going rate), and generally they accepted that Wilson Barrett was the best manager that the theatre could have

because he was a nationally eminent man in his profession, having taste and judgement, the respect of his professional colleagues, and staged the productions that he did (especially pantomimes) with lavishness and generosity.

It may be wondered what it was that encouraged the directors to make their decision not to renew Wilson Barrett's lease. The reservation that they generally expressed was that they thought the public would prefer a manager who was resident in Leeds. When they advertised the lease of the theatre they made a point to respondents of saying that the manager should be resident. (Significantly perhaps, the respondents also asked if this was a sine qua non — which would seem to indicate that some thought this condition a drawback.) Perhaps, indeed, this was their sole consideration: that Wilson Barrett by his residence in London, and his constant touring, was not managing the Grand Theatre in such a way as to provide companies and productions that satisfied the directors' desires for the theatre that they had striven to build. Conceivably they did not realise that it was at that time something of a general practice for provincial theatres to be managed from London (of the six inquiries about the lease that they received, three came from London, one from Bradford, one from Leeds, and one from Worthing), and perhaps, also, they underestimated the amount of popular support that Wilson Barrett had in Leeds — in theory, if not at the box office. (It is interesting to note in this context

that Wilson Barrett's visits to Leeds made his company quite large profits, while even then the theatre barely broke even, and Wilson Barrett made no greater demands by way of terms than other companies of equal standing.)

But perhaps there was another factor, not made public, that weighed heavily upon the directors' minds. We have seen how Wilson Barrett increasingly fell behind in his payment of rent - claiming that he was unable to pay - and the directors, managing only just to pay the interest due on debentures and mortgage as well as a small dividend on the shares, were driven to insure the rent. At the height of Wilson Barrett's dilatoriness in paying his rent in 1887 they had suggested that he gave up the lease of the theatre. Perhaps this influenced their decision primarily, and the fact that Wilson Barrett was rarely in Leeds was a mere aggravation.

However, it is also conceivable that a third factor was at work, and this was a desire on the directors' part to have an interest in the profits that a producing company could make. When eventually Wilson Barrett's lease did expire, the company brought in John Hart (from Bradford) as manager, but on condition that he bought shares in the company, and managed the theatre as a managing director of the company. In this way the directors could be certain of the profits that accrued from the one certainly profitable production of the year - the pantomime, and we have seen that these profits were not inconsiderable in proportion to the other running costs of the theatre.

Be this as it may, the correspondence in the press after the directors' decision at the Annual General Meeting on 8 May 1888 not to renew Wilson Barrett's lease aroused the opposition of enough shareholders (headed by George Corson) to call an extraordinary general meeting to reverse the directors' decision. In fact the meeting was unnecessary, for the directors quickly became aware of the strength of opposition to their measures, and negotiated a further lease of five years with Wilson Barrett. He, furthermore, was able to take advantage of their disarray to demand a reduction of the theatre's rent (it was reduced to £2,350 from £2,500) and to be rid of the burden of the Assembly Rooms (although he demanded their use for the rehearsal of the pantomime).

As negotiations were going on on the much higher plane of principle, Wilson Barrett's arrears of rent received much less attention in 1888 than they had in previous years, and though he had reduced them to nothing at the end of February under the arrangement to pay off the previous year's arrears during the pantomime, they quickly began to mount again. By May he owed £447 7s. 5d., and none of this had been paid by 22 June. By August he owed £944 17s. 5d., but in September he paid off three hundred pounds of this. By November he owed £1,054 17s. 5d., but he paid only two hundred pounds more, and on 29 December the company wrote to him to suggest that he paid £350 per week during the pantomime in order to clear up the arrears.

Much eclipsed by Wilson Barrett's arrears of rent and the negotiations of the new lease, the directors also saw to the improvement of the theatre's safety with regard to fire. In February they considered a report on the general efficiency of such apparatus as there was, and under pressure from the magistrates began to consider the installation of a fire curtain (this was in April). Lloyds refused to renew a portion of the theatre's insurance in June (and a company that shared some of the risk, Les Insurances Belges, was found to have given up practice in England), and this no doubt added to the pressure on the directors.

However, the magistrates could only require the installation of a fire curtain as a condition of granting the theatre a licence, so that eventually the directors were able to say that it was Wilson Barrett's responsibility, since it was he who had to apply for the licence.

The directors also made it a condition of the lease that a Corporation fireman should be employed in the theatre during performances, and that a watchman be employed both day and night.

It will be remembered that the directors had established a policy of making Wilson Barrett pay for every item of maintenance to the theatre that they could, and in pursuance of this negotiations over the heating apparatus (which Lee Anderson complained repeatedly had never functioned properly since the theatre's opening) had

developed to the point of the exchanging of solicitors' letters by the end of the year. The directors did accept responsibility, however, for repairs to the leaking roof over the carpenter's shop, and for making alterations to some of the urinals.

The 1888 seasons saw an increase to twelve and one half weeks of the number of weeks of pantomime, seven weeks of comic opera, a reduction to one week of opera proper, and two weeks of performing horses (these horses gave the only fortnight's run of the season). There were seventeen weeks of returning productions, and in addition three weeks of revived productions. There was only one week of panoramic melodrama, and this was a returning production.

'Cinderella' closed on Saturday, 11 March, and was followed by a return visit of 'Human Nature'. The cast of this production, after an absence from Leeds of two years, had substantially changed: Robert C. Lyons had replaced Henry Neville, Helen Hastings had replaced Isabel Bateman, Leslie Ball had replaced Mrs Alfred Maddick, and there had also been changes among the lesser members of the company.¹

There was a large audience upon whom the striking situations, scenic magnificence and ingenuity, and the power of the play to stimulate to excitement, worked to produce frequent applause.²

In fact Isabel Bateman was to appear the following week (beginning 19 March) in a revival of 'Jane Shore'. In this she was supported by Edward Compton's company³ who 'acquitted themselves satisfactorily in nearly all respects'.⁴ Isabel Bateman 'displayed considerable dramatic power', playing with 'vigour', and giving a rendering which was 'vividly realistic'. Mr G.R. Peach, who had been a member of Wilson Barrett's company when the latter first produced 'Jane Shore', was also in this company, and made up 'with a remarkable resemblance to Wilson Barrett' to play his part. This would see a striking indication of the degree to which roles once created were identified with their original portrayers.

Though the audience was small, it gave Isabel Bateman its approval, and she was 'cordially' applauded.

'Jane Shore' was followed on 26 March by a new comic opera, 'La Bearnaise'.¹⁵ This piece was written by Andre Messager, and was in the style of Offenbach and Audran. Its plot reminded the Yorkshire Post reviewer of that of 'Falka' in that the heroine was a young lady who, in search of her male cousin, was forced by circumstances to dress as a man, and from this complications ensued.⁶

The music seemed to the reviewer neither original nor striking, but included 'several numbers' which were 'pleasing'. The 'concerted' passages were 'thin in the extreme', but the heroine's songs were 'warmly encored'.

'La Bearnaise' was followed on 2 April by the third visit of Horace Lingard and Van Biene's company in 'Pepita'.⁷ The piece had now been playing for two years, but its popularity was unabated, and it had an 'overflowing' house at the Grand Theatre.⁸ Giulia Warwick had replaced Miss Wentworth in the title role.

'Pepita' was followed on 9 April by 'Siberia', a play written by Bartley Campbell, and first produced at the Princess's Theatre by Grace Hawthorne. Since that production it had been 'shorn' of some encumbrance, and the reviewer thought that it should make a good 'thriller' to take on tour as it was a 'fairly strong' piece, likely to appeal to pit and gallery.⁹ (It had a fairly large audience at the Grand Theatre.)

The subject of the play was 'the oppressed condition of people under Russian laws', and concerned the involvement of a young man (called a Nihilist, though there was little political development in the play) with a young woman who was condemned to exile for 'visiting upon an unprincipled official a righteous vengeance for the murder of her father and a plot to ruin her sister'.

Though the play's five acts contained episodes that the reviewer thought reminiscent of other pieces, if they could not actually be called conventional, it seemed 'not without dramatic skill' and was 'marked by no poverty of striking situations'. The reviewer also commended the scenery.¹⁰

'Siberia' was followed on 16 April by a return visit of Van Biene's company in 'Falka', which in turn was followed (on 23 April) by another returning production - H.C. Arnold's company in G.R. Sims's 'The Lights o' London'. Though this piece had not been seen in Leeds for some four years it appeared to have 'lost none of its old charm',¹¹ and 'suited the tastes of the people to a nicety'. It had an unquestionably 'hearty' reception.¹²

'The Lights o' London' was followed on 30 April by the return of H.J. Leslie's company in 'Dorothy', of which the 'phenomenal' success showed no sign of abating.¹³ There had, however, been some changes in the cast: Mr R. Hollins had resumed the role of Geoffrey Wilder, Madge Johnstone had replaced Sophie Lingwood, and Fred Emney had taken the place of Mr Fischer.¹⁴

'Dorothy' was followed on 7 May by another returning melodrama, 'Shadows of a Great City'.¹⁵ It had an audience that was 'neither small nor lacking in appreciation',¹⁶ which perhaps enjoyed the piece's 'decided American flavour' as well as its sensational plot, which, the reviewer explained, was 'related in the approved melodramatic style', with 'clever mechanical effects, striking situations, and startling episodes'.

'Shadows of a Great City' was followed on 4 May by a further returning production, that of 'Held by the Enemy'.¹⁷

In fact this constituted a second week of American melodrama, and the return of Charles Warner's company was greeted by a 'fairly well-filled' house.

The reviewer expanded on his earlier remarks on the piece to say that it had the merit of preserving the military spirit of its subject without resorting to '"drum and trumpet" incident', and also of creating characters that were 'men as well as soldiers, and rational human beings rather than stage Americans'.¹⁸

There followed on 21 May the sixth week of returning productions in Jennie Lee's 'Jo', which had previously been seen at the Grand Theatre in November 1880. The piece had remained in Jennie Lee's repertoire, and the press advertising asserted that she had now played the role thousands of times.

'Jo' was followed on 28 May by the 'successful Drury Lane Drama ... 'Youth'. Though this was the piece's first performance at the Grand Theatre, it was not its first production in Leeds, for it had been at the Theatre Royal.

The reviewer thought that it was typical of the Drury Lane dramas in that it had 'a gentleman villain in a military uniform, a sorely wronged hero, a good and insipid heroine, some designing [French] women, and several good, bad, and indifferent men'.¹⁹

In mitigation, however, he did allow that there was some freshness in the treatment of these familiar characters,

and admitted that the 'sorely wronged hero' was a very human young man, and deserved 'at least a fraction' of the suffering to which he was subjected.

The central character of the play was Tom Gardham, 'the misguided, happy-go-lucky, good-souled, brave-hearted convict whose prison philosophy and patriotic death formed not the least entertaining and pathetic passages of a play which combined both pathos and humour to an almost extravagant degree'.

The scenery 'was a feature of the performance', 'The Defence of Hawk's Point' being impressive to the reviewer both for its pictorial qualities and the 'thrilling realism' of its action.²⁰

'Youth' was followed on 4 June by another returning company, Violette Melnotte's and Frank Wyatt's company (from the Royal Comedy Theatre, London) in 'The Barrister'.²¹

At the time of this second visit this piece had been running for a year (it will be remembered that it had its first performance at the Grand Theatre as a matinee in 1887) and it was greeted now by a larger audience than the theatre had seen for some weeks.

The reviewer considered that the play depended mainly upon its briskness of action and its 'risky' and sometimes witty dialogue rather than literary merit.²² Its success he was sure was attributable to the fact that the author had exactly identified the public taste of the moment. The play was preceded by 'a somewhat uninteresting comedy drama', 'The Genius', by H.W. Williamson.

'The Barrister' was followed on 11 June by C.H. Hawtrey's company in 'The Arabian Nights', which was preceded by 'The Nettle'. 'The Arabian Nights' was another adaptation of Von Moser, made by Sydney Grundy.

The central idea of the piece was that the otherwise staid and exemplarily pedestrian Arthur Hummingtop should one night be overcome by a sudden quixotic desire for the pursuit of adventure which took the form of leaving his handkerchief with 'the "gutta-percha" girl of the Alhambra' in order that she might identify and follow him.

Unfortunately the girl waited until the following morning to take up this invitation, and her sudden appearance in Hummingtop's morning room (where all the action of the play in fact took place) caused considerable embarrassment. He was driven to attempt to explain her away as an expected niece from America, but this only created multiplying difficulties when the real niece turned up.

The piece relied upon its briskness and 'somewhat questionable' dialogue, averred the reviewer,²³ but was given a competent and unexaggerated performance by an 'admirable' company.²⁴

'The Arabian Nights' was followed on 18 June by a returning visit of 'Hoodman Blind'. The play was given an 'encouraging'²⁵ reception by a large audience though the company had undergone some change: Sarah Mignon had replaced Maude Milton, F.R. Balmain had replaced Mr Bucklaw, and Henry W. Hatchman had taken the place of Mr J.S. Haydon in the principal roles.²⁶

'Hoodman Blind' was followed on 25 June by a revival of 'East Lynne' by Margaret Soulbey and Pitt Hardacre's company.²⁷ The reviewer thought it better not to go into the wisdom of presenting this 'well-trying ... lachrymose ... and stale' drama, which, it was claimed, was given 'by desire'.²⁸

However, he found the company unusually well qualified for its representation, and noted that the pit and gallery were filled by an audience that followed the slow evolution of the plot that they must have known by heart 'with jealous interest'.

'East Lynne' was followed on 2 July by Yorke Steven's company in 'Mr Barnes of New York'.²⁹ A large house gave a good reception to this adaptation by Rutland Barrington of Mr Gunter's novel (which had recently appeared in paper back).

The reviewer thought it a particularly skilful adaptation,³⁰ though Mr Barnes himself had for the sake of the drama to take something of a subservient role to those of the main protagonists in a plot which revolved round vengeance, death, duelling, and a passionate Corsican girl.

'Mr Barnes of New York' was followed on 9 July by a second adaptation of a novel, 'The Mystery of a Hansom Cab', in a version sanctioned by the novel's author (there had been others), and performed by Balsir Chatterton's company.³¹

The play attracted a 'fairly large audience for the first night of the week',³² who saw a production which was impressive for the quantity and quality of its 'stage accessories' which reached their zenith when a hansom cab appeared on the stage in the first act.

After 'The Mystery of a Hansom Cab' the theatre remained closed for a week, reopening on 23 July for a fortnight of performances by 'Professor Crocker's [fifteen] wonderful educated horses'. These horses, claimed the advertising, had created a great sensation at the Avenue Theatre in London. Three matinees were given each week, and the children (to whom, presumably, the show was thought likely to appeal) were admitted at half price. The theatre was almost full for the first night of the run — and this at the period of the year that was considered most difficult theatrically.

Professor Crocker's horses were followed on 6 August by a revival of 'Olivette' by W.F. Glover's company.³³ It was given for the Bank Holiday week, and attracted a large and sympathetic audience.³⁴

'Olivette' was followed on 13 August by Wilson Barrett's company in 'The Golden Ladder'.³⁵ This was a five-act melodrama written by G.R. Sims and Wilson Barrett. The former had shown his journalistic hand in contributing breadth of style and literary finish, while the latter

exercised his usual taste and judgement in 'perfect stage craft'.³⁶ The play belonged to the early type of Princess's Theatre pieces which were begun by 'The Lights o' London', and combined much human sympathy with 'not a little fearless improbability'.

The hero was a young missionary who, being generous, zealous, and impulsive, made a number of enemies. Two attempts were made on his life: one in Madagascar ('where the most picturesque and the most unnecessary parts of the drama were enacted') where 'the British lion' came to the rescue with appropriate music and cheers from the gallery; and one on Hampstead Heath, where his wife was arrested for attempting the life of his assailant.

She was flung into prison where Sims provided a detailed and 'realistic' evocation of her surroundings, companions, and personal agony before virtue 'after a few more wrenches at probability' eventually triumphed.

'The Golden Ladder' was followed on 20 August by Mark Melford's company in 'Kleptomania' and a curtain-raiser, 'Venus and Adonis', both of which pieces were written by Mark Melford.³⁷

'Kleptomania' was a farcical comedy. Its central character, Lady Blair, was unaware that she was a kleptomaniac. Her husband, Major-General Blair, concealed it from her, making good her crimes with his cheque book.

Eventually the woman stole a ring which Professor Andrew Smalley (of Trinity College, Cambridge) intended to give

to the thief's daughter to whom he was affianced. The Professor became afraid that the daughter might inherit the mother's habit, and entered into a plot with a Dr Watly (who was a secret would-be suitor of the daughter too). Their plan was to bring into the house another kleptomaniac as a chaperone for Lady Blair in the hope that the latter might be shocked out of her ways by observing them in another.

The unexplained presence of the chaperone in the house, caused a scene between Lady Blair and her husband, and further complications arose from the Professor's confused and equivocal answers under interrogation. Lady Blair formed the opinion that it was her daughter who was the kleptomaniac.

The Professor, discouraged, gave up his suit of the daughter, leaving her to Dr Watly, and the Major-General and his wife were eventually reconciled, though the latter remained a kleptomaniac.

The reviewer thought that this play had 'a considerable amount of originality' and was 'brimful' with laughter.³⁸

'Kleptomania' was followed on 27 August by Wilson Barrett, Miss Eastlake, George Barrett and London company in 'the great Princess's Theatre success', 'Ben-my-chree'.³⁹ For this visit (which was to last for a fortnight) the prices of the dress circle, upper circle, and stalls were raised to four shillings reserved (and three shillings unreserved).

However, this did not deter the audience from 'cramming'

pit and gallery for the first night, and the boxes were 'thronged', too, though not quite so full. Wilson Barrett himself was greeted with cheers and shouts of 'welcome back'.⁴⁰

'Ben-my-chree' was a (free) adaptation of Hall Caine's novel, 'The Deemster', and had first been produced at the Princess's Theatre three months prior to this visit.

The play was set in the Isle of Man, and was heavily enriched with Manx folk-lore and customs, though it managed to retain a suitable universal melodramatic basis to the plot.

The hero was Dan Mylrea, the 'rough, head-strong, devil-may-care',⁴¹ son of the 'gentle' Bishop of the island. Dan was in love with his cousin, Mona Mylrea, the daughter of the Deemster — the island's judge.

Mona exercised a reforming influence upon Dan, but her father would not have him in the house. Nonetheless he made clandestine visits, and, being surprised on one of these, he had to escape by climbing out of Mona's bedroom window. He was observed doing this by the latter's equally head-strong brother, who attacked Dan with a knife. In the ensuing struggle the brother was killed.

Dan invoked the aid of his fisherman friends who first hid the body, and later dropped it into the sea. However, it was washed up, and Dan was tried at the Tynwald, where, largely by his own remorseful admission, he was convicted of murder.

The island's governor, an Englishman named Harcourt, was an admirer of Mona, and was glad thus to be able to be rid of Dan, but the Bishop, under local law, was empowered to commute the death penalty to one of exile in a remote part of the island. Dan was forbidden to speak to anyone on pain of death.

The governor then set about his suit in earnest, but, repulsed, disclosed that he too was a witness to Dan's exit from Mona's bedroom window. Mona's reputation was thus threatened, and the only way that she could redeem it was at a special ceremony in church at which she took an oath as to her innocence kneeling before the altar.

That by itself, however, was inadequate, and it needed Dan to break the embargo on his speaking and to take a similar oath in order to clear her reputation. Of course Dan (who had been seen languishing in misery in his lonely retreat) impulsively took that oath, and Mona's reputation rose unsullied. But this posed the dramatist with a problem: the conclusion required that Dan, having broken the terms of the commutation of his sentence, should be led off to execution, and Mona should then die of a broken heart. That indeed was the ending with which the play was first performed. However, that could not satisfy the audience's desire for a happy ending, and so it was changed. In the second version the judge relented and Dan and Mona were married. It is difficult to think that this second ending was any more improbable than the first.

For the second week of this visit Wilson Barrett performed 'The Silver King', except on the Friday, when 'Claudian' was given. For 'The Silver King' on the Monday night the pit and gallery were densely packed, and the circles and stalls well filled by an enthusiastic audience. In his notice of the piece the reviewer identified four aspects of Wilson Barrett's qualities as an actor which revealed themselves in the unfolding of the play: 'the besotted habitué of the Wheat Sheaf in the first act, the haunted and conscience-stricken criminal of the second, the good-intentioned husband of the third ... [and] the determined seeker after the true murderer on the wharf at Rotherhide'.⁴²

Wilson Barrett's fortnight was followed on 10 September by a further return of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Mikado', which was played on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and 'relished with the keenness of a first hearing',⁴³ and 'The Pirates of Penzance' which was given for the rest of the week.⁴⁴

The D'Oyly Carte company was followed on 17 September by Miss Lingard and Mr Kemble Cooper who appeared in 'Cymbeline' on Monday, 'Adrienne Lecouvreur' on Tuesday and Thursday, 'Romeo and Juliet' on Wednesday and Saturday, and 'Camille' on Friday.⁴⁵

'Cymbeline' was rarely chosen by managers for performance, and had not been played at the Grand Theatre since Miss Wallis

had appeared in it in December 1883 when she gave only one performance.

Miss Lingard invested Imogen with pathetic sweetness as well as an attractive presence, and the reviewer summarised the virtues of this production in commending the scenes in which 'her husband Leonatus was torn from her and sent into banishment, when she was subjected to the seductive allurements of Iachimo, when she donned the hose to meet her lover and found herself lonely in the rocky passes of Wales, and when, brought a prisoner before her father the king, she was restored to her husband'.⁴⁶

Although her audience was large for the Monday night, it was but thin for the rest of the week, and though she invested her Adrienne Lecouvreur with 'mingled poetry and tenderness' there were few people to see it. The reviewer felt driven to harangue those who prated of the elevation of the drama and complained of the frivolity of the three-act farces which dominated the stage yet stayed away for these performances of the legitimate drama.⁴⁷

However, he did not succeed in drawing any more people to see Miss Lingard's 'Camille', an adaptation of 'La Dame aux Camélias' (though different from that in which Madame Modjeska had appeared). In this version Camille's 'unhappy past' was less strongly dwelt upon, and Miss Lingard made a more refined interpretation of the heroine's conflicting emotions, and maintained a purer note of tragedy in her 'zestful' playing of the lighter

scenes in which she never forgot that 'the assumed gaiety of the high-souled Parisienne is clouded with death'.⁴⁸ Camille's 'careless pleasures, her power of love, and capabilities of self-sacrifice' grew 'naturally' in Miss Lingard's performance and she excelled herself, in the reviewer's opinion, in the death scene, sounding a note of 'true pathos'.

Of her 'Romeo and Juliet' the reviewer said that 'time was when all the town would have run after a new Juliet, or a new Romeo',⁴⁹ but this, clearly, was no longer the case, and Miss Lingard was again poorly attended.

The production itself did not veer from the well trodden path, but it did have a certain freshness. It suffered the faults that the old stock companies had: not everyone was ideally cast, or knew their part very well, nor could all the actors speak blank verse proficiently. The quick changing of scenes did not always seem easy to carry out.

However, on the whole the performance seemed competent, and the reviewer particularly praised the balcony and the tomb scenes, which he thought were 'excellent stage pictures', and what audience there was, he said, was well pleased, giving frequent 'warm and spontaneous applause'.

Miss Lingard was followed on 24 September by J.L. Toole who appeared in his latest success, 'The Don', on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday (when it was followed by 'Ici On Parle Français' for Toole's Benefit), and on

Thursday and Saturday, 'The Butler' with a curtain-raiser, 'Waiting Consent'.⁵⁰

'The Don' was written by Mr and Mrs Herman Merivale, and its central character's life was complicated by having a young nephew with an identical name. Thus the Don was suspected of 'having made love to his quondam housekeeper, fallen a victim to the blandishments of a buxom widow, and married a ward in Chancery'.

The dialogue was 'generally commonplace' and the reviewer attributed to this those moments that the otherwise 'praiseworthy' efforts of the company failed to animate.⁵¹

'The Butler' was written by the same authors, and in the title role gave Toole the opportunity to play a (to the reviewer, consummate⁵²) version of his familiar character (H.J. Byron had provided him with its archetype).

The dramatis personae included 'the irascible and ambitious' Sir John Tracey, former huckster, but now knight, and mayor of his native borough, Lady Tracey, whose English was faulty, a comely and romantic cook, and a deaf Flyman — all of them established elements of Toole's genre.

Toole was followed on 1 October by George Edward's London Gaiety Burlesque Company in 'Esmerelda'.⁵³ This piece was a burlesque of Victor Hugo's 'Notre Dame' enlivened with 'rich dresses, glinting armour, capital ballets, and admirable scenery [by Beverley, Telbin, and E. Ryan] ...

lots of fun ... plenty of music [from both orchestra and military band, and] ... glowing and iridescent stage pictures full of life, colour, and briskness'.⁵⁴

If this might seem out of harmony with the hunchback of the story, the reviewer admitted that burlesque was a specific and acquired taste.

'Esmerelda' was followed by a return visit of Horace Lingard and Van Biene's company in 'Falka' which was given on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and 'Pepita' which was given for the rest of the week.⁵⁵ That these two pieces were played in the same week indicates that their popularity at last seemed to be declining, and further evidence of this was in the fact that 'Falka' was given on the Monday night with a substantially changed and inferior cast.

'Pepita' was followed on 15 October by Agnes Hewitt's company in 'The Pointsman'.⁵⁶ This play was written by R.C. Carton, and Cecil Raleigh. It was a sensational melodrama which began with the murder of a diamond merchant, and then went on to show the career thereafter of the culprit (who of course came to his just end eventually). The plot contained two or three love affairs (the morality of one of which the reviewer found very doubtful⁵⁷), but the piece's main sensation was the staging of a rail crash which was caused deliberately by the drugging of the pointsman.

The reviewer remarked that the characters of the drama were ones who in reality would have no element of drama or interest in their lives, and that 'some rather fine sentiments' were put into the mouths of people who he thought in reality would seldom bother their heads about anything other than earning their daily bread.

'The Pointsman' was followed on 22 October by a further visit of H.J. Leslie's company in 'Dorothy' which, though it had then been playing for hundreds of nights, still attracted large audiences and 'hearty' receptions.⁵⁸ The company was unchanged.

'Dorothy' was followed (on 29 October) by one week of the Carl Rosa Opera Company⁵⁹ which gave two revived works, 'Robert the Devil' which was given on Monday and Thursday, and 'The Jew's Revenge' which was given on Saturday night, as well as four of the regular operas of the repertoire, 'The Marriage of Figaro', 'Carmen', 'Mignon', and 'The Bohemian Girl' which were given on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (as a matinee).

'Robert the Devil' was by Meyerbeer and Scribe, and was first produced in Paris in 1831. The reviewer thought that Meyerbeer's work was analogous to the Drury Lane melodramas in that it was largely for sensational effect.⁶⁰ The work contained a ballet – a 'weird scene of incantation and resuscitation of the nuns in the cloisters of the ruined convent' – which (surprisingly) did not seem 'dragged

in by the heels' as such scenes often did. The scenery, dresses, and 'appointments' were for the most part specially prepared for this revival, the reviewer noted.

'The Jew's Revenge' was composed by M. Halevy with a libretto by Scribe, and done into English by a Mr Grist. The work was first produced in Paris in 1835, but had not often been performed in Britain. The French title of the work was 'La Juive', the central character being Rachel, thought to be a Jewess. She was charmed by Prince Leopold who was married to the Princess Eudora. For the purpose he had pretended to be a Jew. However, when his wife asked for a jewel that she had bought at Rachel's shop to be inscribed with his name, his conscience was pricked, and he confessed his deception to Rachel. She and her father, incensed, betrayed Leopold to his wife, and all three were sentenced to death and thrown into prison.

Rachel retracted her accusation, thereby saving her lover's life, and she and her father were offered a reprieve by Cardinal Brogni if they would become Christians. They would not, however, and Rachel was executed. Her father, just before he was led off to the scaffold too, told the Cardinal that Rachel was in fact the daughter whom he, the Cardinal, had lost in her infancy.

In fact Grist, in making his version, had changed this ending to a 'happier' one, but Carl Rosa had restored the original tragic denouement, to the reviewer's approval.⁶¹

The music was powerful, the plot intensely dramatic, and the opera provided plenty of opportunities for spectacle,

thought the reviewer, and he could see no reason for its neglect unless it was because the 'love interest' was inadequate, or because of the difficulty of finding a tenor with sufficient range to sing the role of the father.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company was followed on 5 November by Mr Lingard's company in 'the London success', 'Little Lord Fauntleroy'.⁶² This was an adaptation of the novel by its author, Mrs Hodgson Burnett. The reviewer thought that the play was of poor dramatic construction, but considered that as a sketch of 'child-life' it might command interest.⁶³

The play was simply a narrative 'the sayings and doings of Little Lord Fauntleroy', who had first to fight for his inheritance against the anti-American prejudices of his grandfather, the Earl of Doricourt, and then to defend it against the scheming of an American adventuress.

Substantially the play dealt in 'the artless philosophy' with which the hero healed the estrangement that his family had suffered. (In the basic situation the reviewer thought he detected echoes of Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair'.)

'Little Lord Fauntleroy' was followed on 12 November by Henry Irving, Marion Terry, and the Lyceum company who appeared in 'Faust' on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 'Louis XI' on Thursday, 'The Lyons Mail' on Friday, and 'The Bells' and 'Robert Macaire' on Saturday.⁶⁴ Though some provincial towns had twice before had opportunities

of seeing 'Faust' this was its first visit to Leeds. The other pieces were from Irving's repertoire.

Goethe's 'Faust' was adapted by Irving and W.G. Wills to allow of considerable spectacular elaboration. Its five acts were lavishly 'illustrated' (Irving toured most of the scenery with him) with 'gorgeous, charming, quaint, and weird views' culminating in a 'Witches' Carnival' on 'The Summit of the Brocken'.

The reviewer had little doubt that it was primarily this spectacle that the audience enjoyed.⁶⁵ The play, he said, 'revived a legend in dramatic form by methods which, while appealing to the intellect, also aim at pleasing the eye and ministering to the lighter but not less refined sensibilities of those who are unable to analyse the subtleties of Goethe's moralising'. Every part of the house was crowded, and the audience reacted to the piece with enthusiasm.

The description of the climactic scene given by the reviewer reveals the atmosphere of the performance, and conveys the spectators' excitement:

The arrival of Mephistopheles and Faust is accompanied by the flash of lightning and the roll of thunder. Witches fly through the air on broomsticks, and gruesome creatures flit across the stage in the dim light, through which are seen the gaunt figure and contemplative features of Mephistopheles as he witnesses the demoniacal revels. The fiendish crew mysteriously vanish, and Mephistopheles, in the orthodox scarlet costume, and with the light directed upon him, stands with arms extended, the only figure visible in the gloomy darkness that surrounds him. Faust in his excitement curses his fate, but his remorse is increased by a vision of Margaret, clad in spotless white, with a gash in her throat. The revels resume, and amid a dazzling blaze of fire the curtain falls.

Such an emphasis on the visual spectacle, which in this scene Irving virtually conducted from his central position on the stage, left the reviewer little room to notice the performance of the star, save to indicate the outline of his Mephistopheles: 'The arch-fiend is courteous, a gentlemanly personage, with a cynical expression and a sinister motive in every action. He can make himself agreeable with the roysterers, he can wheedle Faust as effectually as he can flatter the susceptible Martha, and having drawn his victim into his net he can smile sardonically at their fate and glory over their downfall'.

Irving's other performances were more susceptible of conventional criticism. His Louis XI was 'without a trait of heroism in his character, and destitute of every kingly and manly attribute', said the reviewer,⁶⁶ and it seemed a 'sin against art' to have revived this historical character from oblivion. It would have been hissed off the stage had it been attempted by any but Irving.

However, the king gave plenty of scope for Irving's powers: he was both old and ill, shambled, was slovenly, had eccentric habits, and was callously brutal and cunning.

Irving's 'analytical research into the emotions' allowed him to give a 'vividly realistic' representation of the character, bringing the king's 'intellectual pre-eminence' but 'moral vileness' to life. He invested the part with majesty, which only dissipated when the king prostrated himself at the feet of the father confessor, or when he

grovelled in the dust at the sight of Nemours's dagger. The only relief from all this gloom was Louis's brief essay at a smile at the purchased cheering of peasants in a forest scene, but this quickly disappeared.

The most impressive scene for the reviewer was that of the king's death which Irving's 'consummate art' invested with 'unequalled horror' (permissible, of course, and elevated to the highest art because the king was a villain). The plot was followed with 'breathless interest' by a large audience.

In Charles Reade's 'The Lyons Mail', 'every detail' of Irving's performance of the dual roles of Lesurques and Dubosc 'appealed to the imaginative faculties of a large audience'.⁶⁷ The piece was eminently melodramatic, and the audience relished the 'dignity and sorrowful pathos' of Lesurques, wrongfully led off to execution for robbing the Lyons Mail, and the villainous Dubosc's chuckling and gloating over the spectacle of his innocent double going to the scaffold.

Irving continued in melodramatic vein on the last night of his visit. The reviewer was impressed by his versatility in compassing 'the conscience-stricken and vision-haunted murderer' of Leopold Lewis's 'The Bells', and the huge leap to comedy and the 'fashionable, rollicking, and callous thief' in 'Robert Macaire'.⁶⁸

Even with the prices of admission doubled audiences had crammed the theatre for the week, and the reviewer 'had it on the highest authority' that Irving had taken more money for this week at the Grand Theatre than at any other provincial theatre on this tour. It had been seven years since Irving's previous visit, but when at the end of his performance on the Saturday night a speech was demanded of him, he promised that the interval before his next appearance would not be as long.

Henry Irving was followed on 19 November by a return visit of Hawtrey's company in 'The Private Secretary'.⁶⁹ (Early advertising had promised that this would be the piece's farewell visit.) The play attracted 'moderately large houses' still,⁷⁰ and though the company had undergone some changes, many of the principal parts were still in the same hands.

'The Private Secretary' was followed on 26 November by 'Mamma', an adaptation of 'Les Surprises du Divorce' by Sydney Grundy. (At the time of this visit to the Grand Theatre it was still playing to 'crowded' houses at the Royal Court Theatre in London.)

The central device of the piece was a divorce and the plot consisted of complex ramifications that followed it. Jack Pontifax was the main character, and he divorced his wife, Diana, because he could not stand his mother-in-law. He then remarried, but to avoid the possibility of a

recurrence of the problem, took care to choose the daughter of a widower.

However, the widower was revived by the settling of his daughter, and took off for the Continent where he met and married Diana. Not daring to forewarn his daughter of his marriage, he, his wife, and his mother-in-law, descended upon Jack's house to the latter's considerable chagrin.

To rectify the situation Jack, abetted by his ex-mother-in-law, contrived to provoke a second divorce - between the ex-wife and the new father-in-law.

The reviewer thought that this was 'the funniest of funny plays', being full of ludicrous situations, but there was only a 'thin' audience to give it an encouraging reception.⁷¹

'Mamma' was followed on 3 December by the annual visit of Edward Compton's Comedy Company which appeared in 'The School for Scandal' on Monday, 'The Rivals' on Tuesday, 'The Liar' and 'The Critic' on Wednesday, 'David Garrick' on Thursday and Saturday, and 'The Way to Keep Him' on Friday.⁷² With the exception of the last piece, these plays had all been in Compton's repertoire for some time. 'The Way to Keep Him' was written in the late eighteenth century by Arthur Murphy, and had been revived by Compton. The reviewer thought that many of its situations had been adapted by subsequent dramatists, thus making the original seem 'antiquated', but on the whole he thought it a worthy

play to revive, and commended it to younger playgoers.⁷³ He pointed out that it did not depend for its success upon stage effects, but upon the playing of its half dozen major characters, who embodied 'certain weaknesses of human nature' to which 'the dramatic corrective' was applied.

Though the play did not depend upon 'stage effects', nonetheless, the reviewer thought it a peculiar virtue of this performance that it created a stage picture which seemed as though it could have been drawn from Thackeray — thus it seems that it must have created a quaint, historical atmosphere for the reviewer.

Compton's Comedy Company was followed on 10 December for the last week of the season by a return visit of Hawtreys' company in 'The Arabian Nights'. The actress who played the 'gutta-percha girl' had been replaced by Marianne Santry whom the reviewer found to lack the 'spriteliness' with which he thought that the role should be played,⁷⁴ but otherwise the cast and the performance were unchanged.

'The Arabian Nights' brought the season to a close on Saturday, 15 December, and thereafter the theatre remained closed until 22 December, when the pantomime opened.

The pantomime was called 'Aladdin the Second and His Still More Wonderful Lamp', in consequence of its being the second Aladdin to be performed at the Grand Theatre. Again, it was written by J. Wilton Jones, whose libretto,

the reviewer thought, was 'clever', and 'occasionally biting'.⁷⁵ Jones had followed the story with uncommon fidelity, and was 'niggardly' in his distribution of puns. His local allusions (including censure upon the city for the smallness of its offer for Kirkstall Abbey which had come up for sale during the year, and satire upon the School Board) were up to date, but his political references were kept to a minimum.

The pantomime opened in the studio of Abanazar, the wicked magician. 'Through the lofty casement of the studio the beams of the moon are streaming from a stormy sky, falling upon the grotesquely formed hills and glistening lake which are visible beyond', and they further illuminated an assembly of witches gathered in musical revel.

Diavolo was summoned, a plot to lure Aladdin to the cave hatched, and the scene closed by the appearance of the slaves of the lamp and the ring who transported Abanazar to Canton to a spirited chorus by Offenbach.

The next scene was 'The Market Place, Canton', painted by Stafford Hall. Here, after some clowning by two 'Hiberno-Chinese policemen' (who also sang Irish songs) the principal characters of the piece were introduced, and Aladdin, having cast unlawful eyes upon the Princess on the way to her bath, the plot got underway. Aladdin was forgiven his 'crime' by the Emperor, but then Abanazar entered (disguised as a 'Cheap Jack'), and began to involve Aladdin in his schemes.

Darkness fell upon the scene, 'the windows of the quaint dwellings which stretch along the river side became brilliant with light and the stage was gradually peopled with a merry, dancing crowd of lantern-bearers'.

The following (front-cloth) scene was set in Widow Twankey's shop, whence Abanazar conducted Aladdin to the Enchanted Cave. Here they were unable to enter until Diavolo told them that 'entrance is gained by the "automatic" principle', that was, a penny had to be dropped into an appropriate slot. This banality cued the opening of the cave, and a transformation effect took the audience into its interior.

Following the story, Aladdin was incarcerated with the lamp, but rubbed his ring and was transported (despite the opposition of Diavolo) to the 'Garden of Jewels'. This was another scene by Stafford Hall, who had again chosen to use a moonlight effect:

The silvery orb shone through a lofty arch of interlacing trees, and threw a narrow track of glinting light on the water which faded into distance in the background, while the broad arched-over space in front remained shadowed in a greyish haze.

The light grew, and an elfin ballet ensued before the scene changed to the Widow's back kitchen, whither Aladdin returned. The scene ended with a concerted musical realisation that the Twankey family were now wealthy.

Aladdin was then able to relieve the Emperor's poverty, and thus win the Princess. However, Abanazar, disguised

as a Jewish pedlar, gained the lamp and transported Aladdin's palace to Egypt 'amid the flashing of lightning and pealing of thunder'.

Though Aladdin repossessed the lamp the remainder of the action remained in Egypt so that the spectacular set piece of the pantomime could be a 'Grand Egyptian Hall'. This was by Stafford Hall who seemed to the reviewer to have used every available inch of stage and filled it with dazzling light. 'Massive Egyptian pillars rise from a marble pavement and extend irregularly to the portico, through which a glimpse is caught of the red and cloud-streaked sun which illuminates an undulating landscape'.

As usual the scene contained an elaborate ballet, for which Lee Anderson received his by now customary call. At the end of the pantomime Stafford Hall, Freddie Fox, Henry Hastings, J. Wilton Jones, and Wilson Barrett (who made an exhortatory speech condemning grumblers and lavishly praising the pantomime) were all called also. The transformation scene was painted by Stafford Hall and Freddie Fox, and was entitled 'The Lily'. The reviewer thought it an 'imaginative and beautiful picture' and it closed the evening since the Harlequinade was omitted in view of the length of the performance.⁷⁶

Notes

- 1 Freddie Farren and Rubie Maude were also in the company.
- 2 Yorkshire Post, 13 March 1888, p. 4.
- 3 The company included William Morrison, and Edward Price. J.H. Savile was its manager.
- 4 Yorkshire Post, 21 March 1888, p. 5.
- 5 The company included Agnes Delaporte, Michael Dwyer, Walter Lonnen, Florence Lambeth, Arthur Barrows, Mr C.A. Randolph, Arthur Kingsley, and Sydney Doree.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 28 March 1888, p. 5.
- 7 The company included Maude Albert, Horace Lingard, Louis Kelleher, Frank Seymour, Mr Westlake Perry, and Grace Vicat.
- 8 Yorkshire Post, 3 April 1888, p. 5.
- 9 Yorkshire Post, 10 April 1888, p. 5.
- 10 The company included Charles Weir, Miss Bertie Willis, Walter Sealby, Mr F.M. Paget, William Farren jnr, Ernest Leicester, Agnes Knight, and Marie Stuart.
- 11 Yorkshire Post, 26 April 1888, p. 8.
- 12 The company included the Jarvis family, Alfred B. Cross, Mr J.S. Haydon, Agnes Templeton, Louis Gomersal, Henry C. Arnold, Kissie Wood, and Mrs R. Power.
- 14 The company further included Miss Carr-Shaw, Marion Cross, Mary Webb, Harry Sherwood, Charles Ryley, and Albert Christian.
- 15 There had been several changes in the company which now included William Calder (still), Henry George, Tom Cooper, Adria Hill, Alice Finch, Minnie Webb, Denis Coyne, George Minshill, and Frank Pearce.

- 16 Yorkshire Post, 9 May 1888, p. 3.
- 17 The company included Georgie Esmond, Mr J.R. Crawford, Mr Nelson, Miss Soultby, Mr Brennand, Mari Brewer, Maurice Drew, Mr Godfrey, Miss Darell, and Mr F. Hawley (these last two appeared in the curtain-raiser, 'A Conjugal Lesson').
- 18 Yorkshire Post, 16 May 1888, p. 5.
- 19 Yorkshire Post, 30 May 1888, p. 6.
- 20 The company included Julius Knight, Mr H.R. Teesdale, Arnold Bell, Harry Nicholls, Mr O'Brien, Mr Galton, Mabel Coates, Mr H.P. Hazlitt, Mr Mortimer, Mr Sheedy, Julia Seaman, Miss Calhaem, Elsie Carew, Miss Trevelyan, Mr Ellis, Miss Brewerton, Miss Bertie Leslie, and Kitty O'Brien.
- 21 The company included Mr W.H. Rawlins, Mr L. D'Orsay, Mr R. Medlicott, Mr L. Corrie, Mr A. Walcott, Mr A.E. Chapman, Annie Dacre, Delia Merton, Miss Crede Byron, and Marie Dagmar.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 6 June 1888, p. 8.
- 23 Yorkshire Post, 13 June 1888, p. 5.
- 24 The company included Mr W.H. Day, Rosian Filippi, Fred Kaye, Helen Palgrave, Agnes Verity, Francis White, Miss D. Duncan, Frederick Tyrell, and William Bowron.
- 25 Yorkshire Post, 20 June 1888, p. 3.
- 26 The company further included Mr Wilton Reede, Maude Elliston, and Mr G.H. Fulford.
- 27 The company included Margaret Soulby, Mr Mermer, Mr Chute, Mrs C.A. Clarke, and Mr Gordon.

- 28 Yorkshire Post, 28 June 1888, p. 5.
- 29 The company included Edward Sass, Clara Cowper, Emma Gwynne, William Calvert, Mr J.A. Howell, John Barnes, Elsie Chester, Miss Lennie Vining, Miss C. Lindsay, Edgar Freeman, Duncan Fleet, Charles Denton, Seymour Hicks, and Mr T. Foster.
- 30 Yorkshire Post, 3 July 1888, p. 8.
- 31 The company included Helen Creswell, Miss Swaine Kinton, Mr H. Russel, Florence Cornell, John Nesbitt, Mr D'Esterre Guinness, Mr A.D. Pierpoint, Mr Murray Hawthorne, and Mr H.M. Murray Innes.
- 32 Yorkshire Post, 10 July 1888, p. 4.
- 33 The company included Mr J.H. Rogers, Miss Warner, Marion Erle, Mr Hilton St Just, Mr Bedford, Mr Seaton, Mr Townrow, Miss Murphy, and Miss Murray — a company 'not overburdened with talent', but including some 'old favourites', said the reviewer.
- 34 Yorkshire Post, 9 August 1888, p. 5.
- 35 The company (only one or two of whom were from the original cast) included George Harker, Helen Leigh, Charles Wibrow, Mrs George Owen, Miss Frances Wyatt, Henry Fenwick, Mr Langley Russel, Mr F. Powell, Edward Irwin (a Leeds man who played, appropriately, a Yorkshire Manufacturer), Mr T.A. Palmer, Edwin Herrick, Mr F.H. Fenton, Mr Wensleydale, Mr J.B. Westcott, Mr Strand, Mr C. Barrett, Mr Stafford-Smith, and Lizzie Collier. Stafford Hall and F. Fox provided 'magnificent' scenery, said the Yorkshire Post reviewer.

- 36 Yorkshire Post, 14 August 1888, p. 5.
- 37 The company included Mr J.E. Dodson, Mr Roydon Evlynne, Rich Rutland, Blanche Ripley, Emily Armstrong, Mr W. Beresford, and Adrienne Dairolles.
- 38 Yorkshire Post, 21 August 1888, p. 5.
- 39 The company included Austin Melford and Mr Cooper-Cliffe.
- 40 Yorkshire Post, 28 August 1888, p. 5.
- 41 Yorkshire Post, 28 August 1888, p. 5.
- 42 Yorkshire Post, 4 September 1888, p. 4.
- 43 Yorkshire Post, 12 September 1888, p. 4.
- 44 The company included George Thorne, Mr F. Billington, Mr Cadwallader, Mr Herve D'Egville, Mr W.H. Montgomery, Elsie Cameron, Margaret Cockburn, Kate Forster, and Rosa Maitland.
- 45 The company included Miss Lingard, Mr F. Kemble Cooper, Charles Dalton, Mr H.T. Fischer, Mr A. Lyle, George Capel, and Mrs Bickerstaffe.
- 46 Yorkshire Post, 18 September 1888, p. 4.
- 47 Yorkshire Post, 19 September 1888, p. 5.
- 48 Yorkshire Post, 22 September 1888, p. 7.
- 49 Yorkshire Post, 20 September 1888, p. 3.
- 50 The company included John Billington, Eliza Johnstone, Effie Liston, Mr G. Shelton, Mr Brunton, Mr C. Wilson, and Mr C.M. Lourie.
- 51 Yorkshire Post, 25 September 1888, p. 4.
- 52 Yorkshire Post, 28 September 1888, p. 5.
- 53 The company lacked the better known Gaiety Theatre actors, but included Mr Ramsay Danvers, George Honey, Leonora Braham, Ada Blanche, and Addie Blanche.

- 54 Yorkshire Post, 3 October 1888, p. 5.
- 55 Agnes Delaporte had replaced Miss Wadman, and George Mudie, Mr Hallen Mostyn, Louisa Henschel, Mr E.T. Steine, and Albert James were in the company.
- 56 The company was 'most capable', said the reviewer, and included Agnes Knight, Miss le Bert Royston Keith, Wilfred Shine, Adolphus Ellis, and Henry Hampton.
- 57 Yorkshire Post, 17 October 1888, p. 4.
- 58 Yorkshire Post, 24 October 1888, p. 5.
- 59 The company included Barton McGuckin, Charles Manners, John Child, Mr Campbell, Fanny Moody, Martha Mayell, Arnadia Fabris, and Georgina Burns. The conductor was E. Goossens.
- 60 Yorkshire Post, 30 October 1888, p. 4.
- 61 Yorkshire Post, 5 November 1888, p. 8.
- 62 The company included Lucy Webling (who played Little Lord Fauntleroy, though she was not his original interpreter), Ada Mellon, Gladys Efolliott, John Benn, Mr H. de Lange, Alfred Tate, Charles Brooke, George Terry, Annie Osborne, Peggy Webling, and Mr W. Russel.
- 63 Yorkshire Post, 7 November 1888, p. 5.
- 64 The company included Henry Irving, Marion Terry, Mr Alexander, Mrs Pauncefort, Mr Harvey, Mr Wenman, Miss Coleridge, Mr Johnstone, Mr J. Carter, Mr Tyars, Mr Archer, Mr Clifford, and Miss Mills.
- 65 Yorkshire Post, 13 November 1888, p. 5.
- 66 Yorkshire Post, 16 November 1888, p. 8.

- 67 Yorkshire Post, 17 November 1888, p. 7.
- 68 Yorkshire Post, 19 November 1888, p. 5.
- 69 The company included Arthur Helmore, Mr Hargreaves, Mr Leveson Lane, Mr Wilmot Eyre, Harold Constable, Alice Bruce, and Hilda Temple.
- 70 Yorkshire Post, 21 November 1888, p. 5.
- 71 Yorkshire Post, 27 November 1888, p. 8.
- 72 The company included Edward Compton, Mrs Compton, Mr Vibart, Mr Marston, and Mr Young Stewart.
- 73 Yorkshire Post, 8 December 1888, p. 8.
- 74 Yorkshire Post, 11 December 1888, p. 5.
- 75 Yorkshire Post, 24 December 1888, p. 6.
- 76 The company included Colin Coop, the Brothers Haytor, Mr H.C. Arnold, Mr J.H. Rogers, Mr J.C. Rich, Messrs Rhodes and Connoly, James McWilliam, Bella Black, Eva Harrison, Kissie Wood, Kate Gurney, Florrie Heywood, Edith Desmond, Gipsy Lawrence, Pete Dwight, Mr Legere and the Legere troupe, Charles Barrett, Miss Gurnall, Clara Grey, Miss Hardwick, Miss Reybolds, Mea Tempest, Miss Hooper, Kitty Dennison, and Ethel Tempest. Sidney Jones conducted the orchestra.

CHAPTER XIII:1889

The new lease negotiated with Wilson Barrett in 1888 had allowed the management of the Assembly Rooms to revert to the theatre company. In fact the lease ran out on 30 April 1889, and Henry Hastings, who was managing the theatre in Wilson Barrett's absence (the latter was touring in America), wrote to the company secretary in February to point this out, and to ask if he should let the rooms after the expiry date.

A board meeting was held on 12 March which discussed the future letting of the Assembly Rooms, and it was decided to insert an advertisement in the Yorkshire Post, and the Manchester Guardian inviting offers for the tenancy. A further board meeting was held on 26 March which discussed such applications as there had been, and at a meeting on 9 April it was decided to ask Thomas Winn, the architect, to make suggestions as to how the Assembly Rooms might be adapted in order to make them more attractive. The directors had in mind the lowering of the floor of the Assembly Rooms to the level of the top of the shops, and improving access to the rooms (at this time the use of the balcony and gallery was prohibited).

On 26 April Kingston wrote to the Clerk of the Leeds Magistrates giving notice that he intended to apply for the transfer of the licence of the Assembly Rooms to himself

at the special licensing session on 3 May. On the same day Kingston received a letter from Henry Hastings offering on Wilson Barrett's behalf to take the tenancy of the Assembly Rooms again along with the theatre for a joint rent of two thousand, five hundred pounds (this amounted to an offer of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum for the lease of the Assembly Rooms). The directors considered this offer at their next meeting, but declined it - not surprisingly since they hoped to derive a rent of roughly fifteen pounds per week from it.

The loss of the use of the Assembly Rooms for rehearsal of the pantomime drove Henry Hastings to apply to rent them for the three weeks from 2 December to 21 December. He offered thirty pounds, but the directors demanded fifteen pounds per week, and Henry Hastings felt that he could not recommend such a price to Wilson Barrett. Consequently he later applied for, and got, the use of the Supper Room from 9 December to 21 December, and the kitchen attached to it from 2 December to 21 December at a rent of twenty pounds.

Meanwhile the directors pressed ahead with the plans for alterations which were extended to include the moving forward of the shop fronts to the building line. In fact the completion of this alteration provoked a threat of prosecution from the Building Clauses Committee of the Council (in a letter received on 6 December) on the grounds that pilasters then included in the shop fronts encroached by six and one half inches onto the highway. (Winn was

asked to instruct the company's solicitors as to what reply they should make.) The company did not install a permanent tenant, but booked the rooms out themselves. The rooms were advertised as suitable for concerts, entertainments, balls, private theatricals (there was no dramatic licence, though Kingston told one inquirer that he thought that a temporary one might be granted with sufficient notice), public meetings, social gatherings, and association, lodge, and club meetings. The advertisements were inserted in the Yorkshire Post and The Era. One applicant, a Mr E.R. Dainez, writing from the Egyptian Hall, Llandudno, inquired if the rooms were suitable for a miniature circus. Kingston was dubious, and in the event the rooms were not used for such a purpose, but more generally served the functions advertised.

Another consequence of the new lease was that some assessment of the dilapidation that had happened to the interior of the theatre had to be made. Under the terms of the old lease Wilson Barrett and the company were to appoint their own architects to undertake negotiations on this matter. The company appointed Thomas Winn, and, when persuaded that Henry Hastings was not competent for such a purpose, Wilson Barrett appointed George Corson to act for him.

It was agreed that the decoration of the ornamental plaster-work needed renewing, but it was discovered that before this could be done, the plaster-work would need

securing, since pieces large enough to cause injury had fallen into the auditorium. Hastings wrote on 6 May that the front of the balcony, the front of the upper circle, and the ceiling were in a dangerous condition, and that a large amount of the plaster-work seemed insufficiently secured. Scaffolding which was necessary to facilitate an examination was not erected, however, until the theatre closed for the summer vacation on 1 July. That the company accepted some responsibility for this is clear from the fact that they agreed to pay a quarter of the cost of erecting the scaffolding which otherwise was to be used for the redecoration. Winn was instructed to examine the chandelier as well as the ceiling when eventually he did make his inspection.

The company also had to carry out maintenance to the theatre's heating apparatus. There had been complaints about its efficiency since the theatre's opening, and after questioning what the company regarded as rather costly tenders, the contract to repair the apparatus was given to Messrs James Nelson & Son of Leeds whose estimate was £208 15s. for work in the auditorium, £183 15s. for work backstage, and a further £33 for making the two boilers work independently. (As a result of negotiations Wilson Barrett had to contribute £150 of this.) The firm gave a guarantee for two years, and promised to complete the work during the time that the theatre was closed in the summer. However, A.C. Millwaters prevented their access to the

refreshment rooms of the theatre for some of this time, and in the event Kingston had to write to them in early November regretting that the work had not been finished by then.

One of the walls of the kitchen had to be inspected, too, since it seemed to be leaning outwards as a consequence of a defect in the roof, and the roof over the scene hoist developed a leak which Henry Hastings complained had made the break line of the hoist so sodden that it was in need of instant replacement 'for fear of an accident'.

The Clerk to the Magistrates wrote early in the year to say that the balustrade and railing on the upper part of the theatre's main staircase were too low for safety, and that the magistrates required them to be raised to a minimum of three feet nine inches. Further safety precautions were taken by the installation of a direct line telephone to the fire brigade for which the company and Wilson Barrett shared the annual rent of ten pounds. (In 1889 Lloyds accepted the increase of insurance on the fire policy to the original £1,800.)

Added to these expenses the 1884 debentures were due to be redeemed on 1 July 1889. The directors decided to make a new issue to repay them with, but at an interest rate reduced by half of one per cent. Kingston wrote to debenture holders pointing out that the new debentures' interest rate of four and one half per cent was still three quarters of a per cent greater than the usual rate

for first class debentures, and indeed, this reduction seemed no impediment, for the seven thousand pounds worth of debentures that the company wished to issue was all subscribed for by 1 May, and offers arriving after then had to be turned down. The company's position seemed to be consolidating, for it was again able to pay a two per cent dividend to shareholders, and during the year share valuations went up from £6 13s. 4d. per fifty pound share to ten pounds per share.

Wilson Barrett's ability to pay his rent, however, did not improve, and though he had paid off his arrears up to the end of January on the eighteenth of that month, and he was up to date with his payments at the end of the first quarter, he thereafter steadily fell behind, and on 13 June he wrote to the directors asking them to allow his arrears (then £507 10s.) to remain unpaid. The directors replied that if he would pay half of that amount immediately they would allow the rest to wait for three months. Wilson Barrett wrote back on 2 July to say that he could not pay anything towards his arrears at that time, and a meeting was arranged for 2 August so that he could put his case to the directors. In the event they again came to an arrangement whereby Wilson Barrett paid one hundred pounds at the end of August, and promised to pay a further three hundred pounds by the end of the year. He was then to pay one hundred and fifty pounds per week during the run of the pantomime to clear all liabilities until the end of April 1890.

Three directors resigned during the year: Benjamin Goodman, who was replaced by R.H. Fowler; James Kitson, who was replaced as vice chairman by another Kitson — I. Hawthorne Kitson; and Sir Andrew Fairbairn tendered his resignation in October.

Eighteen eighty-nine saw an average eleven weeks of pantomime, but an increase to thirteen of the number of weeks of comic opera. Again there was only one week of opera given by Carl Rosa's Company, and there were only twenty-three weeks of dramas and comedies. There was a single week of panoramic melodrama (the same one that had returned to the Grand Theatre in 1888), and there were no fortnightly runs. Sixteen weeks were filled by returning or revived productions.

The pantomime closed on Saturday, 9 March, and was followed on 11 March by Carl Rosa's Light Opera Company in 'Paul Jones'.¹ This was an English version of the then most recent of Planquette's comic operas. Though the reviewer might have desired of it clearer enunciation and more 'emphatic personification' he generally thought the performance competent.² He added that he might have wished that Carl Rosa's first venture in this direction was something more 'English', and on the whole considered that the piece was not as tuneful as 'Les Cloches de Corneville', but he did admit that it was more humorous.

The subject of the piece was nautical. Paul Jones was a Breton sailor apprenticed to a ship's chandler with whose daughter he was desperately in love. In order to amass a fortune with which to pursue his suit he joined an American privateer, and at the end of three years returned just in time to save his beloved from a young Spaniard. His adventures were not yet over, however, and he was arrested by the Spaniards, but, confused with his rival by an eccentric governor, he eventually gained the upper hand, and escaped to marry his girl.

'Paul Jones' was followed on 18 March by a return visit of Violet Melnotte and Frank Wyatt's company in 'The Barrister' which was preceded by 'A Highland Legacy'. The cast of 'The Barrister' was substantially unchanged (though Agnes Hewitt had taken over the role of the Barrister's wife) and the piece's popularity seemed undiminished. The curtain-raiser was by Brandon Thomas, and this was its first performance. The reviewer thought that it suffered gravely from under-rehearsal, but that nonetheless its literary merits shone through.⁵ The subject of the play was the accession by the central character ('a clannish, almost unintelligible, and kilt-wearing Highlander') to the chieftainship of the McDonald clan.

'The Barrister' was followed on 25 March by a further return visit of 'Erminie' which, though it had not been to the Grand Theatre for two years, still seemed to maintain its attraction. The company had substantially changed in that time.

'Erminie' was followed on 1 April by Miss Patti Rosa and a 'selected' company from the Strand Theatre, London, managed by William Calder, who appeared in 'Bob', which was preceded by J. Wilton Jones's 'On an Island'.⁴ Miss Patti was the latest American import in the mould of Minnie Palmer. She sang 'quaint' songs, performed 'eccentric' dances, played the banjo, employed a comical gait that was peculiarly her own, and kept the audience merry with the comic and burlesque elements of a play that also, in the reviewer's opinion, attained the tragic and melodramatic.⁵

These latter aspects of the play, however, served mainly as a background in a piece which primarily involved the actress's playing of an impertinent schoolgirl who, under the assumed name Bob, spent much of her time tormenting her teacher.

'Bob' was followed on 8 April by a return visit of Wilson Barrett's company in 'The Golden Ladder'.⁶ Though there had been some changes in the cast, the reviewer declared that this signified no deterioration in the quality of the performance which, indeed, he thought had improved with maturity.⁷

'The Golden Ladder' was followed on 15 April by T.W. Robertson's company in 'the latest London success', A.W. Pinero's 'Sweet Lavender'.⁸ It had been running in London for over a year by the time of this visit to the

Grand Theatre, and was still drawing large houses there. The Yorkshire Post reviewer thought that it was a charming, bright, fresh, healthy, and well-constructed piece which combined comedy and pathos.⁹

The plot involved a baker, some barristers, an adopted son, an unhappy past, and the reformation of an endearing, drunk barrister which expedited a happy resolution of the plot.

Clement Hale was the adopted son of a banker who, though he was affianced to the latter's niece, contracted a passion for his landlady's daughter, Lavender. The engagement was broken by mutual consent, but Lavender's mother turned out to be a former lover of the banker, whose child Lavender was. Vengeful, the mother forbade the match, but, once the banker had been brought to humility and repentance by his financial ruin, she relented. The banker's bank was then saved by the bibulous lawyer who happened to come into a legacy at a convenient moment.

In fact this good angel of the piece was its central character, and the reviewer thought that it was so original and successful a creation that it was likely to be imitated.

'Sweet Lavender' was followed on 22 April by Messrs Cuthbert and Cobbe's company in Wilson Barrett's then most recent domestic drama, 'Nowadays' - subtitled 'A Tale of the Turf'.¹⁰ It had first been played at the Princess's Theatre, but this was its first visit to Leeds, and it was given a favourable reception by an (Easter) holiday audience.¹¹

Despite its subtitle it was principally a domestic drama. John Saxton was the master of Saxton Hall, and the owner of Bowdley Coal Mine. Before the opening of the play he had promised a loan of three thousand pounds to Gabriel Harper, but when the moment came to hand over the money, he refused, generally behaving in a violent and excitable manner.

His son, Tom, who was in love with Harper's daughter, Amy, took and handed over the money — for the sake of his father's honour, he claimed. Saxton forthwith branded his son a thief for this act, and broke with Harper.

Saxton also had a daughter, and although he intended her to marry Sir Harry Croydon, she was in love with a jockey, Bob Fressingwold. From a bookmaker, Dick Dowling, Saxton heard that Sir Harry was not all that reputable a character, and this was proved correct in the succeeding act where he was seen to enter into a conspiracy to steal the Derby favourite, Thunderbolt. (Thunderbolt, by the way, was owned by Gabriel Harper.)

Jenny Dowling, the bookmaker's daughter, and Sir Harry's unacknowledged wife, was involved in the plot and she was induced to look after the horse which she believed to belong to her husband.

In the meantime Saxton's coal mine had failed, and Harper exulted in his misfortune. Tom and his father were reconciled, but as he was employed by Harper, this caused a breach between these two, so that when it was discovered that the horse had been stolen, Harper had a warrant issued for Tom's arrest.

The action then switched to the Great Exhibition where amongst much toing and froing Dick Dowling and Tom overheard part of Sir Harry's plotting, and thus learned that the horse was hidden in Brixham. Hither they proceeded, only to be held at gun point by Jenny, ever faithful to her unworthy husband. Eventually, however, Sir Harry's character was made clear to her, and she relinquished the horse which Tom then rode to victory (Bob Fressingwold having been 'nobbled' by the villains). Thus Harper's fortunes were saved, the two families were brought together, the young couples united, and even Harry was forgiven for the sake of his wife.

'Nowadays' was followed on 29 April by a return visit of Henry J. Leslie's opera company in 'Dorothy'. This was advertised as its only visit to the Grand Theatre in 1889, and a large house attested to its continued popularity. There had been some changes in the company, but most of the principals were the same, and the reviewer had no reservations about their ability.¹² He did, however, complain that the band was not up to the mark.

'Dorothy' was followed on 6 May by a further return visit of Henry C. Arnold's company in 'The Lights o' London'. This production still seemed to hold its own, and though there had been some changes in the company,¹³ this did not signify to the reviewer any deterioration in the quality of the performance.¹⁴

The return of 'The Lights o' London' was followed on 13 May by the return of 'The Arabian Nights' (preceded by 'The Nettle'). There was but one change in the company — Katie Lee now played the Gutta-Percha girl — but the piece failed to draw a large audience. It was followed on 20 May by Messrs Horace Lingard and Van Biene's company¹⁵ in 'The Old Guard', a comic opera by Planquette with a libretto by H.B. Farnie. This production had first been given in Birmingham eighteen months prior to this visit to the Grand Theatre, and the piece was to go into London after it. It too had only a meagre audience, but the reviewer attributed this to the 'geniality' of the May evening.¹⁶

The plot was not over-elaborate. Napoleon had decreed that officers in his army should marry into the aristocracy, and thus Marcel, Captain of a detachment of the Old Guard, was affianced to Muriel, daughter of the Marquis D'Artemare. The Marquis would have preferred that his daughter marry an aristocrat, and so he consented to a ploy by which it was intended that Marcel should be married to a village beauty disguised as the Marchioness. Muriel was to attend the beauty in rustic disguise.

Marcel, however, fell in love with the disguised Muriel, while the Comte Gaston de la Roche Noir fell in love with the disguised village maid. This would only partly satisfy propriety, and so it was then discovered that the two girls had been exchanged as babies. Thus only Napoleon's edict was cheated — and then in letter, and not in spirit.

To the reviewer Planquette's music seemed to lack inspiration, being mainly a succession of waltzes and other dance measures, and generally he thought the work inferior to 'Les Cloches de Corneville' and 'Rip Van Winkle'.

The opera, being military in subject, lent itself to elaborate set scenes, and the reviewer considered that the composer had contrived some effective and rousing finales.

'The Old Guard' was followed on 27 May by D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Yeoman of the Guard'. This was then the latest of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and had first been produced eight months prior to this visit to the Grand Theatre.¹⁷

The plot of the opera had a greater affinity with the conventional melodramas than Gilbert and Sullivan's other works, and the reviewer thought that the latter's music was correspondingly more 'operatic', especially in the early part of the piece.¹⁸ The condemned prisoner's marriage to a blindfolded bride (who accepted the role for payment, and on condition that he would be executed) in order to cheat a scheming relative of his inheritance savours heavily of the domestic melodrama, as does the prisoner's almost inevitable escape from the Tower, which of course created an anxious dilemma for the heroine.

In the end true love coincided both with convenience and propriety — again melodramatically conventional — though in this context, the heart-broken, jilted Jack Point, who

fell quivering at the feet of the hero who had robbed him of his intended bride seemed to strike a somewhat daring, jarring note.

'The Yeoman of the Guard' was followed on 3 June by a third week of comic opera when Horace Guy's company appeared in 'Delia'.¹⁹ This was a new comic opera which at the time of this visit to the Grand Theatre had not been played in London.

The plot of the piece was thoroughly usual: a pretty German principality was ruled over by a despotic Duchess who wished her ward, Princess Delia, to marry her nephew, Prince Max. Delia, however, was in love with Conrad von Halderstadt, and the Prince with Marguerite, the chief maid of honour in the Duchess's house.

Out of this was woven a fabric free of notable incident, expressed in what the reviewer called 'reminiscent' dialogue,²⁰ but with 'very' tuneful music. Indeed the reviewer thought that the libretto had quite clearly been subordinated to the music (much of which was in waltz time) which was given an unusually competent performance.

'Delia' was followed on 10 June by J. Pitt Hardacre's company in a 'powerful drama', 'Right's Right' (of which the Yorkshire Post did not carry a review), and this in turn was followed on 17 June by W.J. Scanlan ('the representative Irish comedian of America') and his company in 'Shane-na-lawn'.²¹ Scanlan had brought his scenery

from America with him. It illustrated 'scenes on the banks of the winding Shannon'. Scanlan was author and composer of the play, which described itself thus in the programme: 'a true picture of Irish life without politics, red coat, or process server; abounding in startling dramatic situations, tragic and pathetic incidents, and idyllic love scenes, brightened by an abundance of genuine Irish comedy'. The reviewer described it as 'one of those pieces in which a light-hearted couple in humble circumstances make love and comedy in song, dance, and dialogue, against a background of melodrama'.²²

The contrast in these views underlines the difference between the taste of the mass audience, and the degree of sophistication that the reviewer wished upon the 'premier' theatre and its patrons. The people who took part in the melodramatic background of the play appeared to the reviewer to be afraid that they were boring, and he thought their suspicions well founded. The play was set in 1790 — but the reviewer could see no point in this other than that it allowed of 'very picturesque' costumes.

'Shane-na-lawn' was followed on 24 June by 'The Balloon', performed by Charles Sugden, Charles Groves, and the company of Messrs Warren-Wright and F.C. Yardley.²³ The play was written by G. Manville Fenn and J.H. Darnley, and similarities of structure and of mood would seem to indicate that it was written to capitalize upon the success of the two authors' previous piece, 'The Barrister'.

This first performance in Leeds was received with enthusiasm by a large audience, and the reviewer was in no doubt that it surpassed the former work.²⁴

The central character of 'The Balloon' was another professional man, this time a doctor, who became involved in farcical imbroglio as a consequence of his innocent misconceptions. He believed that he might have poisoned the aunt of his fiancée with an accidental dose of strychnine which had been intended for a dog. He was further tormented by the conviction that he was being pursued by a fascinating but revengeful lady (thought to be a widow) to whom he had previously written love letters.

Distracted by these fears he rushed down to the beach at Dover (where the piece was set) and leapt into a balloon. The ropes were cast off, and he appeared to drift out to sea.

In fact the doctor landed in a hedge, but the balloon was found in the Channel, and he was presumed dead. His return therefore resulted in a game of dramatic hide and seek, as he was taken by some to be a ghost, and by others to be an intruding stranger.

'The Balloon' brought the season to an end on 29 June, and the theatre remained closed for the following three weeks, to reopen on 22 July with the Avenue Theatre (London) company under the direction of Mr H. Watkin in the comic opera, 'Nadgy'.²⁵ This operetta by Chassaigne, with a libretto by Alfred Murray, was cast in the 'Falka' mould.

The Count de Rosen, nephew of the Emperor of Austria, and a reckless young man, was in love with Nadgy, a danseuse at the Opera. The Emperor himself and many members of his court were similarly smitten, however, and the Emperor wished the Count to marry his ward, Etelka, an Hungarian Princess. Etelka was in turn in love with one Rakoczy, an Hungarian patriot who had followed Etelka to the Emperor's palace though at peril of being arrested.

As the Count did not dare offend his uncle he and Etelka agreed to a mock marriage ceremony after which they intended to separate. After the wedding, therefore, the Count fled to Nadgy, but she, enraged by what she thought to be a genuine ceremony, was revengeful and bent on making trouble.

However, the patriot carried off Etelka (who was believed to be the queen of Hungary) and, after some 'adventures familiar in a score of works',²⁶ the appropriate pairs were married.

The music seemed commonplace but pleasant to the reviewer who particularly favoured a 'whimsical duet' with the refrain 'tzim-tzim-tzig-a-zig-ziga'.

'Nadgy' was followed on 29 July by Mr and Mrs Hubert O'Grady, Shiel Barry, and company in 'The Fenian'.²⁷ This was a sensational piece set in Dublin in 1870, and based upon the romantic love of Lieutenant Tracey of the Eleventh Hussars, and Helen Lynch, the coastguard's daughter, and sister to a Fenian. Both Colonel Tracey (the hero's

father) and the Fenians were opposed to the match, and the latter contrived to have the hero arrested for treason and sentenced to be shot. Virtue, and true love, triumphed in the end nonetheless.

'The Fenian' was succeeded on 5 August by Captain H. Pomeroy Gilbert's company, with twin Arabian horses, Pegasus and Bucephalia, in 'Still Alarm', a play 'direct' from the Princess's Theatre for the Bank Holiday, and doubtless suitably exciting and sensational, though the Yorkshire Post did not review it.

'Still Alarm' was followed on 12 August by Arthur Roberts and his company who appeared in 'the original burlesque', 'Lancelot the Lovely'.²⁸ As with other burlesques, the reviewer thought that this one bore little resemblance to the legend on which the joint authors (under one composite pseudonym, Richard Henry) had based it.²⁹ The burlesque functioned rather as a vehicle for speciality or variety types of performance. Arthur Roberts, for example, drew the reviewer's commendation for a scene in which he both juggled and manipulated cards in mime. When Arthur Roberts was (rarely) off the stage, the audience's attention was maintained by lavish costumes, pretty faces, and graceful dances.

The reviewer averred that 'Lancelot the Lovely' was the most successful of Avenue Theatre burlesques, but he thought it could hardly be called a drama.

'Lancelot the Lovely' was followed on 19 August by John Hart's company which appeared in 'Carina'.³⁰ This was a comic opera with music by Julia Woolf, and libretto by E.L. Blanchard and C. Bridgman, with alterations by T.F. Doyle and Mr F. Bower. The plot of the piece was not extraordinary: a Cuban merchant, Don Lago San Diego, had been promised the hand of Carina by her father, General Bobadillo del Barcelona, but her affections lay elsewhere, and her father found it necessary to keep her locked up. Don Felix de Tornado was, in fact, her lover, but he had been rejected by the General. However, with the aid of his lackey, Cadrillo, who impersonated the Cuban, and Cadrillo's sweetheart, Zara, who outwitted Carina's guardians, true love was enabled to find its way.

The reviewer thought that the work was not harmed by the fact that it bore generic resemblance to Wallace's 'Maritana'.³¹ He considered it would, rather, profit from the popularity of the latter piece. He did, however, cavil at what he considered the interpolation of 'variety business' and 'antiquated Christy Minstrel jokes'. Otherwise the music was sweet and tuneful, the dresses beautiful, and the scenery pretty and effective.

'Carina' was followed on 26 August by Wilson Barrett, Miss Eastlake, George Barrett, and the Princess's Theatre company in 'Ben-my-chree' on Monday, 'Good Old Times' on Tuesday and Saturday, 'Hamlet' on Wednesday, 'Claudian' on Thursday, and 'Lord Harry' on Friday.

A crowded, 'pantomime'³² house greeted Wilson Barrett's return with 'utmost cordiality' on the Monday night, when the performance of 'Ben-my-chree' was given in the presence of the author on whose novel the piece was based, Hall Caine. He was present to witness an enthusiastic reception for the restoration of the play's 'tragic' ending (with which the play had first been produced, but which had been changed during the performances at the Princess's Theatre).

At the end of the play Wilson Barrett was called to make a speech and said that if the reception of the other pieces during the week was as good as that for 'Ben-my-chree' then he would during his long (forthcoming) absence in America be wishing to return to Leeds, a place where Hall Caine had remarked that he must be at home.

'Good Old Times' was a second collaborative venture by Wilson Barrett and Hall Caine. Less favourable critical opinion than that of 'Ben-my-chree' had preceded it to Leeds, and the reviewer admitted that the follow up was inferior to its forerunner.³³ Nevertheless it was watched by a crowded house.

'Ben-my-chree' had been adapted from Hall Caine's novel, but 'Good Old Times' was written directly as a play, and bore many more of the familiar traits of Wilson Barrett's dramas. The hero was a Cumberland sheriff, John Langley, who had married a woman, Mary, of whose past he knew nothing. Mary had had a former lover, Grainger, and there was a suspicion that she had been involved with him

in the murder of her father. With melodramatic irony John Langley had unknowingly signed a warrant for her arrest because of this. However, Grainger turned up (with his wife Lucy) at Langley's Hall, and insisted with alternate threats and pleas on a private interview with Mary in the garden. Driven by him to desperation Mary took out a revolver, and a struggle ensued which ended when the gun went off, wounding Grainger. Langley had been brought to the scene (Lucy told him what was happening out of jealousy) and he then learned of his wife's past. Nonetheless he nobly took the blame for the shooting upon himself.

Accordingly he was transported to Tasmania, whither his devoted wife followed him. There, 'exciting scenes of bush life, with stirring episodes of plottings and escapes, riots and robberies, revenges and reconciliations' followed one another until justice caught up with the villains and Langley and his wife were reunited.

The play, which was beautifully set by Walter Hann, abounded in dramatic action which mitigated otherwise unpleasant elements to the reviewer's eyes, and Wilson Barrett was given scope to demonstrate the power and pathos at his command in the 'unassuming' and 'unsuspecting husband at his quiet home' and the 'long-suffering convict who bears the cruel taunts of his tormentors'.

'The Lord Harry' was co-written by Wilson Barrett and Henry Arthur Jones. It was first produced at the Princess's

Theatre early in 1886, but it had undergone some revision by the time of this, its first visit to Leeds.

The piece was set during the English Civil War. Castle Zayland in Somerset was held by the Puritans, and besieged by the Royalists. Lord Harry Bendish was a brave and fearless Royalist warrior who infiltrated the castle, disguised as a Puritan. He was recognised and made prisoner in the house of Colonel Breame where he awaited execution. Lord Harry was, however, in love with Colonel Breame's daughter, Esther, and with her aid he contrived to escape.

A Parliamentarian, Captain Ezra Promise, conceived a treacherous ruse by which Lord Harry was enticed back, but an end to the play was contrived by which he and Esther could marry without sacrifice of conscience on any part, and the perfidious Promise was shot.

The reviewer thought that though Lord Harry was not one of Wilson Barrett's most powerful roles,³⁴ nonetheless it was most striking and attractive, and in it his 'brave, chivalrous, calm, and artless cavalier' was able to demonstrate varying moods of 'contemptuous indifference, lofty dignity, and overpowering passion'.³⁵

Wilson Barrett's week was followed on 2 September by Oscar Berringer's company in 'Little Lord Fauntleroy'. This was a return visit of the company, with the exception that the title role was on this occasion played by Vera Berringer, who, under the direction of Mrs Kendal, had been its originator.³⁶

'Little Lord Fauntleroy' was succeeded on 9 September by Isabel Bateman, supported by Edward Compton's company in a revival of 'Jane Shore' which was given all the week with the exception of Friday, when 'Mary Warner' was played instead. In its turn 'Jane Shore' was followed on 16 September by Bella Pateman, Robert Pateman, and company,³⁷ in Pettitt and Sims's 'Master and Man'. This, their then most recent piece, was of a kind with their others - liable to arouse the 'honest feelings' of pit and gallery, in the reviewer's estimation.³⁸ Its construction was of a sequence of elaborately staged and melodramatically exciting scenes.

The plot concerned a beautiful woman who was loved by three men: Jack Walton, the hero, Robert Carlton, an ironmaster, and Humphrey Logan, the latter's foreman. Carlton and Logan conspired to have Walton convicted of attempted murder, and kidnapped his child, but when Walton saved Logan from death at the hands of his enraged workmen, the villain was overcome with gratitude, and told the truth, thus clearing the way for a happy ending.

Clearly the piece had an industrial context, and in one of the scenes the reviewer felt that the scenic artist (W.T. Hemsley) had depicted a furnace fire at the ironworks with 'considerable realism'.³⁹

'Master and Man' was followed on 23 September by a further return visit of Minnie Palmer who appeared in 'My Sweetheart' which was performed all week except Friday,

when 'My Brother's Sister' was given. Minnie Palmer's performance in 'My Sweetheart' appeared unimpaired despite the seven years for which she had been playing it, though the reviewer thought that her voice was not as fine as it had been.⁴⁰ Some new songs and business had been introduced into the piece, and there were some new members of the company.⁴¹

Minnie Palmer was followed on 30 September by a return visit of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Yeoman of the Guard' which was given by a substantially unchanged cast to as big an audience as it had had at its first performance in Leeds.

'The Yeoman of the Guard' was followed on 7 October by Charles Dornton's company in a revival of 'The Silver King' (of which Dornton had the provincial rights⁴²).

'The Silver King' was followed on 14 October by the visit of Mrs Langtry (who had not been to Leeds for some years). She appeared in three plays: 'Esther Sandraz' on Monday and Tuesday, 'As You Like It' on Wednesday and Thursday, and 'Twixt Axe and Crown' on Friday and Saturday.⁴³

'Esther Sandraz' was an adaptation by Sydney Grundy of Belot's novel, 'La Femme de Glace'. In it Mrs Langtry played the role of an abandoned and vengeful mistress, spurned by the lover for whose 'unimpeachable taste' she had bedecked herself in finery (Mrs Langtry, said the reviewer, had brought a new play and plenty of new gowns⁴⁴).

After a year she pursued the villain to his married home where, not unnaturally, his wife began to suspect his past. The old lover also began to suspect his wife of having an affair with one Deschamps. Eventually the lover readdressed himself to Esther, but she left the house with Deschamps (with whom she had struck up a 'platonic' friendship). Thinking that Esther was his wife eloping, and enraged, the former lover shot her, and Esther's 'pathetic' death scene was followed by the lover's suicide.

The reviewer thought that the piece was one of which Sarah Bernhardt would have made a success — it had a reforming courtesan, whose swift reversals of fate and passion led inexorably to a tragic end. But, though Mrs Langtry's acting had improved since she first took to the stage, she could not attain the necessary tragic stature. She was more successful in the lighter passages of the play.

Again, Mrs Langtry seemed at home as Rosalind in 'As You Like It' only where there was no call for 'delicate touches of comedy', and the reviewer felt he must point out her inferiority to such actresses as Mary Anderson, Madame Modjeska, Miss Lytton, and Miss Wallis in this role.⁴⁵

Mrs Langtry was followed on 21 October by Horace Lingard and August Van Biene's company in 'The Brigands', a comic

opera by Offenbach.⁴⁶ Its central characters were a brigand chief, Falsacappa, and his daughter, Fiorella. Falsacappa planned to rob the Duke of Mantua of three million francs which was to be given to him on the day that he married the Princess of Granada.

Falsacappa intercepted a royal messenger who was preceding the Princess with a picture of her, and substituted for it a likeness of Fiorella, whom the Duke had never seen. The brigands then took possession of an inn where they locked up the landlord and disguised themselves as waiters and cooks. They dealt similarly with the Princess and her guard when they arrived at the inn: the Princess was locked in a bedroom, while the brigands disguised themselves as her guard.

Eventually their plan was foiled (after they had deceived the Duke and robbed a courtier of his watch) and they were sentenced to death. Fiorella, however, prevailed upon the Duke to spare them since she had saved the Duke's life (by helping him to escape her father's clutches) earlier in the story.

The piece was well received by a large audience.⁴⁷

'The Brigands' was followed on 28 October by 'Girouette', a comic opera by MM Hennery and Bocage, done into English by Robert Reece, and with music by Mona Caedes. It was performed by Charles Wibrow's comic opera company.⁴⁸

Like many other comic operas, 'Girouette' was concerned with matrimonial plotting and counterplotting, with an element of disguise, and set in a European castle.

The castle, in fact, was called the castle of Birminstorff, and in it lived the governor and his fair daughter, Frederique. Eustace, Count of Toledo, and Hildebert, Count of Brindisi, were rival suitors to Frederique. The Governor (whose debts had to be paid off by his future son-in-law) favoured Eustace, but, inevitably, Frederique preferred Hildebert. This formed the basis of the plot in which Hildebert passed the greater part of the performance disguised as Eustace, while the Governor tried to guess who was who.

Eventually the wrong identification was confidently made, and Hildebert was married to Frederique in place of Eustace. The latter, however, found solace in marrying Frederique's foster-sister, Susanne.

'There is not much plot here', noted the reviewer, 'but the thinness of the story is more than counterbalanced by an abundance of light and sparkling melodies, many of which were vociferously encored'.⁴⁹

'Girouette' was followed on 4 November by the Carl Rosa Opera Company which performed six operas: 'Carmen' on Monday and as a matinee on Saturday, 'Bohemian Girl' on Tuesday, 'Lurline' on Wednesday, 'Robert the Devil' on Thursday, 'The Star of the North' on Friday, and 'Lucia de Lamermoor' on Saturday evening. Only two of these works offered any novelty: Donizetti's 'Lucia de Lamermoor' though 'well worn' had not been played in Leeds for some years, and 'The Star of the North' (by Meyerbeer and Scribe),

though a version of it had first been given in England at Covent Garden in 1855, had not been seen in Leeds before.

In fact the early English version of this work had been performed with recitative substituted for the composer's spoken dialogue since it was given by the Italian Opera. In the production that visited the Grand Theatre, Carl Rosa, in the last work that he arranged before his death, had restored the opera to its original form (though some of the military spectacle with which Meyerbeer and Scribe had invested it had been reduced, and it had been shortened from its original four hours length).

'The Star of the North' proved an excellent vehicle for Georgina Burns who played in turn a Russian peasant, a gipsy, a soldier, a lunatic ('in the white robes that are on the operatic stage an inseparable accompaniment of lunacy'⁵⁰), and in the end donned imperial robes.⁵¹

The reviewer regretted the lack of size of the orchestra in a performance for which he could otherwise find nothing but praise.

Carl Rosa's Opera Company was followed on 11 November by a return visit of Messrs Cuthbert and Cobbe's company in 'Nowadays'.⁵² The reviewer remarked that the dramatist could not be expected to be absolutely accurate in his presentation of the racing world with which this piece had to do, but thought that he had done enough in creating several striking scenes as well as a 'picturesque realisation' of Derby day.⁵³ Thus he stated in condensed form the attractions of the piece.

'Nowadays' was followed on 18 November by Henry J. Leslie's company in 'Doris'.⁵⁴ This was a comic opera by Alfred Cellier with a libretto by B.C. Stephenson which the reviewer thought weak in construction and lacking in interest and cohesion.⁵⁵ It concerned the daughter of a London alderman and the temporary thwarting of her love by her involvement with a fugitive cavalier. The piece was set between the accession and the coronation of Elizabeth I, and after unjustifiably arousing the jealousy of Doris's lover the cavalier was eventually pardoned by the queen. The action began in the aftermath of a festival which the alderman had staged to celebrate the new queen's passing through Highgate to her coronation, then transferred to Cheapside, and in the third act to a court mask where the cavalier received his pardon. Despite the reviewer's strictures a large audience responded to the work with enthusiasm.

'Doris' was followed on 25 November by Carl Rosa's Light Opera Company which returned in 'Paul Jones', and this was followed on 2 December by the annual visit of Compton's Comedy Company⁵⁶ in his usual round of comedies: 'The School for Scandal' on Monday, 'She Stoops to Conquer' on Tuesday, 'Money' on Wednesday, 'The Road to Ruin' on Thursday, 'The Honeymoon' on Friday, and 'David Garrick' on Saturday. A fairly large audience (even in the 'best' parts of the house) expressed a 'hearty satisfaction' with the Monday night's performance.⁵⁷

Edward Compton's company was followed on 9 December by a return visit of Warren-Wright and F.C. Yardley's company in 'The Balloon' which brought the season to an end on Saturday, 14 December. Thereafter the theatre remained closed until the first night of the pantomime, 'Mother Goose', on 23 December.

J. Wilton Jones, as was usual, had written 'Mother Goose' (a character with whom no particular story was associated, so he was able to invent a rather more melodramatic drama than for other pantomimes). It was written in blank verse — an innovation about which the reviewer had doubts as it seemed to lack the briskness and play upon words that the conventional couplets provided.⁵⁸

A second innovation was that the pantomime was set almost entirely in fifteenth-century Yorkshire. The story began in the Leeds forge, 'an animated scene, the works being in full blast, leviathan cranes making child's play of mammoth corrugated boilers, and demon puddlers and hammerers and riveters being hard at work, their assaults on the metal keeping rhythmical beat to the music of "The Harmonious Blacksmith"'.

The plot of the pantomime concerned the wicked designs of Squire Bugie upon the heroine, Mavis. The Squire had stolen the lands that Mavis had inherited, and to make his ownership more secure he wished to marry her. Mavis, however, was in love with Colin, a handsome village lad.

The Squire had stolen Mavis from her parents when she was a child, and put her in the care of Dame Crump, the village crone, and in his villainous way he also persecuted Mother Goose who, driven to distraction, entered upon a contract with Mephistopheles by which she obtained magical powers in exchange for her soul.

The second scene was of a Yorkshire village in winter. This was 'a picturesque full set scene with snow on the roofs and lights in the windows of the houses and the quaint old church'. It was Christmas Eve and Mother Goose was seen wandering homeless and destitute. Jones here had 'struck a deeply pathetic vein', said the reviewer. Mother Goose exclaimed:

Christmas! A time of peace on earth - goodwill to men;
Of blazing hearths - of food and drink galore;
Of happy children round the Christmas tree.
Ring out, ye bells, and mock the starving poor,
Who shiver in bare huts and garrets. Christmas!

A choir entered singing a carol to complete the pathetic irony. However, the fairies were at hand to bring Mother Goose relief. They presented her with the magic goose that laid golden eggs. The emotional tide turned, and Mother Goose was befriended by Dame Crump, her son, Simple Simon, and Colin (who was further assisted by Sir Lancelot and Sir Bevidere, two Knights of the Round Table who went about the country disguised as troubadours helping damsels in distress).

By her powers of witchcraft Mother Goose instantly transformed the scene from winter to summer, and there followed a ballet of summer flowers.

A cockney comedian, Joskyn, who recurred throughout the piece trying to finish telling a story, was introduced, and then a tender love scene between Mavis and Colin revealed that the latter was without a penny in the world. Mother Goose thereupon gave him her magic namesake.

The next scene (by Stafford Hall) was 'a pretty view of the river Aire near Keighley'. There the Squire and his henchmen attempted to kidnap Mavis, slay the goose for the sake of its eggs, and evict Dame Crump from her cottage. They were opposed by Colin and his Knights, but in the next scene (set inside the Dame's cottage) they succeeded in carrying off Mavis - to Templenewsam House, Leeds. The Dame was evicted, and the goose arrested.

The following scene was set in the banqueting hall of Templenewsam House - a 'good piece of architectural drawing' by Frederic Fox - where, after a wedding feast (the Squire was still planning to marry Mavis), there was a 'black and white ballet'. (The reviewer objected that this ballet matched ill with the 'brown wainscotted walls and trussed roof'.)

Eventually, of course, Mavis was rescued by Colin who was assisted by a whole band of Knights Templar 'in martial array'. But the lovers' vicissitudes were not yet over,

for the Squire pursued them in the next scene, which was set in Knaresborough. There, however, by her magic, and in the nick of time, Mother Goose rescued the situation by throwing down a crystal ball which exploded, carrying everyone instantly into the nineteenth century, and in fact to the North Eastern Railway station in Leeds, 'with a railway train at the platform, and all the bustle of a modern railway station in a big town'. All the characters boarded the Scarborough train, and again by her magic Mother Goose transported them to Scarborough Spa. This formed the big scene of the pantomime 'with the Spa building, the sea wall, and Herr Meyer Lutz's band pavilion solidly built out'.

There was a ballet of sports - fishing, shooting, lawn tennis, football, etc. - and 'a realistic review of Yorkshire Volunteers' (this drew 'round upon round' of applause).

The last scene of the pantomime was set in Kirkstall Abbey where the plot was unravelled, and everything set to rights. In such auspicious surroundings Mother Goose was able to cheat Mephistopheles of her soul by claiming that there were no witnesses to their agreement. Stafford Hall's transformation scene was 'The Apotheosis of Bacchus'.⁵⁹

Notes

- 1 The company included Michael Dwyer, Camille D'Arville, John Wainwright, Mr E. Marshall, Mr W. Cheeseman, Mr Clarence Hunt, Mr Richie King, Mr Leon Roche, Nelly Clayton, and Amy Broughton. The orchestra was conducted by F. Sidney Ward.
- 2 Yorkshire Post, 12 March 1889, p. 5.
- 3 Yorkshire Post, 19 March 1889, p. 8.
- 4 The company included Mary Ruby, Elsie Carew, Madeline L'Estrange, Ida Lawrence, William Farren jnr, Mr R. Pringle, Oswald Yorke, Mr W. Friend, John W. Dunne, and Mr G.T. Minshill. 'On an Island' was received with 'much favour'.
- 5 Yorkshire Post, 2 April 1889, p. 5.
- 6 The company included Mr G.H. Haler, Rose Murray, Allen Thomas, Edward Irwin, Mr J.E. Manning, Charles Barrett, Mr E. Skelton, Otto Williams, Mr F. Powell, Mrs Stafford-Smith, Frances Wyatt, Mr W.S. Hardy, and Mr Langley Russel.
- 7 Yorkshire Post, 9 April 1889, p. 6.
- 8 The company included T.W. Robertson, Mr W.T. Lovell, Emilie Grattan, Cora Stuart, Maria Davies, Mrs Kemmis, Mr Nicol Pentland, Sam Sothern, Arthur Clive, Alfred Ferguson, and Mr J.B. Gordon.
- 9 Yorkshire Post, 16 April 1889, p. 4.
- 10 The company included William Rignold, Mr Coventry Davies, Mr M. Hay, Fred Powell, Tom Park, Stanley Pringle, Bessie Rignold, Miss Bealby, and Agnes Knight.

- 11 Yorkshire Post, 30 April 1889, p. 5.
- 12 Yorkshire Post, 30 April 1889, p. 5.
- 13 The company included Henry C. Arnold, Frederick Maxwell, Haidee Wright, Mrs R. Power, Kissie Wood, Amy Mills, Mr J.S. Haydon, and Mr J.J. Bartlett.
- 14 Yorkshire Post, 7 May 1889, p. 8.
- 15 The company included Horace Lingard, Agnes Delaporte, Louise Henschel, Amy Thornton, Frank Wesley, James Leverett, Mr H. Trant Fischer, Mr J.C. Piddock, and Mr J.T. Tanner.
- 16 Yorkshire Post, 21 May 1889, p. 4.
- 17 The company included Mr W. Lemaitre (who took over David Fischer's role after the latter's death on the previous Saturday night), George Thorne, Charles Conyers, Fred Billington, M. Herve D'Egville, Frank Tebbutt, Margaret Cockburn, Elsie Maynard, Haidee Crofton, Elsie Cameron, and Annie Harding. The orchestra was conducted by Mr P.W. Halton.
- 18 Yorkshire Post, 28 May 1889, p. 5.
- 19 The company included Fanny Wentworth, Bertha Hochheimer, Adelaide Newton, George Mudie, Mr Lytton Grey, Mr Louis Balton, Arthur Kingsley, Ella Clinton, and Blanche Leamington.
- 20 Yorkshire Post, 4 June 1889, p. 4.
- 21 The company included Thaddeus Shine, Mr Scanlan, and Miss Mattie Ferguson.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 18 June 1889, p. 6.

- 23 The company included Charles Sugden, Charles Groves, Mr H.P. Murray-Innes, Ida Goldsmith, Rosy Robertson, and Miss G. Olliffe.
- 24 Yorkshire Post, 26 June 1889, p. 5.
- 25 The company included Harry Grattan, Carrie Cooke, Aimie Halford, Joseph Tapley, Alec Marsh, Mr E.D. Ward, and Sallie Turner.
- 26 Yorkshire Post, 23 July 1889, p. 5.
- 27 The company included Hubert O'Grady, his wife, Shiel Barry, Mr E.F. Douise, Richard Brennand, and Gracie Edward.
- 28 The company included Arthur Roberts, Miss Dell Thompson, Grace Huntley, Mr Wheatman, and Mr Campbell.
- 29 Yorkshire Post, 29 August 1889, p. 8.
- 30 The company included Ada Lincoln, Josephine Findlay, Vera Carew, Grace Sprague, Lillian Belmont, Kate Sinclair, Marie Shields, Fanny Selby, Mr E.S. Gofton, Walter Gilbert, Louis Kelleher, Edward Louis, Mr J.W. Edgar, and Arthur Giles. Fred Vincent was the company's director, and the musical director was W.E. Lawson.
- 31 Yorkshire Post, 20 August 1889, p. 5.
- 32 Yorkshire Post, 27 August 1889, p. 5.
- 33 Yorkshire Post, 28 August 1889, p. 5.
- 34 Yorkshire Post, 31 August 1889, p. 7.
- 35 The company included Wilson Barrett, Miss Eastlake, George Barrett, Mr Cooper-Cliffe, Austin Melford, and Mr J. Welch.
- 36 The company included Mr G.M. Somerset, Leonard Outram, Helen Leigh, Frances Ivor, Ernest Hendrie, Cyril Vernon,

Mr F.L. Branscombe, Fred Baxter, and George Hughes.

The play was preceded by a curtain-raiser, 'Parson's Play', by Scott Battams.

37 The company included Mr J.R. Crawford, Gerald Maxwell, Robert Nelson, Luke Foster, and Retta Walton.

38 Yorkshire Post, 17 September 1889, p. 5.

39 The Yorkshire Post reviewer indicated that there were two other scenic artists: Richard Douglas, and R.C. Durant.

40 Yorkshire Post, 24 September 1889, p. 6.

41 The company included Henry P. Clarks, Herbert Sparling, Mr W.J. Robertson, George Bernard, and Helen Palgrave who were new members.

42 The company included Mr E.J. George, Maude and Edie King, Mr Ashley Page, Adria Hill, and Mr J.J. Bartlett.

43 The company included Lawrence Cautley, Arthur Bouchier, Amy McNeil, Mr Everill, and Mrs Charles Calvert.

44 Yorkshire Post, 15 October 1889, p. 5.

45 Yorkshire Post, 17 October 1889, p. 6.

46 The company included Mr Hallen Mostyn, Mr R. Morand, Frank Wesley, Agnes Delaporte, Marie Luella, Laurence Wensley, and Geraldine St Maur.

47 Yorkshire Post, 22 October 1889, p. 5.

48 The company included Giulia Warwick, Ivy Warner, Marion Erle, Charles Wibrow, Mr F.S. Gilbert, Mr Calvering Power, Sidney Harcourt, and Mr Westlake Perry.

49 Yorkshire Post, 30 October 1889, p. 4.

50 Yorkshire Post, 9 November 1889, p. 5.

- 51 The company included Kate Drew, Mr F.H. Celli, John Child, Mr Aynsley Cooke, Marion Drew, Miss V. Kranski, Mr W. Esmond, Mr Belton, Mr Campbell, and Mr Somers.
- 52 There had been many changes in the company since it had last been in Leeds, and it now included William Rignold, Tom Park, Bessie Rignold, and Margaret Soulby.
- 53 Yorkshire Post, 12 November 1889, p. 6.
- 54 The company included Effie Chapuy, Laura Maxwell, Mr C. Ryley, Florence Perry, Beatrice Grosvenor, Annie Dwelley, Sydney Tower, Albert McGuckin, Mr King, Mr Morgan, Edward Thomas, Edward Thirlby, and Percy Compton.
- 55 Yorkshire Post, 19 November 1889, p. 5.
- 56 The company included Edward Compton, Clarence Blakiston, Virginia Bateman, Mr Lewis Ball, Evelyn McNay, Mary Allestree, Elinor Aickin, Mr Young Stewart, and Sydney Paxton.
- 57 Yorkshire Post, 3 December 1889, p. 5.
- 58 Yorkshire Post, 23 December 1889, p. 5.
- 59 The company included Mr J.S. Haydon, May Levey and her two sisters (all three were 'variety' artistes and played Colin and the two Knights), Carrie Lawrie, Florrie Heywood, Henry Arnold, Mr Lisbourne, Mr McWilliam, Colin Coop, and Messrs Rhodes and Copley. Sidney Jones led the orchestra.

CHAPTER XIV:1890

The alterations to two of the shops which had begun in 1889 had not been completed in January 1890, and provoked the Howe Machine Company, which rented the shop at thirty-eight, New Briggate, to write complaining that they needed a gate fitting to the doorway to exclude children who were making themselves nuisances. This was not all, for they also lacked a letter box, which meant, they complained, that they could not receive a post until two thirty in the afternoon. The altered shops, also, looked disreputable, and the Howe Machine Company thought that they should be painted. Further, they had spent twenty pounds on fitting up the inside of the premises, as well as thirty-five shillings on gold lettering on the window, and felt that they should have the full use of the shop as soon as possible, and hoped also that the theatre company would allow them the cost of the lettering.

This was not the sort of complaint that the theatre company could ignore, for the shops were still not easy to let. The shop at forty-two, New Briggate remained empty, and though the company had asked Wallis, the agent, to find a tenant who would pay seventy pounds per annum rent, the best offer that he could get was of sixty pounds. This, however, was unlikely to bear any fruit, since the person who had offered that much was a confectioner who had hoped that he might occupy the premises

during the run of the pantomime. This was impossible, and the company had to be content with hoping to raise the rent paid by the last tenant by five pounds to forty-five pounds per annum.

The alterations were completed in March at a cost of £234 15s. 8d., and Winn was instructed to see to the painting of the shops in May. But in March also Wallis transmitted a complaint from Boswell that the floor of his wash room was cracked and leaking. Boswell also wrote direct to the board adding that water ran down through the cracks rather than into the drain. The board responded to Boswell by telling him that under the terms of his lease it was his obligation to see to the repair of the floor. In these events there were perhaps the roots of a growing dissatisfaction with Wallis's agency. At all events, at a board meeting on 25 September it was decided that Messrs George Whitaker & Son should take over as agents for the shops. At this time forty-two, New Briggate, was still unlet, and the total rents from the other five shops amounted to £290 per annum.

While alterations to the shops were in progress, larger works were under way at the theatre which were mainly concerned with the renewal of the heating apparatus. It had been intended that this work should have been completed while the theatre was closed in the summer of 1889, but this had not proved possible and it was not until February 1890 that Messrs James Nelson could write to the company to tell them that the work had been completed and to ask

that someone inspect it with a view to taking it over. Henry Hastings wrote to the secretary later in February to say that Wilson Barrett was willing to pay his contribution to the cost of the work when it was certified in correct working order.

Accordingly the board appointed a Mr Wigglesworth to inspect the apparatus, and he reported that he thought that some modifications should be made. These were that the pipes in the cellars should be lagged; that valves should be fitted to allow individual pipes to be emptied in order to carry out maintenance; that by-pass pipes should be inserted to allow the water to circulate when some of the heating coils were turned off; and that the valves in the heating chamber should be labelled. The Teale Fireplace Company was given the task of carrying out these modifications before the company would pay the £282 of the total of £482 that was still owing, and before Wilson Barrett would accept the handing over of the apparatus. The Teale Fireplace Company was given the contract in May, but the modifications were not completed, and the apparatus finally handed over until December 1890. In anticipation Winn was instructed in May to inspect the tobacconist's shop with a view to making sure that it would be safe from fire when the boilers were eventually started up. When the hand-over took place the Teale Fireplace Company sent a letter to the theatre company suggesting that the cause of the flooding of the front of the house

that had taken place before the renewal of the apparatus was that frost had been allowed to crack the pipes. This would happen again unless someone went round the theatre every night making sure that all the coils which had been turned off, were turned on again. Kingston at once passed on this letter to Henry Hastings.

One other item of repair work of any importance had to be undertaken in 1890: the wall of the kitchen that formed the upper part of the theatre's facade had been observed to be leaning in 1889. This had to be reinforced at a cost of £45 9s.

In 1890 a manager (John Wilson) was appointed for the Assembly Rooms, but Kingston continued to respond to requests for bookings. Of specific interest amongst these were his letters to one Marie Strachane whom he told that there should be no difficulty in getting a temporary licence for a sketch which she wished to perform as part of her entertainment, and that the night prior to her performance had been booked for a ball of which the admission prices were low, so that it was likely to be attended by 'the working class element' amongst whom she might distribute handbills. At the end of the year Kingston gave notice to the Town Clerk that he intended to apply for the lifting of the prohibition of the use of the Assembly Rooms' dress circle.

Wilson Barrett made seven weekly payments of £150 during

the run of the pantomime, and he paid a further £7 19s. 4d. on 7 March which meant that on that date he had paid off his arrears and the rent up to the end of April. On 21 May the negotiations over dilapidations which had been sent to a Mr Chorley of Leeds as umpire were ended when the board accepted the latter's award of £135. Though Kingston had written to Wilson Barrett on 1 May demanding the second quarter's rent, none had been forthcoming, so that, with Wilson Barrett's contribution to the heating apparatus, the dilapidations award, and the quarter's rent, he owed the company £932 7s. 6d. Kingston wrote to the Rev. Frank Heath, through whom Wilson Barrett had been making his weekly payments during the pantomime, demanding this sum or a 'substantial remittance at least'. Heath, however, wrote back to say that he was not Wilson Barrett's attorney, and giving an address at a theatre in San Francisco to which Kingston should apply. Accordingly Kingston sent a demand to San Francisco direct and through an agency in New York, and to Henry Hastings. There was no response, but Henry Hastings wrote on 12 July asking for the previous year's arrangement for paying off the arrears during the pantomime to operate again. The directors decided that they would defer consideration of the arrears until Wilson Barrett returned from America.

Accordingly a letter was written to Wilson Barrett at his London address on 25 July asking him if he wished to put anything before the directors, and he replied with a

request that the rent arrears be allowed to stand over until after Christmas. This was considered by a board meeting on 1 August which offered to allow Wilson Barrett to pay his rent arrears out of the pantomime receipts if he would pay seven hundred pounds on account within a fortnight. Wilson Barrett wrote back immediately saying that he could not meet the directors' offer.

The directors further considered the situation at a meeting on 8 August, and decided to reiterate their insistence on a substantial payment 'within a reasonable time'. In the meanwhile they asked Wilson Barrett to instruct Henry Hastings to allow the company secretary to examine the theatre's accounts under the terms of the lease.

Wilson Barrett made no reply to this, and a second letter repeating these demands was sent on 13 August. This drew a response from Wilson Barrett who sent a statement of his profit and loss at the theatre from 3 March to 9 August. He asserted that this showed the financial position from Christmas up to the time of writing, but Kingston was quick to point out that this was not the case, and added that the directors wished to examine the accounts over a longer period than that covered in his statement in order to be able to assess the situation properly. Again Kingston asked that he instruct Henry Hastings to allow him to inspect the accounts.

This request was repeated once more in a letter of 22 August in which Kingston said that he understood from

Henry Hastings that Wilson Barrett had instructed him not to allow Kingston to inspect the accounts before 1 May (the date at which the arrears began), but he pointed out that though the covenant of the lease specified that the accounts should be open to examination when the rent was in arrears, it did not limit the accounts that should be examined to those which covered that period. It was obviously necessary to look beyond the preceding three months, he said, to assess the lessee's position.

Wilson Barrett made no reply to this, but sent a cheque for two hundred pounds on 22 August. (Kingston acknowledged this on 27 August (he had been away from Leeds, he said, accounting for the delay) with a further demand to be allowed to look at the books.) The directors therefore held another meeting on 2 September to discuss what they should do, and after examining at this meeting a report on the amounts that Wilson Barrett had been able to pay off during the four pantomimes from 1886 to 1890 (£1,318 in 1886/7, £1,495 in 1887/8, £1,245 in 1888/9, and £1,658 in 1889/90), wrote to him to say that they would put off any further negotiations over the inspection of the accounts until they could see him personally. They invited him to a meeting on 25 September.

At this meeting Wilson Barrett seems to have conceded the directors' right to examine the accounts from the end of the pantomime, and to have agreed to pay three hundred pounds before Christmas (of this he paid one hundred pounds on 1 November). Consequently the directors

were able to receive a report from Kingston on Wilson Barrett's accounts from 3 March to 27 September at a meeting on 2 December. Before this meeting Kingston wrote to Wilson Barrett to say that the directors were going to discuss the proposition that they should allow him to pay off his arrears (then amounting to £1,522 7s. 6d.) and the first quarter's rent of 1891 in instalments of £187 during the pantomime, and invited Wilson Barrett to give his views on the proposition.

Wilson Barrett replied on 28 November agreeing to the proposition, but trying to make a proviso (perhaps guarding against the possibility that the pantomime should not make enough profit). When the board had considered this they wrote to him to say that they would accept no proviso, and that he must undertake in writing to pay £187 every week. They also drew his attention to the fact that there still remained one of the promised payments of three hundred pounds to be paid before Christmas. The letter went on to say that (after Kingston's examination of the books) since 3 March the operation of the theatre had brought Wilson Barrett a profit of £1,262 14s. 9d. (he had claimed that sums of £265 13s. 2d. and £315 5s. 1d. should be deducted as expenses, but Kingston said that the first was not chargeable against the profits of the theatre, and the second belonged to a period before these accounts began). The directors noted that out of this Wilson Barrett had paid only three hundred pounds on account of his rent, and that they considered that the rent should have first call upon the theatre's profits.

The one hundred pounds earnest had still not been paid by 19 December. Accordingly Kingston sent a reminder, and Wilson Barrett sent a cheque for the amount on 20 December. However, he had to be reminded by telegram on 29 December that the first instalment of £187 was then due. He telegraphed back to say that he would post a cheque that night.

During 1890 Sir Andrew Fairbairn's resignation was accepted ('with regret'), and Armitage Ledgard invited to take his place. Ledgard, who was not an original shareholder, bought twenty shares of fifty pounds each, and accepted election to the board.

The seasons in 1890 contained only eight and one half weeks of pantomime, six weeks of comic opera (though there were in addition two weeks of burlesque performances which were advertised as 'comic opera burlesques'), two weeks of opera proper, twenty-three weeks of dramas and comedies (with four weeks of burlesque in addition), a returning panoramic melodrama for one week, sixteen weeks of returning productions, and a revived production for one week. The number of weeks of burlesque obviously greatly increased seemingly at the expense of pantomime and comic opera.

The pantomime closed on Saturday, 1 March, and was

followed on 3 March by Henry J. Leslie's company which returned in the comic opera, 'Dorothy'. It was given a 'hearty' reception by only a 'fairly good' house. The reviewer observed that though Miss Carr-Shaw and Marion Cross retained their roles, there had been a number of changes in the cast, and these were for the worse.¹

'Dorothy' was followed on 10 March by 'The Middleman', a play by Henry Arthur Jones. It was performed by the company that he, E.S. Willard, and John Lart managed, and had first produced the play in August 1889.²

The central character of the play was Cyrus Blenkarn who at the beginning of the piece had worked for twenty years for Joseph Chandler who owned the Tatlow porcelain works. Blenkarn had been endeavouring to discover the secret of old Tatlow porcelain, and seemed to have driven himself crazy by the effort of his researches.

In the meantime Chandler's son had compromised Blenkarn's daughter, Mary, but was called away to join a regiment in Africa. He asked Mary to elope with him to Paris to be married, but she would not have this, and when Chandler began to intercept his son's letters to her, she was driven to distraction, and left home. She was presumed to be dead.

Blenkarn, then, driven crazy in the employ of Chandler, believed that his daughter had been compromised and driven to her death by Chandler's son. He prosecuted his researches with even greater effort, and this resulted

in a sudden reversal of fate, for he discovered the secret that he had been searching for, and thereby became rich. In fact he became rich enough to buy out his (by now bankrupt) employer, who then went to work for him (though as an undermanager - his humiliation was tempered by compassion).

Blenkarn's triumph was not complete, however, and he still felt that there was something wanting, when, quite unsuspectedly, his daughter, recovered from the shocks that she had received, returned to him. 'Dazed beyond expression, the old man clasped his loved one to his arms with the one cry "My child!".'

The reviewer,³ specifically identifying Chandler as a capitalist, described the play as 'a treatment of those social problems which vex the soul of the talented and ambitious workman, and distract the mind of the ardent reformer', and evidently considered that the audience would find strong sympathy with it. Indeed, the curtain fell upon the last line 'amid the breathless attention of an overwhelmed audience', and the reviewer confirmed that the prophesy on the play's first production that it would be well appreciated in the provinces was true.

'The Middleman' was followed on 17 March by Grace Hawthorne and her company from the Princess's Theatre (under the management of W.W. Kelly and directed by W.H. Vernon) in 'Theodora'.⁴ This piece was written by Sardou and

performed by Sarah Bernhardt, and had been done into English by Robert Buchanan.

The play had the conventional requirements of Sarah Bernhardt's pieces. Theodora was a flower girl, thence circus dancer, and at the opening of the play was the dominating wife of the Emperor Justinian. Wishing that the latter loved her as he had before he came simply to fear her, Theodora went to a witch to obtain a love philtre.

In the process she visited some of her former haunts, and thus entered upon an affaire with one Andreas. It transpired that he and his friend, Marcellus, were conspiring to assassinate the Emperor and his consort, but of this Theodora was forewarned as a consequence of her disguise and their relationship.

Thus the plot was forestalled, and Marcellus captured, but Theodora contrived Andreas's escape. The Emperor, however, threatened Marcellus with the most dire tortures, and Theodora, fearing that the latter might implicate her lover, killed him.

Later Andreas espied Theodora at the Hippodrome, and since she was sitting in the imperial box he realised who she was, and denounced her as the murderer of his friend. He was arrested, but again Theodora managed to arrange his escape.

At last the Emperor realised what was going on, and cast Theodora into prison, sentenced to death. Here she managed to see Andreas, but his love had turned to scorn, and in order to woo him back she gave him the witch's

love philtre. The witch, however, thinking that the philtre was for the Emperor, had made it one of poison, and Andreas died. Distraught, Theodora too drank from the poisoned cup, and her death brought down the curtain.

'Theodora' was followed on 24 March by Isabel Bateman and Edward Compton's company in a new, 'emotional drama', 'Clarissa Harlowe'. This was an adaptation of Richardson's novel by W.G. Wills.⁵

The reviewer thought that Wills had successfully overcome the inherent difficulties in the dramatisation of Richardson's 'prolix and epistolatory' novel, though he complained that the five acts of the play seemed pervaded with an unrelieved gloom and sadness that at times transmitted themselves to the audience.⁶

The climax of the play was created by turning McDonald into Clarissa's avenger, so that he might kill Lovelace at the very moment when Clarissa died in her mother's arms.

The reviewer thought that Isabel Bateman gave a conscientious rendering of the title role, if at times she failed to represent the deep emotions required by it. Henry Vibart, on the other hand, who played Lovelace, erred the other way, giving vent to an excess of earnestness that threatened to mar an otherwise capable performance.

'Clarissa Harlowe' was followed on 31 March by Auguste Van Biene's company from the Gaiety Theatre in a burlesque

upon Goethe entitled 'Faust up to Date'. It was written by G.R. Sims and Henry Pettitt with music by Herr Meyer Lutz, and was watched by a large audience.⁷

'Faust up to Date' was followed on 7 April by a return visit of Minnie Palmer in 'My Sweetheart' which she gave on Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday, 'My Brother's Sister' which she gave on Wednesday and Thursday, and 'Ring and Keeper' and 'Fool's Mate' with 'A Little Rebel' which she gave on Friday. Minnie Palmer was followed on 14 April by H. Beerbohm Tree's company, with Mr J.G. Grahame and Maud Milton in 'the Haymarket success', 'A Man's Shadow'.⁸

'A Man's Shadow' was an adaptation by Robert Buchanan of 'Roger La Honte'. It was being performed at two London theatres at the time of this provincial tour. The piece depended like 'The Lyons Mail' on the device of having the hero and the villain resemble one another (they were in fact played by the same actor). Lucien Laroque was a 'well-bred, respectable character',⁹ though he had enjoyed a 'wild college romance' with Julie, who afterwards married Raymond de Noirville alongside whom Lucien fought in a Franco-German war.

Julie pressed Laroque to resume their relationship, but he spurned her. She was therefore prepared to enter a conspiracy with the mirror-image villain of the piece, Luversan. The latter, impersonating Laroque, robbed a bank (killing a cashier in the process) in the view of Laroque's wife and child who were deceived by the impersonation. Luversan then sent the proceeds of the

robbery to Laroque with a note from Julie asking him to accept the money to save him from impending ruin. Respect for the feelings of Noirville, and Julie's reputation, prevented Laroque from revealing where the money had come from, and he maintained this silence even at his trial. But Luversan, in court in disguise, then passed a note to Noirville disclosing his wife's perfidy to him (this was part of Luversan's plan of revenge). Noirville was then prepared to explain the source of the money in Laroque's defence, but suddenly he fell down dead.

In the last act Laroque was seen as an escaped convict whom the repentant Julie tried to save from his pursuers. With suitable irony Luversan was shot in mistake for Laroque, but before dying he confessed his guilt, thus absolving Laroque.

The highpoints of the play for the reviewer were the emotional rendering of the scene in which Laroque's wife recoiled in terror from her husband when she believed that he was a murderer (the presence of the child helped intensify this), and the excitement of the scene in court.

'A Man's Shadow' was succeeded on 21 April by a return visit of T.W. Robertson's company in 'Sweet Lavender' which was accompanied as an afterpiece on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by a new musical comedy, 'A Fair Equestrienne'. The cast of 'Sweet Lavender' was substantially unchanged,

and the reviewer found it a refreshing change from the highly sensational, deeply emotional pieces of the preceding weeks.¹⁰ 'A Fair Equestrienne' was a one-act piece specially adapted for Cora Stuart which the reviewer suggested would have been better as a curtain-raiser than as an afterpiece, for he wished to leave the theatre with the fragrance of 'Sweet Lavender' untrammelled by 'grosser pleasures'.

T.W. Robertson's company was succeeded by that of Wilson Barrett on 30 April in 'Good Old Times'. This was an entirely different company from that which introduced the play to the theatre in August 1889.

Wilson Barrett's company was followed by that of Henry J. Leslie in a new comic opera, 'The Red Hussar'. This visit was advertised as the only one that the company would make to Leeds in 1890, while the piece was still playing at the Lyric Theatre, London.¹²

'The Red Hussar' was written by H.P. Stephenson, with music by Edward Solomon. It combined 'domestic interest' with a military setting (in the time of Queen Anne), and had an elaborate, if not confusing, plot. The central character was Kitty Carrol, a 'pretty village maiden' who followed her lover, Ralph Rodney, to war in Flanders where, disguised as a soldier, she displayed such valour as to be promoted to the command of a troop.

Rodney, however, had had a former love for one Barbara Bellasys. She had spurned him when he had seemed unlikely

to inherit Avon Manor and its estates, and this was the cause of his joining the army. In Flanders Ralph heard that Kitty was near Bruges (though he did not know of her military career) and left his post to go to see her. He was promptly arrested and sentenced to be shot, but was reprieved at the last moment by Barbara who had procured his discharge, having heard that he would inherit Avon Manor after all.

The scene of the action then transferred to England where Ralph was engaged to Barbara (to the disgust of a sincere admirer of the latter), and Kitty Carrol, now become a grand lady, was engaged to Sir Middlesex Marsham (whose ward Barbara was).

Kitty, however, revealed that Ralph was in fact penniless (thereby securing Barbara's instant disaffection), and that she, Kitty, who was really in love with Ralph still, was the real heiress of the Manor.

The reviewer thought that Solomon's music was some of the best that he had written, though he admitted that the style of it was somewhat conventional.¹³ He thought the lyrics to be of uneven quality, and frequently inferior to the dialogue (when this latter did not descend to punning).

'The Red Hussar' was succeeded on 12 May by the visit of 'the eminent tragedian', Osmond Teale, who appeared in 'Virginus' (a tragedy by Sheridan Knowles) which was well received on Monday, 'Othello' on Tuesday, 'Macbeth' on

Wednesday, 'Hamlet' on Thursday, 'Richelieu' on Friday, and 'Richard III' on Saturday.¹⁴

Osmond Teale was followed on 19 May by D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Gondoliers' which the reviewer thought though not Gilbert and Sullivan's best piece, certainly of sustained vintage,¹⁵ and he indulged in some speculation over the break up of the partnership.¹⁶

'The Gondoliers' was followed on 26 May by a return visit of 'The Still Alarm', which was in turn followed on 2 June by Augustus Harris's Burlesque Company in 'Venus'.¹⁷ This was a revival of Harris's first London success, and it had been re-written and brought up to date by William Yardley.

The piece, which the reviewer alleged had no plot,¹⁸ concerned the Roman pantheon, members of which suffered from libel actions resulting from their running of a newspaper, or from strikers at Vulcan's forge.

'Venus' was followed on 9 June by more burlesque, or rather 'extravaganza', when Arthur Roberts's company appeared in 'Guy Fawkes'.¹⁹ This piece was billed as a comic opera burlesque by Messrs A.C. Torre and Herbert Clarke, with lyrics by Mr Doss Chiderdoss, and music by George W. Byng. It had first been performed in April 1890 in Nottingham, and was founded on a free interpretation of the Gunpowder Plot.

The production had an attractive chorus that sang well and danced cleverly, which called forth the reviewer's general approval, though he did think that there was room for some re-writing.²⁰

'Guy Fawkes' was followed on 16 June by Charles Wyndham's company in 'Pink Dominos'.²¹ This company had in fact revived the piece at the Criterion Theatre, London, where it had run for 150 nights before being brought out on tour.

The reviewer found this revival of Albery's comedy quite as capable of evoking hearty laughter as when it had first been seen in Leeds some years before (even though, he pointed out, the Cremorne Gardens which formed a setting for the piece had long since vanished).²²

'Pink Dominos' was followed on 23 June by 'My Jack', a sensational and elaborately staged piece in five acts by Benjamin Landeck, and given by Yorke Stephens and E.W. Gardens's company.²³ The plot of the piece concerned Jack Meredith and his beloved, Dorothy Prescott. A villainous Baronet, Sir Edward Vanberg, plotted against Jack both for Dorothy, and because Jack was the real heir to the estates and title that the villain enjoyed (Jack had been rescued from his dead mother's arms on the sea shore, and documents that proved his identity had been stolen by one Ciro Panitza. The latter was thereby blackmailing Vanberg).

Among the 'startling episodes' through which the plot evolved were the blowing up of a lighthouse, a struggle in a ruined mill, and the eventual confession of Panitza in an African desert. In the process, also, Jack was accused of murdering Dorothy's brother, and Dorothy inadvertently gave Jack some cause to doubt her fidelity temporarily.

'My Jack' was followed on 30 June by John Hare's company in 'A Pair of Spectacles' - a touring company, while the piece was being played at the Garrick Theatre, London. John Hare's company was succeeded (on 7 July) by Horace Lingard's Comic Opera Company which appeared in 'Falka' for the first half of the week, and 'Pepita' for the second.²⁴ Though these pieces had been seen many times at the Grand Theatre there was still a large house on the Monday night. The company had almost entirely changed since its previous visit to Leeds in 'Falka', which, together with the fact that this piece was only given for half a week, and that the company was now advertised as Horace Lingard's (Auguste Van Biene seemed to have withdrawn from its management) would suggest that the piece's popularity was running down.

'Pepita' brought the season to its end on 12 July, and the theatre thereafter remained closed for three weeks. It reopened on Saturday, 2 August, with another of Horace Lingard's companies (he himself toured with this one) in

a return visit of 'The Old Guard'.²⁵ This in turn was followed on 11 August by a return visit of Arthur Roberts's company in 'Guy Fawkes', a return which the reviewer welcomed.²⁶

'Guy Fawkes' was followed on 18 August by Charles Hawtrey's company from the Comedy Theatre, London, in a new farcical comedy, 'Nerves'.²⁷ This was an adaptation by Comyns Carr of 'Les Femmes Nerveuses'. It had first been produced at the Comedy Theatre three months before this visit, and it attracted a large audience in Leeds.

The central device of the plot was that one Captain Armitage should have a wife, a mother-in-law, and a maid all of whom were afflicted by a theatrical version of nervous hysteria. An 'amorous French confectioner', and a 'fascinating would-be widow' initiated a cascade of farcical/hysterical misunderstandings finally resolved when 'the ladies were brought to a reasonable frame of mind'.²⁸

'Nerves' was followed on 25 August by a return visit of Charles Dornton's company²⁹ in 'The Silver King', which attracted on the Monday night a large and generous audience.³⁰ In its turn 'The Silver King' was followed on 1 September by D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Mikado' and 'The Yeoman of the Guard' which were given for half a week each. A 'pantomime' house on the Monday night verified the reported provincial success of the tour of this revival.³¹

D'Oyly Carte's company was followed on 8 September by George Edwardes's Gaiety Theatre Company in the burlesque, 'Ruy Blas; or, the Blasé Roué', by A.C. Torre, and Herbert F. Clark, with music by Herr Meyer Lutz.³² There was a full house. The reviewer noted that as usual the burlesque had little real relation to the piece it was supposed to parody (in this case Victor Hugo's 'Ruy Blas'),³³ and averred that the performance depended largely upon the versatility of Fred Leslie (as Don Caesar) and Nellie Farren (as Ruy Blas) who appeared as school girls, members of the Salvation Army, and chimney sweeps, while Fred Leslie made a further 'sensation' as an Irishman and Scotchman combined – dressed half and half.

'Ruy Blas' was followed on 15 September by a return visit of H.A. Jones's company in 'The Middleman'. The company was substantially unchanged.³⁴ In its turn 'The Middleman' was followed on 22 September by the visit of Wilson Barrett, Miss Eastlake, and London company after their tour of America in 'Hamlet' on Monday, 'Claudian' on Tuesday and Friday, 'Ben-my-chree' on Wednesday, 'Clito' on Thursday, and 'The Silver King' on Saturday.³⁵ The prices of admission were advertised as remaining unaltered.

Wilson Barrett's performance in 'Hamlet' was the only one in which he had a rival, said the reviewer,³⁶ adding that Wilson Barrett gave his own 'conscientious' interpretation. He did not present the character as a

madman, but rather as a philosophic young man, impulsive and passionate at times, but never for more than a moment losing sight of his resolution to avenge the murder of the father whom he loved so dear.

Called to make a speech after the performance, Wilson Barrett asserted that he had seen no theatre to surpass the Grand Theatre in America. Speaking similarly at the end of the performance of 'Clito' he expressed his gratification at the intense silence in which the piece was watched (he regarded this as an indication of wrapt attention), and that the theatre had been crammed every night that week (there was neither seat nor standing room left on the Thursday night, said the reviewer). Wilson Barrett further referred to a debate over the stalls saying that he had received a number of letters (some of them rude) suggesting that the stall seats be enlarged and their prices put up. He said that he and the directors would do whatever they could to improve patrons' comfort, but that larger seats would mean fewer of them, and certainly increased prices. The stalls cost half a crown in Leeds, he pointed out, and six shillings in Manchester. (In fact though the matter was discussed at a board meeting nothing was done about it.)

Wilson Barrett's company was succeeded on 29 September by that of Richard Edgar in a farcical comedy, 'Aunt Jack', which had been playing at the Royal Court Theatre.³⁷

Richard Edgar played a staid barrister suddenly stricken by love in this piece which was written by Ralph Lumley, and which was mainly constructed round a breach of promise action. The reviewer thought that the play was good enough, though its curtain situations were not strong enough for his taste.³⁸ The play was preceded by 'A Month After Date' which the reviewer considered the feeblest (from a long experience) of feeble curtain-raisers.

'Aunt Jack' was followed on 6 October by a return visit of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Gondoliers' which the advertising asserted was 'the most fashionable opera of the series'.³⁹ Every part of the theatre was filled for it by an audience which the reviewer thought must all have come to see it a second time.⁴⁰ The company had undergone some changes, though this marked no deterioration of it in the reviewer's opinion.

'The Gondoliers' was followed on 13 October by Thomas Thorne and the Vaudeville Theatre Company in 'Joseph's Sweetheart' on Monday, Tuesday, and Saturday, 'Miss Tombay' on Wednesday, 'Confusion' on Thursday, and 'She Stoops to Conquer' on Friday.⁴¹

'Joseph's Sweetheart' was an adaptation by Robert Buchanan (following his success with his adaptation of 'Tom Jones' under the title 'Sophia') of Fielding's 'Joseph Andrews'. The reviewer thought that though Buchanan had had to make

allowances for the changed taste in public morality, and possibly could have been more succinct, the piece maintained the interest of the original. The scenery was not elaborate, but the costumes were 'picturesque and accurate'.⁴²

Thomas Thorne's company was followed on 20 October by Messrs H. Bruce and J.H. Darnley's company in 'The Solicitor', which at that time was being played at Toole's Theatre in London.⁴³ In Leeds it was given with a curtain-raiser, 'The Coiner's Dream'. The reviewer thought that 'The Solicitor' was of average merit, though it did possess some originality and dramatic power.⁴⁴ The play was based upon the consequences of a bet made by the central character, Gilbert Brandon, the solicitor of the title, that he would 'borrow' an unattended hansom cab and drive it through the London streets at night. He set off in it, but was forced to take three passengers, the first was his wife whom he took to the house of a dressmaker where he saw what he took to be her shadow in compromising familiarity with that of a soldier. His heart burning from the contemplation of this infidelity, he had then to drive two burglars about their business. Thereafter he abandoned the cab in fear of the consequences, and spent much of the remainder of the play waiting to be arrested as an accomplice (while preparing the proper cab driver's defence), and agonising over his wife's betrayal. Embarrassments and misadventures abounded before the piece's

eventual resolution in which Brandon was aided by two military friends and their wives.

The piece was given a 'highly favourable' reception by a large and appreciative audience.

'The Solicitor' was followed on 27 October by the Carl Rosa Opera Company which gave 'Romeo and Juliet' on Monday, 'Faust' on Tuesday, 'The Daughter of the Regiment' on Wednesday, 'Bohemian Girl' on Thursday, 'Carmen' on Friday, 'The Star of the North' as a matinee on Saturday, and 'La Traviata' on Saturday evening.⁴⁵

Only two of these works held any novelty for the Leeds audience. The first of these was Donizetti's 'The Daughter of the Regiment', which the reviewer regarded as 'the flimsiest of flimsy' pieces, and wondered at the advisability of its revival when it had enjoyed a 'long repose' in London.⁴⁶ In itself the work was considered too short to fill an evening, and so 'judiciously selected' pieces from Donizetti's other works were interpolated. The second was 'La Traviata' which had not been given in Leeds before, but which the reviewer described as 'well-worn'.

Despite his reservations about Donizetti's work, the reviewer found the music 'bright', and the male chorus as the Regiment, though not fully up to their drill, nonetheless were given an encore.

In its second week the Carl Rosa Company gave 'Lurline' on Monday, 'Romeo and Juliet' on Tuesday and as a matinee

on Saturday, 'The Bohemian Girl' on Wednesday, 'The Daughter of the Regiment' on Thursday, 'La Traviata' on Friday, and 'The Lily of Kilarney' on Saturday evening.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company was followed on 10 November by a return visit of Henry C. Arnold's company in 'The Lights o' London', and this was followed on 17 November by George Alexander's company from the Avenue Theatre, London, in a farcical comedy, 'Dr Bill'.⁴⁷

'Dr Bill' was an adaptation by Mr Hamilton Aide from Albert Carré, and though he had 'thoroughly Anglicised' the characters, the reviewer thought that the play remained risqué in places.

The piece revolved round Dr William Brown who had specialised in treating theatrical people, but on marrying, he retired. His father-in-law, however, disapproved of such idleness, and set about building him up a practice by extravagant advertising – with farcical consequences (the reviewer particularly enjoyed a 'game of hide and seek' in the second act). A large audience laughed 'immoderately'.

'Dr Bill' was followed on 24 November by a return visit of Augustus Harris's Burlesque Company in 'Venus'. There had been two material changes in the company: Victor Stephens had replaced Harry Nicholls, and Grace Huntley had replaced Alice Brookes, otherwise the cast was unchanged

and the reviewer thought that the substitutions were in no way to the detriment of the performance.⁴⁸

'Venus' was followed on 1 December by the annual visit of the Compton Comedy Company which gave a round of familiar comedies: 'David Garrick' on Monday and Saturday, 'The Rivals' on Tuesday, 'She Stoops to Conquer' on Wednesday, 'The School for Scandal' on Thursday, and 'The Wonder' on Friday.

The Compton Comedy Company was followed on 8 December by Miss Fortescue's company which gave 'Romeo and Juliet' on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 'The Lady of Lyons' on Wednesday, and 'The Hunchback' on Saturday.

Miss Fortescue's Juliet was a marked improvement on her previous essays at the part in Leeds (presumably at the Theatre Royal), but though it was admired for its tenderness and grace in the balcony scene, it still seemed to the reviewer generally to lack the fervour and passion that he expected in the role.⁴⁹ Her costumes were 'extremely beautiful and appropriate', the piece was staged 'most excellently', and on the whole followers of Miss Fortescue's career must have been 'agreeably surprised'.

After Miss Fortescue's last performance on 13 December the theatre remained closed for preparation of the pantomime

with which it opened on 23 December. 'The Babes in the Wood; or, Bold Robin and the Foresters Good' was written by J. Wilton Jones, and produced by Henry Hastings.

It opened in 'The Neglected Temple of the Drama' where an Arch Druid explained with the aid of a peep show that all suitable nursery stories had been exhausted in Grand Theatre pantomimes, but then, inspired, lit upon 'The Babes in the Wood', which promptly provoked demonic opposition, and fairy support.

The second scene was set in a schoolroom where Dame Durden, the teacher, elicited such replies from the children as:

Dame: How many hours are there in a day?

Dorcas: Eight... The working man says so. That's all he means to give the masters.

and

Dame: What did Christopher Columbus discover?

Margery: Corrugated flues.

The pupils were sweethearts of Robin Hood's Foresters. To the school come the Babes themselves followed by the bad Baron, their uncle, and sundry other villains including Burglar Bill and Joe Ugly. These two latter had come in answer to a marriage advertisement placed by Dame Durden, but after seeing her they decided to accept the Baron's commission to kidnap and murder the Babes.

The next scene was on the hill overlooking Robin Hood's

Bay (on the coast of Yorkshire), a 'delightfully executed stage picture against which the green attire of the Foresters showed up well'.⁵⁰ There Maid Marion, the Dame, and others were discovered discussing the Baron's suspected plot. Robin Hood was summoned to take up the Babes' cause. The scene proceeded through a scrimmage between Robin Hood's men and those of the Baron, and ended with an archery contest at which (to the Baron's disgust) Robin Hood won Maid Marion's hand.

The following scene was set in the Baron's study where, after the Lauri Troupe had performed acrobatic tricks with a dog and disappearing food, the Baron unfolded his evil plans.

The next scene was set deep in the heart of the forest where Robin Hood, his men, and their maids were searching for the Babes. This scene, painted by Stafford Hall, 'had hit the popular taste to a nicety [with] effects of light and shade and the fantastic shapes of animals'.

The Babes fell into the hands of Bill and Joe, but in a quarrel over how they should be killed Joe disposed of Bill, and the Babes were left to the mercy of the elements until, by a mechanical change, a sylvan glade was revealed in which the fairies came to their aid. The scene ended with a ballet, 'The Birds and the Autumn Leaves'.

The following scene was 'The Baron's Picture Gallery' which was a parody of a scene in 'Ruddigore'. The four pictures were of the Mayor of Leeds, a councillor, and two aldermen.

Nemesis in the form of Dame Durden and 'lively phantoms' appeared to the frightened Baron and told him that his plot was uncovered and that one of the burglars had turned Queen's evidence.

The Baron, however, had an answer in producing a 'two hundred million pound brief' for 'Sir Charles Bustle' (presumably a reference to an expensive but efficacious criminal lawyer).

The scene then changed to the Baron's 'White Marble Banqueting Hall' which formed an excellent frame to a series of 'effective and pleasing pictures' amongst which was a procession of Foresters and Knights in silver armour, a variety entertainment, and a triumphant entrance of Robin Hood's party with the rescued Babes to the strains of the 'Tannhauser' march.

However, it transpired that the demon had carried off the Babes again, and in the next scene - 'A Glade in Bolton Woods' - there was a discussion as to their whereabouts, resolved by recourse to an automatic machine which, once a penny had been inserted, indicated that they were hidden in the cellars of the Baron's castle.

Accordingly the scene changed to 'The Baron's Castle' which in a spectacular conclusion to the pantomime was blown up by armoured soldiers, and the Babes were seized from the ruffians amongst its ruins.

In the final (carpenter's) scene outside the Leeds Town Hall, an attempt to lynch the Baron (who was confined with the other villains in the cells there) was abandoned when

the Dame offered an enduring punishment in marriage to herself. Robin Hood was then made Earl of Huntingdon, and given Maid Marion as wife.

The transformation scene, 'a brilliant display illustrative of Dresden china' was designed by Stafford Hall and Frederic Fox who, with the assistance of Julien Forbes, had painted all the pantomime scenery.⁵¹

The pantomime, which, compared with previous ones seemed thin in plot, spectacle, and the quality of its casting, only drew from the reviewer a prediction of a 'fairly successful' run.

Notes

- 1 Yorkshire Post, 4 March 1890, p. 6.
- 2 The company included Mr C.W. Somerset, Henry Crisp, John Phipps, Agnes Verity, Laura Lindon, Harry Halley, Edward A. Coventry, and Evelyn Darrell.
- 3 Yorkshire Post, 12 March 1890, p. 8.
- 4 The company included Grace Hawthorne, Alfred B. Cross, Cecil Morton, and Charles Lander.
- 5 The company also included Mr G.R. Peach.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 26 March 1890, p. 8.
- 7 The company included Edmund Payne, George Honey, Harry Yardley, Grace Huntley, Harry Parker, Alice Barnett, and the Gaiety Quartet of Danseuses: Marie Knight, Jenny Holland, Violet Monkton, and Minnie Knight.
- 8 The company included Mr J.G. Grahame, Maud Milton, Edie King, Mr J.S. Haydon, Ina Goldsmith, Miss Floyd, Mr C. Whitford, John Benn, Lytton Grey, F. Luke, Arthur Wyndham, Mr D.A. Clarke, and Arthur Playfair.
- 9 Yorkshire Post, 15 April 1890, p. 5.
- 10 Yorkshire Post, 22 April 1890, p. 4.
- 11 It included Mr Barrington Reynolds, Maud Digby, Helen Creswell, Mr A. D'Esterre Guinness, Frank Pilstone, and Ambrose Manning. The scenery, which was an important feature of the production, was by Walter Hann.
- 12 The company included Effie Mason, Mr Lyon Ferrand, Albert Christian, Laura Maxwell, Nellie Christie, Mr J.W. Handley, and Mr T.W. Volt.

- 13 Yorkshire Post, 7 May 1890, p. 5.
- 14 The company included Osmond Tearle, Grace Edwin, Edwin Lever, Robert H. Owen, and Frederic and E. Conway.
- 15 Yorkshire Post, 20 May 1890, p. 5.
- 16 The company included Haidee Crofton, Rose Hervey, George Temple, Rosina Brandram, Nannie Harding, Charles Conyers, Duncan Fleet, Mr Broughton Black, Miss Rochefort, and Geraldine St Maur. The scenery was by F. Fox and Stafford Hall.
- 17 The company included Harry Nicholls, Harry Fisher, and Whimsical Walker (these three were 'low comedians'), Belle Bilton, Agnes Delaporte, Kitty Loftus, Alice Brookes, Annie Halford, Alice Lethbridge, Violet Malvern, and Alice Carlton.
- 18 Yorkshire Post, 3 June 1890, p. 5.
- 19 The company included Arthur Roberts, Mr W.H. Rawlins, Sam Wilkinson, and Fanny Marriott.
- 20 Yorkshire Post, 10 June 1890, p. 5.
- 21 The company included Mr W.E. Gregory, Mr T.G. Warren, Alfred Maltby, Mr A. Boucicault, Horatio Saker, Mr W.H. Wallace, Rose Saker, Miss Scarlett, Louisa Peach, Emily Miller, and Miss A. Chaloner.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 18 June 1890, p. 8.
- 23 The company included Julius Knight, Helen Boucher, Edward Rochelle, Mr W. Groves, Henry Bute, Miss Trissie Humphrys, Mr T.A. Palmer, Henry W. Hatchman, Mr Harcourt Beatty, and Miss Page.

- 24 The company included Walter Wright, Mr Fuller Allen, Rosie St George, Clare Harrington, Mr J.W. Bradbury, and Wilfred Shine.
- 25 The company included Horace Lingard, Harry Child, Mr J.C. Pridock, Kate Neverist, and Miss C. Fannington.
- 26 Yorkshire Post, 12 August 1890, p. 4.
The company included Arthur Roberts, Sam Wilkinson, Mr W.H. Rawlins, and Fanny Marriott.
- 27 The company included Wilfred Draycott, Kate Tyndal, George P. Hawtrey, Miss M. Talbot, Katie Lee, and Mr J.F. Graham.
- 28 Yorkshire Post, 19 August 1890, p. 5.
- 29 The company included Henry George, Edward Rochelle, Elaine Verner, Edward J. George, and Mabel Dent.
- 30 Yorkshire Post, 26 August 1890, p. 6.
- 31 Yorkshire Post, 2 September 1890, p. 5.
The company included George Thorne, Fred Billington, Sidney Tower, Mr Broughton Black, Mr T.A. Muir, Rose Hervey, Haidee Crofton, Alice Pennington, and Kate Forster.
- 32 The company included Ellen Farren, Fred Leslie, Ella Bankhardt, Sylvia Grey, Grace Pedley, Fred Storey, and Mr G.T. Minshill.
- 33 Yorkshire Post, 9 September 1890, p. 7.
- 34 It included Mr C.W. Somerset, Mr H. Crisp, Edward H. Coventry, John Phipps, Mr H. Halley, Agnes Verity, and Miss Hall Caine.

- 35 The company included Miss Eastlake, Mr Cooper-Cliffe, Mr T.W. Percyval, Mr W.A. Elliott, Mr A.E. Field, Mr F. McLeary, Mr H. Warren, Frank Cranstone, Mr P. Belmore, Edward Irwin, Charles Ashford, Alice Cooke, and Lila Garth.
- 36 Yorkshire Post, 23 September 1890, p. 5.
- 37 The company included Mr and Mrs Edgar, George Lester, Mr Magill Martin, Arthur Lawrence, John Owen, Marie Dagmar, and Jenny Taylor.
- 38 Yorkshire Post, 30 September 1890, p. 5.
- 39 The company included Richard Clarke, Mr H. Lemaistre, Mr H.A. Lytton, Kate Talby, Mary Duggan, and Josephine Findlay who were new members, and Thomas Redmond, Duncan Fleet, Miss Harding, Geraldine St Maur, and Marie Rochefort who remained in it.
- 40 Yorkshire Post, 7 October 1890, p. 5.
- 41 The company included Thomas Thorne, Mr H.B. Conway, Frank Gilmore, Mr F. Thorne, Mr F. Grove, Mr J.S. Blythe, Ella Bannister, Gladys Homfrey, Rose Dudley, and Sylvia Hodson.
- 42 Yorkshire Post, 14 August 1890, p. 5.
- 43 The company included J.H. Darnley, M. Etienne Girardot, Mr Stratton Rodney, Lillie Richards, Helen Palgrave, Alice Young, Margaret Wallace, Charles Kent, Richard Brennand, Laurence Child, Ralph Roberts, Ernest Anson, and Alice Thurston.
- 44 Yorkshire Post, 21 October 1890, p. 8.

- 45 The company included Miss de Lussan, Mr Aynsley Cooke, John Child, Jenny Dickerson, Kate Drew, Mr E. Albert, and Charles Campbell.
- 46 Yorkshire Post, 30 October 1890, p. 4.
- 47 The company included Mr J.G. Grahame, Wilfred E. Shine, Cecil Crofton, Henry Nelson, Laura Lindon, Christine Mayne, Lilian Revel, Elizabeth Brunton, Alice M. Adair, and Ida Liston. 'Dr Bill' was preceded by 'Our Lottie', a 'one-act comedy drama'.
- 48 Yorkshire Post, 26 November 1890, p. 6.
- 49 Yorkshire Post, 9 December 1890, p. 5.
- 50 Yorkshire Post, 24 December 1890, p. 8.
- 51 The company included the Field-Fishers (who played the Babes), Fanny Marriott (who played Robin Hood), Mr J.W. Rowley, Edwin R. Barwick, Fred Williams, Fred H. Grahame, Maud Boyd, Fred Darbey, and James Welch. The orchestra was conducted by J. Sidney Jones.

CHAPTER XV:1891

By 1891 it had become fairly clear that the profitability of operating the theatre was largely contingent upon the success of the pantomime. That for 1890/1 seemed unusually successful (despite the Yorkshire Post reviewer's pessimism), and Wilson Barrett was able to pay off the rent arrears from 1890 in seven instalments of two hundred pounds during its run, which, with two more instalments of £107 6s. 3d. and £137 10s. 2d. on 23 February and 2 March respectively brought his rent up to date.

However, after the end of the run of the pantomime income was not adequate to Wilson Barrett's commitments, and possibly he was over-stretching matters a little since he had for a short while taken a lease of the New Olympic Theatre in London as well as that of the Grand Theatre. When, therefore, Kingston wrote demanding the second quarter's rent on 30 April, Wilson Barrett wrote back immediately from the Olympic Theatre to ask (though he knew it was much, he said) that he be allowed to pay the rent for the rest of the year in the autumn. He trusted that the fact that he had paid off the debt sooner than expected during the 1890/1 pantomime would weigh with the directors. The board considered this on 13 May, and again on 22 May, but was not as impressed or forebearing as Wilson Barrett had hoped, and wrote to him on the latter

date that the directors saw no reason to suffer the anxiety of waiting through the summer for their rent (and incidentally risking the possible failure of the pantomime) especially when over the year the theatre made a profit. They added that this risk was not consistent with their duty to the shareholders and to the mortgagee, and that all they were prepared to do was to allow five hundred pounds to stand over until the pantomime to let him 'strengthen his position' on condition that all arrears would be paid off by the end of January. Meanwhile the directors wished to exercise their right to inspect the theatre's accounts.

Wilson Barrett replied a week later that he would endeavour to meet the directors' wishes and added that his prospects for the autumn were favourable. To this Kingston wrote on 1 June to say that the directors were pleased, that consequently he would have to find four hundred pounds by the end of August, and that they still wanted to inspect the books. Clearly this brought home the situation forcibly to Wilson Barrett and he wrote on 3 June to say that it would be absolutely impossible to pay anything before September, but that he would be on tour during the pantomime and hoped thereby to make 'a great deal of money' which would make payments more secure. He had resigned his lease of the Olympic Theatre, and hoped that the directors would give him until September. The books, he added, were at the board's disposal.

The board discussed this on 11 June and wrote back to Wilson Barrett on 30 June to say that the directors would wait until September if he would make a positive engagement to pay the four hundred pounds in that month.

By 25 August, therefore, £1,022 9s. 4d. of arrears had accrued, and a letter was sent to Wilson Barrett recording this, followed by another letter on 3 September inviting him to a board meeting to be held on the eighth of that month. At this meeting Wilson Barrett promised to pay four hundred pounds immediately (the money followed on 10 September), another four hundred pounds at the beginning of November, and to attempt to pay off both the arrears for 1891 and the rent up to the end of July 1892 during the pantomime.

The second four hundred pounds was duly paid on 5 November, and Kingston wrote to him on 9 December reminding him of what Kingston called his promise to pay off the rent to the end of July during the pantomime, and asking him what size the instalments were to be. The letter was sent to Bristol, and had to be forwarded to Derby before Wilson Barrett replied that he had only promised to try to pay off the first two quarters' rent, which he still intended to do, but at that stage he would only promise to pay instalments of one hundred pounds per week until the current rent was paid, and that the rest must depend upon the pantomime.

On receipt of this letter Kingston calculated that Wilson Barrett would owe £904 19s. 4d. up to the end of

the first quarter of 1892, which at the rate of one hundred pounds per week during the pantomime would not be paid off until 27 February. This would leave only one more week of the pantomime, which clearly would not go very far towards paying the second quarter's rent, but this could be done if Wilson Barrett would raise his instalments to £130 per week — which did not seem altogether impossible since he had managed to pay two hundred pounds per week during the 1890/1 pantomime.

Kingston wrote the result of these deliberations to Wilson Barrett on 21 December, including the hope that the next pantomime would be as successful as the last.

In 1891, therefore, despite the success of the pantomime, Wilson Barrett seemed to have to rely upon his own touring performances to supplement payments of rent during the rest of the seasons. On the other hand, the directors, though they were getting increased co-operation from Wilson Barrett in the matter of the inspection of the accounts, saw some threat to the security of their income.

On other fronts the directors were more successful. When in July Morrison failed to persuade the Sun insurance company to accept 31s. 6d. as the rate for the premium of insurance for the theatre, he was nonetheless advised to attempt to get reduced rates elsewhere (the company had been paying 42s.). In this he was successful — all insurance (amounting to £16,500 on the theatre, and £6,000 on the Assembly Rooms) was effected at the rate of 31s. 6d. which meant a total premium of £282 7s. 6d.

The use of the gallery in the Assembly Rooms was also allowed in 1891, and consequently the company could put up the weekly rent for them to eighteen guineas. The rooms were regularly advertised in *The Era*, and applications for their use seemed to come in reasonably consistently -- some, like an application to use the rooms for 'an aquatic entertainment', even had to be turned down. The Assembly Rooms, then, once a 'certain loss' by 1891 seemed to have established their usefulness.

Boswell offered, also, to take part of the shop at forty-two, New Briggate, by knocking through into its back room to extend his storage space (the shop had been unlet). Permission was given for this in May, but in June it was discovered that he had further extended his domain into the cellar which the company forthwith forbade him to do, and demanded restitution of the fabric.

However, the company incurred a number of expenses for repairs and replacements in 1891, chief amongst which were those occasioned by one of the large ventilating cowls on the roof of the theatre which was blown off and fell onto the roof of an adjoining mill before landing in the gallery outlet passage, and a half share in the replacement of the theatre's chandelier which Tollerton reported unsafe in June 1891. After some negotiation with Henry Hastings the company agreed to pay £37 10s. of the cost of the replacement of the Sunlight with one that used less gas.

Changes among directors continued in 1891. There was difficulty in achieving quorums, and Fowler — who had been re-elected a director despite the fact that he had said he would not be able to regularly attend meetings — was asked to relinquish his seat. This was forced upon him, after he had refused so to do, under the articles of association of the company. James Kitson's twenty-four shares in the company were transferred to Albert Ernest Kitson in December, and also in December Edward Shunck acquired three shares from Walter Battle (he was to become a director later).

The year ended for Kingston in a state of some anxiety over the Assembly Rooms, for he had attempted to make an alteration in the renewed insurance policies that seemed to him merely to bring them in line with established practice — that is, he had instructed Morrison to add the fact that the rooms were occasionally used for amateur dramatics to the list of uses of the building. The insurance companies had promptly responded that an extra premium of six per cent must be paid if scenery or gas battens were used in the rooms. As this made such a use of them quite uneconomic, and since also the stage lighting had normally to be used when the rooms were — whatever the purpose — Kingston invited an agent of the Phoenix company to inspect the apparatus and its use. This was done, and the agent sent a report to his West End office,

but by the end of December Kingston had heard nothing as to its contents, and wrote to Morrison to see if he knew anything about it.

The seasons in 1891 saw an increase in the number of weeks of pantomime from eight and one half in 1890 to ten and one half in 1891. Comic opera showed no change at six weeks in each year, as did burlesque, at the same number. There were two weeks of opera, and these constituted the only fortnight's run. The number of weeks of comedies and dramas declined by two to twenty-one, while the number of weeks of returning companies increased by one to eighteen. The theatre was closed for an unusually long summer recess — five weeks — and for a further one and one half weeks for the preparation of the pantomime.

The 1890/1 pantomime, 'The Babes in the Wood', ended its run on Saturday, 7 March, and was followed on 9 March by Messrs A. and S. Gatti's Adelphi Theatre Company in 'The English Rose'.¹ This was a melodramatic piece by George R. Sims and Robert Buchanan. In fact Ethel, the English rose of the title, was transplanted to Ireland where, amidst noteworthy scenery (the curtain rose to reveal 'the picturesque ruins of Ballyreeney Castle', and fell on 'The Chapel by the Sea with a Distant View of Clew Bay'²), she formed the unwitting object of devotion of one Harry O'Mailley. This blighted the heart of Bridget O'Mara,

but it was not the central issue of the play, for domestic interest was focused upon the murder of Ethel's father, Sir Philip Kingston, of which Harry was suspected. The latter was arrested in the presence of his brother, Michael, whose conscience was tortured because, being a priest, he could not divulge evidence that would absolve Harry. (Justice was, of course, done in the end.)

'The English Rose' was followed on 16 March by the Carl Rosa Light Opera Company in a new English comic opera, 'Marjorie'.³ It was written by Lewis Clifton and J.J. Dilley, with music by Walter Slaughter. Its 'slight' plot was derived from the battle of Lincoln in 1217, and the reviewer did not think that the composer could claim much originality for his music either.⁴ However, it was 'bright', there was an abundance of comedy, and it was cleverly acted and sung, so that the reviewer did not doubt that its success would endure. It was given what he regarded as an undoubtedly warm reception at the Grand Theatre.

'Marjorie' was succeeded on 23 March by a return visit of William Hogarth's company in 'Les Cloches de Corneville'.⁵ It was given for five nights only — Good Friday being reserved for a Sacred Concert. The company had undergone many changes since its last visit to Leeds, but an exceptionally large audience was attracted to the Monday night's performance. This popularity of the piece seemed reinforced to the reviewer by the probability that there could be few people in the audience who had not seen it before.⁶

'Les Cloches de Corneville' was followed on 30 March by Messrs Cuthbert and Cobbe's company in 'Round the Ring', an 'original drama' by Paul Merritt.⁷ The play contained many of the conventional excitements of melodrama – the murder of a money-lender, and rivalry between a reckless lawyer and a doctor over the heroine's hand – but it seemed to owe its chief attraction to the fact that it was set in and around a circus. This allowed the introduction of processions of animals, high-wire acts, and the like, and gave the piece its suitability to the Easter holiday week in the reviewer's opinion.⁸

'Round the Ring' was followed on 6 April by a return visit of 'Dorothy' with but one change in its company (Walter Gilbert was a new Geoffrey Wilder). 'Dorothy' in turn was followed by a return visit of Augustus Harris's burlesque company in 'Venus'. Daisy Baldry had temporarily replaced Belle Bilton, and likewise William Bentley substituted for Victor Stevens in this piece which the reviewer regarded as funny enough, though 'not altogether the most humorous of productions'.⁹

'Venus' was succeeded on 20 April by 'Jane', a farcical comedy which at that time was enjoying a run at the Comedy Theatre, London, and was toured by Messrs Harry Nicholls and W. Lestocq's company¹⁰. Though the reviewer thought this 'one of the funniest and best acted pieces

seen at the Grand Theatre for a long time',¹¹ he felt obliged to record that there were in it elements of fin de siècle willingness to make fun out of otherwise compromising situations, and lines at least capable of double entendre in their interpretation. The play was given a hearty reception by a house crowded in every part.

'Jane' was followed on 27 April by a return visit (advertised as a 'farewell visit') of C.H. Hawtrey's company in 'The Private Secretary'. This in turn was followed on 4 May by 'La Cigale', a comic opera by Audran and Stephenson which at that time was playing at the Lyric Theatre in London. Its English version was an adaptation by Ivan Caryll.¹²

Despite the reputation that preceded the piece (or perhaps because of it) the reviewer found it disappointing, and certainly inferior to Audran's earlier pieces.¹³ He accounted for its success in London by the strength of the company which gave it there, but felt that this strength was not maintained in the touring company. For the reviewer the production's main attraction seemed to be Stafford Hall's 'pretty' scenery.

'La Cigale' was followed on 11 May by Willie Edouin's company which appeared in 'Our Flat'.¹⁴ This was the first dramatic work of a Mrs Musgrave, and it had first been produced two years before this visit in Liverpool. Since

then Willie Edouin's careful nurturing had brought it seven hundred performances at the Strand Theatre, London, before being toured.¹⁵

The piece seemed not a little autobiographical. The flat of the title was the home of a young couple, Reginald and Margery Sylvester, who were compelled to live in comparative poverty because their marriage had offended Margery's father.

Reginald was a writer of tragedies which no manager would accept, but Margery decided that comedies were the thing, and wrote one which was immediately accepted (in Reginald's name) by Nathaniel Glover, a caricature of a theatrical manager of the 'Star Theatre'.

Farcical humour was lent by Reginald having to discuss the comedy about which he knew nothing with Glover, and by Glover and the father-in-law struggling to sit 'and pose' on a makeshift sofa constructed by Margery and the maid from orange boxes since the hire firm from which they rented their furniture had reclaimed it.

Reginald treated his father-in-law as a money-lender for which he took him, and the latter's other daughter contemplated a run-away marriage before he relented and brought the piece to a united resolution. ('Near the Wind', Margery's comedy, contained a caricature of the father which helped to precipitate this.)

'Our Flat' was followed on 18 May by a return visit of J. Pitt Hardacre's company in 'The Shaughraun' which again

was given for the Whitsun holiday week. This in turn was followed on 25 May by a return visit of Auguste Van Biene's company in 'Faust up to Date'. Its reception was as warm as before, and the company was substantially unchanged, though Amy Augarde now took the role of the young Faust.

'Faust up to Date' was followed on 1 June by another burlesque, 'Little Jack Shepherd', given by J.J. Dallas's company.¹⁶ This piece had been made popular at the Gaiety Theatre, London, by Fred Leslie and Nelly Farren, and the reviewer thought that as the medium depended very much upon the personal skills of the actors comparisons were inevitable.¹⁷ J.J. Dallas and Kitty Loftus survived such comparison, however, with credit.

'Little Jack Shepherd' was followed on 8 June by a return visit of the D'Oyly Carte company in 'The Mikado', which was given on Monday, Tuesday, and as a matinee on Saturday, 'The Gondoliers' which was given on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday evening, and 'The Yeomen of the Guard' which was given on Friday.¹⁸

The warm approval with which the audience greeted the Monday night's performance extended to an encore of the first chorus. All the 'old favourite numbers' were encored thereafter, and the 'singularly dramatic scene towards the end of act one' received especial acknowledgement. The reviewer prophesied crowded houses throughout the week.¹⁹

'The Gondoliers' was followed on 15 June by Henry Lee's company from the Avenue Theatre, London, in a new 'comedy-drama', 'The Henrietta'.²⁰ The piece came advertised with the quotation 'clever, curious, cynical' from the Daily Telegraph. It had been written by Bronson Howard and first produced in America. Speculative dealings on Wall Street in the Henrietta mine formed its central theme, so that, though frequent bandying of the name caused domestic jealousies, the melodramatic crux of the play came in the death from excitement at his imminent wealth of one son of the stockbroker, Nicholas Valnastyne (this son was in fact the villain, scheming and plotting against his father and bringing him almost to ruin), and the sudden return to the fold of another son who had been written off as a 'dude' (he imitated with ironic humour the follies of the British aristocracy) to save his father with a gift of half a million dollars.

The reviewer felt that the dealings on the American Stock Exchange might be more than the average British audience could follow, but he also asserted that one of the piece's most exciting scenes vividly brought to life a panic on that stock exchange.²¹

'The Henrietta' was followed on 22 June by Charles Arnold, May Hannan, and an otherwise 'mediocre'²² company in a revival of 'Hans, the Boatman'. This was the last piece to be given in the spring season, and after it the theatre

remained closed for an unusually long recess of five weeks. The theatre reopened on 3 August with a return visit of Captain Pomeroy Gilbert's company in 'The Still Alarm'. This was followed on 10 August by Augustus Harris's company which brought 'the enormously successful Drury Lane drama, 'A Million of Money''.

Henry Pettitt and Augustus Harris had collaborated to produce this piece which, as usual for such productions, was composed of 'love, devotion, chivalry, jealousy, villains ... good acting, picturesque scenery, beautiful dresses and clever stage groupings'.²³ It was another racing piece, and the reviewer recommended 'it is worth a visit to the Grand Theatre this week if only to see how well a racecourse can be illustrated upon a stage'. Having itemised the regular virtues of a Drury Lane drama the reviewer found but one fault with it — its length (on the Monday night the performance which began at seven thirty did not finish until ten minutes past eleven). However, a large and 'intensely interested' audience sat it out to the end with evident enjoyment, and the reviewer prophesied full houses for the week.

'A Million of Money' was followed on 18 August by the D'Oyly Carte company in 'The Nautch Girl'.²⁴ This was written by George Dance with lyrics by Frank Desprez and music by Edward Solomon. It was commissioned by D'Oyly Carte to follow Gilbert and Sullivan's pieces and attempted

to maintain the style that they had made associated with the Savoy Theatre. The inevitable comparison, thought the reviewer, found 'The Nautch Girl' wanting, and yet it was generally superior to most comic operas.²⁵ It was set in India where its theme was of caste and of rigid social barriers to marriage. The piece revolved round the dancing girl of the title who in the end returned a diamond purloined from the eye of an idol to its owner which then came alive and participated in the happy resolution of the piece. Thus the work afforded opportunity for spectacular scenes which, together with exotic costumes, formed a major part of the operetta's attraction to the reviewer.

'The Nautch Girl' was followed on 24 August by a return visit of Edward Terry in a round of his familiar pieces: 'In Chancery', which was given on Monday and Wednesday, 'The Church Warden', which was given Tuesday and Thursday, 'Kerry' and 'The Weak Woman', which were given on Friday, and 'The Rocket' which was given on Saturday.²⁶

Edward Terry was given an enthusiastic reception by a large audience on this his first visit since 1884. His 'facial expression, spasmodic movement, and quaint utterances - all devoid of coarseness' were still 'irresistibly funny'.²⁷

Edward Terry was followed on 1 September by George Edwardes's 'original' Gaiety company in his latest success,

'Carmen up to Date'.²⁸ This was a burlesque by Sims and Pettitt who had adhered with unusual faithfulness to the plot of the opera, parodying it scene by scene, but still managing to invest it with 'pretty scenery, superb costumes, charming figures, taking songs /the music was by Herr Meyer Lutz who had used occasional quotations from Bizet/ and comic situations'.²⁹

'Carmen up to Date' was followed on 7 September by Wilson Barrett and his London company³⁰ in 'Claudian', which was given on Monday and Saturday, 'The Acrobat', which was given on Tuesday and Thursday, 'Hamlet', which was given on Wednesday, and 'The Miser' and 'Ben-my-chree', which were given on Friday. The Mayor and Mayoress of Leeds, and Colonel and Mrs North attended the Tuesday night's performance.

In a short speech after the Monday night's performance Wilson Barrett said the Leeds audience required value for 'brass' but that the advance bookings for his week were greater than they had ever been, and, indeed, that the tour of which this visit was a part was his most successful yet.

Miss Eastlake had been replaced by a young American actress, Maud Jefferies, who, though in the reviewer's opinion too young and inexperienced to have established a claim to be called a great actress,³¹ nonetheless made a favourable impression on the audience. Mr H. Cooper-Cliffe and Mr J. Dewhurst retained their old roles, but many of the other parts were in new hands.

Wilson Barrett played Belphegor in 'The Acrobat', the only new piece in his repertoire, and which he had first produced at the New Olympic Theatre during his tenancy of it in the autumn of 1890. It was a 'picturesque and moving story',³² indeed, tempting Wilson Barrett to be overly melodramatic in its earlier scenes. The piece encompassed wide social strata and the whole gamut of human emotions. The reviewer thought that the large, wrapt audience might consider it the best performance that Wilson Barrett had given at the Grand Theatre.³³

'The Miser' was a 'weird, somewhat uncanny' one-act piece,³⁴ described in the programme as a fantasy (characters in it were the Miser, the Devil, Death, and a Woman by Dr Weir Mitchell. The reviewer thought that it was the kind of piece that could easily degenerate into the ridiculous, but that Wilson Barrett's deep self-immersion in the role of the old man who hoarded his life's collection of ducats brought the piece to triumph. Indeed, said the reviewer with some enthusiasm, it might have been considered Wilson Barrett's greatest piece of acting in the whole week.

Wilson Barrett was succeeded on 14 September by J.L. Toole's company who appeared in 'Waiting Consent' followed by 'Paul Fry' and 'The Birthplace of Podger' on Monday and Tuesday, 'Chawles; or, a Fool and His Money' and

'Waiting Consent' and 'The Birthplace of Podger' on Wednesday, 'Waiting Consent', 'Serious Family' and 'The Birthplace of Podger' on Thursday, 'The Don' and 'The Spitalfields Weaver' on Friday, and 'Dot' and 'The Spitalfields Weaver' on Saturday.³⁵

These 'well-worn' pieces were watched with as much interest as if they were seen for the first time, and the most familiar of all, 'The Birthplace of Podger', seemed to fetch the loudest laughter, said the reviewer.³⁶

J.L. Toole was followed on 21 September by William Calder's company in 'the celebrated Princess's Drama', 'Fate and Fortune'. This was a new play by J.J. Blood (who was a dramatist of repute in the Midlands, said the reviewer³⁷). It was simple melodramatic fare, though with a spark of freshness, not to say originality, in the otherwise conventional characters. The basis of the plot was that the villain, a Russian, murdered an English banker in Russia, and by impersonating him became a wealthy partner in a London bank. From this base he set about pursuing and almost capturing an heiress (he had to remove a rival in the process) before virtue frustrated him. Light relief was provided by a kindly policeman and his wife, a drunken ne'er-do-well, a comic policeman, a farcical soldier, and Swag, the housebreaker, who was played by William Calder.

The piece was decorously staged (the reviewer singled

out the ruins of Abbotslea Abbey for special praise) and emphatically endorsed by crowded pit and gallery.

'Fate and Fortune' was followed on 28 September by Augustus Harris's burlesque company in 'Orpheus and Eurydice'.³⁸ In this piece which followed up the success of 'Venus' Harris retained Olympian protagonists and adhered closely to its mythological source which, along with lavishness of mounting and the other conventional virtues of burlesque, convinced the reviewer that it had all the ingredients of success.³⁹

'Orpheus and Eurydice' was followed on 5 October by a return visit of Thomas Thorne's company⁴⁰ in adaptations of Fielding, 'Joseph's Sweetheart' on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, 'Sophia' on Thursday, and Bulwer-Lytton's 'Money' on Friday. The Monday night's audience was not large, though it was sufficient in the reviewer's opinion to show that there was some life in the piece yet.⁴¹

'Joseph's Sweetheart' was followed on 12 October by a return visit of T.W. Robertson's company in what was advertised as a farewell visit of 'Sweet Lavender'. The company had undergone some (degenerative) changes since it was previously in Leeds, but the principal roles were still in the same hands.

'Sweet Lavender' was followed on 19 October by a visit of Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and the Lyceum company in 'Nance Oldfield' and 'The Bells' on Monday, 'The Merchant of Venice' on Tuesday and Friday, 'Ravenswood' on Wednesday, and 'Nance Oldfield' and 'The Lyons Mail' on Saturday.⁴²

Advance bookings had been 'unexampled' for Irving's visit, and the Monday night audience watched 'The Bells' with silent reverence. Ellen Terry, who seemed to the reviewer to have recovered almost without trace from her recent illness,⁴³ had no part in the evening's major piece, but played the principal character in the preceding play, 'Nance Oldfield', by Charles Reade (then recently dead). It was based on a 'much adapted' piece by Narcisse Fourrier which was some fifty years old. In it Ellen Terry played a mature actress to whom a young man had become devoted and wrote a tragedy for her. At the instigation of his father who detested actors she set out to disenchant him with her world, but later, when this was too effective, attempted to reverse the process. Ellen Terry was seen in the part in 'her gayest and merriest mood, interwoven with a little sentiment and sympathy'.

People 'flocked in their thousands'⁴⁴ to see 'The Merchant of Venice' and were raised to the utmost enthusiasm by it. The reviewer had written about Irving's sympathetic treatment of the Jew before, and thought that nothing

could be added, repeating that whatever reservations there might be about his 'mannerisms' (particularly prominent in this role) and his interpretation, Irving's performance was still impressive. The scenery was by Hawes Craven, Walter Hann, and Telbin, and created a particularly fine sequence of stage pictures. The Lyceum stage, said the reviewer, was 'bodily transported to Leeds'.⁴⁵

'Ravenswood' was an adaptation by Herman Merivale of Sir Walter Scott's 'The Bride of Lamermoor'. Irving had first produced it at the Lyceum in 1890. In it he played Lord Ravenswood, driven from an implacable desire for revenge to the tenderest love-making by Ellen Terry's gentle Lucy Ashton. She eventually was driven to distraction and died as a consequence of being forced to sign a marriage contract with the villain of the piece. Then, Ravenswood, weak with the fever that had already delayed him too long, fought and slew the villain before riding off with his dead bride to sink with but a small trace into quicksand in the bright rays of the morning sun, watched by a horrified, faithful old retainer.⁴⁶

'The Lyons Mail' was an adaptation also by Charles Reade of 'Le Courier de Lyons' which was based on a real miscarriage of justice, and first performed with the victim's family's approval at the Gaiété Theatre, Paris, in 1850. The reviewer regarded it as a rather coarsely

melodramatic piece, and would have wished for Irving's final performance of the visit to be of a less 'repulsive' play.⁴⁷

The audience, however, did not share these misgivings, and were raised to great enthusiasm by the performance. At its close they made repeated calls for Irving and Ellen Terry (who was by then patently unwell, said the reviewer) and Irving made a brief speech of thanks concluding 'I assure you ... that the memory of our visit to Leeds will be one of unalloyed pleasure and gratification'.

Houses had been crowded during the week — people had often been turned away — and the reviewer confidently asserted that the takings at the box office had been a record. This extraordinary attendance was to the reviewer a proof that the Leeds audience only required performances of high quality to bring it out in force, and prepared to pay raised prices.

Henry Irving was followed on 26 October by a visit for a fortnight of the Carl Rosa Opera Company which in its first week gave 'Faust' on Monday, 'Carmen' on Tuesday, Balfe's 'The Talisman' on Wednesday, 'Romeo and Juliet' on Thursday, 'The Huguenots' on Friday, and 'The Daughter of the Regiment' on Saturday.⁴⁸

The only work of any novelty to the Leeds audience was 'The Talisman' which was based by Balfe on Sir Walter Scott's novel, but Balfe had not completed it before his

death. The opera was finished by Sir G.H. Macfarren, but though it was written in English it had to wait seventeen years before it was performed in that language (such was the hold that the Italian and French opera had). This first English production was by the Carl Rosa Opera Company in Liverpool in 1891.

The reviewer found Balfe's essay at grand opera undramatic, though his part of the music contained 'agreeable' tunes.⁴⁹ The heroine's costume seemed out of place on a crusade, and one of the male characters had a make-up that made him resemble a Christy Minstrel. Otherwise the work was effectively staged, though even the scenery seemed to have lost some of its 'pristine freshness'.⁵⁰

In its second week the Carl Rosa Opera Company gave 'Carmen' on Monday, 'Il Trovatore' on Tuesday, 'Bohemian Girl' on Wednesday, 'The Black Domino' on Thursday, 'The Daughter of the Regiment' on Friday, 'Faust' as a matinee on Saturday, and 'Maritana' on Saturday evening.⁵¹

Again, there was only one piece of any novelty in this second week: 'Le Domino Noire' by Auber and Scribe, done into a poor English version by C.L. Kenney. The opera's 'slight and improbable'⁵² plot centred round one Count Horace who, betrothed to the niece of the French Ambassador to the court of Madrid, met his true love, Angela, at a masked ball, but discovered that she was about to become abbess of a convent.

In the second act, Angela, having lost her way to the convent in the dark, was disguised as a servant in the house of a friend of Horace's where the latter discovered her. A letter followed with all the swiftness of operatic convention to release Angela from her obligation to go into the convent so that a happy ending might ensue.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company was followed on 9 November by Rollo Balmain's Gaiety Burlesque Company in what was advertised as a farewell performance of 'Miss Esmerelda' for which Little Tich had been specially engaged to play Quasimodo. The latter's 'drolleries and agility' made him 'a decided acquisition' to the company, and were enthusiastically received. The reviewer did not regard 'Miss Esmerelda' as a very good burlesque, but conceded that 'taking music, clever dancing, and good acting' carried it through.⁵³

'Miss Esmerelda' was followed on 16 November by a French company in 'L'Enfant Prodigue' which was advertised as a 'musical play' and 'a play without words'. It had been produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London.

The reviewer described the piece as a true pantomime,⁵⁴ tracing the origin of this form back to the Romans, but finally placing it in the early eighteenth century, whence derived the Harlequinade (which he regarded as a moribund

coda of nineteenth-century pantomimes). L'Enfant Prodigue' seemed to the reviewer a French parallel to the Harlequinade.

The story was told purely in mime to the accompaniment of a small orchestra dominated by a piano which often played solo for long passages. Pierrot, living with his parents, was melancholy until Phrynette stirred his heart to love for her. She drove him to steal from his parents in order to elope with her, but then transferred her affections to a wealthy Baron. Pierrot returned home chastened, and received the forgiveness of his mother, but his father remained irreconcilable. Pierrot resolved to join the army in order to restore his good character.

Though the touring company⁵⁵ that presented the piece was inferior to the company which gave it in London, the reviewer did not think that anyone who had not seen the original production would be disappointed. He regarded the musical accompaniment as a particularly successful feature of the performance (the music was by André Wormser), describing it as 'instinct with truly Gallic grace and piquancy, perfectly realising the humorous situations, yet rising at times to considerable heights of emotion as in the pathetic scene of the prodigal's return to his mother's arms'. However, though he had high praise for the pianist, he thought that the rest of the orchestra, particularly the strings, were ragged and under-rehearsed.

The audience was not large, but the reviewer hoped that

it might increase as the unique and charming quality of the performance was noised abroad.

'L'Enfant Prodigue' was followed on 23 November by a return visit of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Mikado' which was given on Monday and Wednesday, 'The Gondoliers' which was given on Tuesday, 'Iolanthe' which was given on Thursday and Saturday, and 'The Yeomen of the Guard' which was given on Friday.

This tour of Gilbert and Sullivan's later works caused the reviewer to prophesy the revival of some of the earlier ones.⁵⁶ The company was substantially unchanged from that which was last in Leeds.

The D'Oyly Carte company was followed on 30 November by a return visit of Minnie Palmer, supported by John R. Rogers's company in 'The Daughter of the Regiment' and 'The Little Rebel' on Monday, 'My Sweetheart' on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and 'My Brother's Sister' on Friday.

'The Daughter of the Regiment', which was the only piece which had not been seen in Leeds many times before, was an adaptation of Donizetti's opera which while adhering closely to the plot, provided Minnie Palmer with an opportunity to demonstrate that she had greater histrionic powers than 'My Sweetheart' had required of her, but that, ultimately, it was her personality that the audience came to enjoy, and this was given ample scope in the play.

She was supported by what the reviewer regarded as an unusually capable company which included Mr H. Sparling, and Miss Jane Grey.⁵⁷

Minnie Palmer's 'romping and pouting schoolgirl' in 'The Little Rebel', said the reviewer, formed a pleasant contrast with her Josephine in 'The Daughter of the Regiment' and was said to be her favourite character. In it she was enthusiastically received by a crowded house.

Minnie Palmer was succeeded on 7 December by a return visit of Charles Dornton's company in 'The Silver King', which, though 'well-worn', still seemed to the popular taste.⁵⁸

'The Silver King' was the last play of the season and after it the theatre remained closed for ten days for preparation of the pantomime, 'The Forty Thieves, Limited', which opened on 23 December. A house 'crowded to the rafters' gave it an unmistakably favourable reception. The reviewer generally concurred with this judgement though he thought that the dialogue and some of the 'vulgar' topical allusions which he witnessed on the first night (which he regarded as a full dress rehearsal rather than as a public performance) needed excision and revision.⁵⁹

Stafford Hall's scenic contribution he thought particularly important, as were the ballets which were arranged by a Mr Dewinne, and the dresses designed by Tom Bradley. Henry Hastings, now the manager of the theatre, had a stage manager under him, Mr W. Howarth.

The pantomime opened in a mystic grove where disciples of Theosophy were congregated before their temple. Theosophy, they found, was played out, and they needed some 'new sensation of the creepy and weepy kind'. A button inserted in a slot in an effigy adorning their temple elicited from the Grand Mahatma a recommendation that they form a 'swindlecate' under the title of 'The Forty Thieves, Limited', and, one of the disciples dissenting (on the grounds that 'she'd do the moral thing for the reason most folks do it - for spite!') the good versus evil polarity was established as was conventionally required.

Thereafter the reviewer found that 'the story of the woodcutter who found out the "open sesame" of the Robbers' Cave' lent itself admirably to stage adaptation, enjoying excellent scenic illustration. Stafford Hall's 'poetic fancy, his research, and his technique' displayed themselves 'with unparalleled force'. Scenes included 'The Market Place at Bagdad', 'The Outside of the Forty Thieves' Cave', 'The Gardens of the Palace' - the first an oriental street scene, the next a 'charming tropical landscape, the last an 'exquisite' moonlight effect..

After the scenery the reviewer enjoyed the procession of the Forty Thieves, and the ballets - a naval ballet, with cutlass exercise and gun drill, and a Grand Ballet in the Robbers' Cave seemed particularly praiseworthy.

The transformation scene was entitled 'Cleopatra' and consisted of a series of tableaux. It was painted by Frederic Fox.

Wilson Barrett watched the first performance from his stage box, and afterwards came before the curtain with Henry Hastings and W. Howarth who had clearly been mainly responsible for the production.⁶⁰

Notes

- 1 The company included Mr W.R. Sutherland, Charles K. Chute, Harry Pagden, Gwynne Herbert, John S. Chamberlain, Gracie Warner, Mr C.H. Fenton, Stephen Caffrey, Frank Wood, Arthur C. Perry, and Ada Rogers.
- 2 Yorkshire Post, 11 March 1891, p. 5.
- 3 The company included Miss Emmott-Herbert, Jennie Rogers, Madge Stavart, John Wainwright, Charles Conyers, Mr Templer Saxe, Edward Marshall, Clarence Hunt, and Carl Risson.
- 4 Yorkshire Post, 17 March 1891, p. 5.
- 5 The company included Shiel Barry, William Hogarth, Mr Fowler Thatcher, Marie D'Alcourt (whose slight French accent was held by the reviewer to mar her Germaine), Amy Grundy, and Edward Chessman.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 24 March 1891, p. 8.
- 7 The company included Lucy Sibley, Mr Hamilton Stewart, Henry Renouf, Belle Valpy, Mrs H. Kitts, Walter McEwan, Walter Summers, Mr W.H. Rotherham, and Edwin Wilde.
- 8 Yorkshire Post, 31 March 1891, p. 6.
- 9 Yorkshire Post, 16 April 1891, p. 6.
- 10 The company included Mr J.G. Grahame, Stewart Dawson, Ernest Hendrie, Emma Chambers, Amy Liddon, Margaret Brough, Beatrice D'Almaine, and Charles Liddon.
- 11 Yorkshire Post, 21 April 1891, p. 5.
- 12 The company included Hetty Lund (whose voice was too 'thin' to fill the theatre), Alice Rees, Kate Payne,

- Percy Compton, Sydney Towler, Mr C.A. White, Percy Brough, Mr F.H. Morton, Miss Harris Brookes, Frances Lytton, Alice Mori, Gertrude Fisher, and Maud Fisher.
- 13 Yorkshire Post, 5 May 1891, p. 5.
- 14 The company included Mr H. Eversfield, Lilla Wilde, Richard Purdon, Thomas Sidney, Roland Moore, Olga Schubert, Louie Tinsley, Frederick Knight, Alec C. Pearson, Catherine Clare, Leslie Wood, Nelly Wentworth, Mr Shepherd, Mr Bright, and Mr Williams.
- 15 Yorkshire Post, 13 May 1891, p. 6.
- 16 The company included Frank Manning, Katie Leechman, Sallie Waters, and Violet Monkton.
- 17 Yorkshire Post, 3 June 1891, p. 8.
- 18 The company included George Thorne, Fred Billington, Mr C. Wallen, Rose Hervey, Mary Duggan, Alice Pennington, Richard Clarke, Thomas Redmond, and Kate Forster.
- 19 Yorkshire Post, 9 June 1891, p. 5.
- 20 The company included Henry Lee, Mr W.H. Perrette, Mr M. Martin, Mr H.J. Turner, Mr F.J. Morgan, Mr J.J. Bartlett, Mr H. Doughty, Mr H. Besley, Mr Baton White, Leslie Bell, Agnes Lockwood, Miss L. Rickards, Miss L. Peach, and Miss E. Irving.
- 21 Yorkshire Post, 17 June 1891, p. 4.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 24 June 1891, p. 5.
- 23 Yorkshire Post, 11 August 1891, p. 4.
- 24 The company included Charles Kenningham, Attalie Claire, Nellie Richardson, Ethel Burnleigh, John le Hay, Sam Wilkinson, Mary Duggan, and James Stevenson. The

- scenery was by Stafford Hall, Mr D.G. Hall (of Bradford), and F. Fox.
- 25 Yorkshire Post, 18 August 1891, p. 4.
- 26 The company included William Calvert, Mr A. Kendrick, Mr T. Cannon, George Belmore, Mr H.V. Esmond, Alice Maitland, and Kate Mills. 'The Baby', by Lady Violet Greville, was given as a curtain-raiser.
- 27 Yorkshire Post, 25 August 1891, p. 5.
- 28 The company included Florence St John, Mr E.J. Lonnen, Arthur Williams, Mr E.H. Haslem, Maud Wilmot, Alice Gilbert, Miss L. McIntyre, Miss A. Astor, and Lillian Price.
- 29 Yorkshire Post, 1 September 1891, p. 4.
- 30 The company included Mr W.H. Elliott, Horace Hodges, and Lillie Belmore.
- 31 Yorkshire Post, 8 September 1891, p. 5.
- 32 Yorkshire Post, 9 September 1891, p. 5.
- 33 The company further included Ambrose Manning, Edie King, and Edward Irwin.
- 34 Yorkshire Post, 12 September 1891, p. 10.
- 35 The company included John Billington, Mr G. Shelton, Mr C.H. Lowe, Irene Vanbrough, Eliza Johnstone, and Effie Liston.
- 36 Yorkshire Post, 15 September 1891, p. 4.
- 37 Yorkshire Post, 22 September 1891, p. 5.
- 38 The company included Harry Fisher, Mr J.L. Shine, Grace Huntley, Fanny Marriott, Mr W. Morgan, Frank Smithson, and Mr J.T. Macmillan.

- 39 Yorkshire Post, 29 September 1891, p. 6.
- 40 The company included Thomas Thorne, Mr H.R. Conway, Evelyn Mullard, Gladys Homfrey, Mr J. Wheatman, Oswald Yorke, Mr J.S. Blythe, Fred Grove, Mr L. D'Orsay, Sylvia Hodson, Rose Dudley, and Miss A. Laurie.
- 41 Yorkshire Post, 6 October 1891, p. 5.
- 42 The company included Gordon Craig, Kate Phillips, and Mr Wenman.
- 43 Yorkshire Post, 20 October 1891, p. 4.
- 44 Yorkshire Post, 21 October 1891, p. 5.
- 45 The company included Mr Terris.
- 46 Yorkshire Post, 22 October 1891, p. 5.
- 47 Yorkshire Post, 26 October 1891, p. 5.
- 48 The company included M. Jean Dimitresco, Alec Marsh, Mr C. Campbell, Leslie Crotty, Josephine York, Annie Cooke, and Georgina Burns.
- 49 Yorkshire Post, 29 October 1891, p. 4.
- 50 The company also included Mr Child, Max Eugene, Mr Pringle, Mr Somers, and Mr Wood. There was a 'feeble' ballet interpolated to music by Claude Jaquinot, who also conducted.
- 51 The company further included Mr E.C. Hedmond, Alice Esty, Mr Aynsley Cook, Rhys Thomas, Mr Ormerod, and Mdlle Zelig de Lussan.
- 52 Yorkshire Post, 6 November 1891, p. 5.
- 53 Yorkshire Post, 11 November 1891, p. 8.
- 54 Yorkshire Post, 17 November 1891, p. 5.

- 55 The company included Mdlle Raynard, Mdme Bade,
M. de Gasperi, Mdlle Denis, M. Virgile, and M. Brun.
Mr Landon Ronald played the piano.
- 56 Yorkshire Post, 24 November 1891, p. 4.
- 57 Yorkshire Post, 1 December 1891, p. 8.
- 58 The company included Henry George, Phillis Manners,
Mr C.K. Chute, Edward J. George, Mr Gray Golby, Charles
Otley, and Mr F. Wells.
- 59 Yorkshire Post, 24 December 1891, p. 4.
- 60 The company included Fanny Marriott, Edith Kenward,
Hetty Chapman, Mr J.R. Rowley, Tom Park, Frank Lindo
(who played 'the conventional burlesque villain'
which included impersonations of Wilson Barrett as
Claudian and as the Silver King), James Danvers,
Mr Harlow, and the Bovis Boys (whose knockabout business
the reviewer thought might more fittingly have been
relegated to the Harlequinade).

CHAPTER XVI:1892

In 1891 Wilson Barrett had promised only to pay one hundred pounds per week during the pantomime, but in fact, as Kingston had hoped, he was able to pay seven instalments of one hundred and thirty pounds. Wilson Barrett did this even though a fire at the Leeds railway station had prevented the usual number of excursions, and the death of the Prince was thought also to have a depressing influence on the takings. Since in a good year the theatre might hope to receive two or three hundred thousand visitors brought in by excursion trains, the lack of them must have seemed very serious, for it nearly halved the potential audience. There was a 'very considerable' fall in takings, in any event, in the early part of January, and G.M. Polini wrote to the company on 21 January on Wilson Barrett's behalf to say that the latter would only pay one hundred pounds a week as a consequence of it. However, this reduction was not found necessary, and Wilson Barrett continued to pay instalments of one hundred and thirty pounds until 18 February.

Thereafter he made only two more payments during the run of the pantomime - of £73 12s. 4d., and £35 7s. 3d. on 29 February and 7 March respectively. As we have seen the profitability of the pantomime used regularly to fall off in its last two weeks, and the reduction in these

payments would seem to indicate that this was markedly so in 1892. On 8 March, consequently, Kingston calculated that Wilson Barrett had paid £150 towards the second quarter's rent and that there would be approximately three hundred pounds more to pay to the end of July. After minor adjustments Kingston sent a demand on 30 April for £291 17s. 6d. to pay off the second quarter's rent.

Wilson Barrett wrote back on 3 May to say that he would hope to pay at least a substantial part of this amount at his next visit to the Grand Theatre which was the week beginning 16 May. The directors decided to hold a board meeting during this week, and wrote to Wilson Barrett on 14 May inviting him to that meeting which they intended to hold on the twentieth. However, on 16 May they received a message from Henry Hastings that Wilson Barrett's daughter was so ill that his almost daily attendance in London was necessitated, and that therefore he could not spare the time for a formal meeting with the board (which usually took place in the afternoon) but that he would meet them informally after the performance on Thursday. Henry Hastings added, however, that a cheque for the £291 17s. 6d. would be paid to the company on that Thursday morning (which may have answered the directors' principal demand to be made at the meeting), and since also the architect's report on the state of the interior of the theatre was not ready, both meetings were cancelled.

The £291 17s. 6d. was duly paid, and this brought Wilson Barrett's rent up to date until the end of July. Kingston wrote promptly on 2 August demanding the third quarter's rent, £587 10s., and followed this with a letter on 4 August inviting Wilson Barrett to make a submission to the next board meeting. Wilson Barrett wrote on 8 August to ask for the rent to be allowed to stand over until his next engagement in Leeds. The board met on the following day, and decided that half that amount would be allowed to stand over if Wilson Barrett paid £225 at once. Wilson Barrett was informed of this decision and replied that he would do his utmost to pay the £225 by the end of August.

This in fact Wilson Barrett did, though, as Kingston conceded in his letter of acknowledgement, business at the theatre had been 'very moderate'. Kingston wished him greater success in the autumn season.

Wilson Barrett's next engagement in Leeds was for the week beginning 27 September, and the directors decided to hold a board meeting on 30 September to which they invited him. At this meeting three major topics were discussed: firstly the rent, as a consequence of which Wilson Barrett paid the remaining half of the quarter's rent (which ran to the end of October), secondly the appointment of some representative while Wilson Barrett was away touring in America as he intended to do again in the autumn, and finally plans and estimates for the

building of an awning over the theatre's entrance. The last was approved subject to Wilson Barrett gaining the appropriate permission from the city council, while the directors deliberated on the second, and eventually wrote to Wilson Barrett on 4 October to express their approval of his son, Alfred Barrett, having his power of attorney. They would prefer this, they said, since they would then have someone in Leeds rather than at a distance to negotiate with.

Wilson Barrett's rent in 1892, then, despite setbacks both to the pantomime and generally a depressed state of business in the summer, nonetheless was paid with a greater promptitude than it had in previous years. Only the last quarter's rent had to be paid out of the 1892/3 pantomime receipts, since all arrears were paid up to the end of October. And with Alfred Barrett installed in Leeds the directors might look forward to these payments with some feelings of security.

The building of the awning over the theatre's entrance in fact went ahead without the council's approval since it was not sought, and this provoked a complaint from the Building Inspector on 10 December to the company. The complaint was swiftly passed on to Wilson Barrett who, it seems, must have then obtained permission, for the erection of the awning was completed.

The company were involved in greater works than this, however. In 1891 wind had blown a ventilation cowling

off the theatre's roof, and there had been a history of misadventures to it. Kingston prepared for the board meeting on 9 August a statement showing that £468 4s. 9d. had been spent on repairs to the roof since 1882. The directors considered that something more than simple repairs was required, and new timbers and re-slatting were decided upon at an estimated cost of roughly four hundred pounds.

Further improvements were required to theatre's soil pipes by the Nuisance Inspector whose report was sent on to Winn on 14 April with a request to estimate what the cost would be if the Inspector's demands had to be complied with. Winn saw no alternative but to comply, and in fact the alterations once undertaken proved extensive and protracted.

The internal state of the theatre was also very much in the directors' minds, and Winn was instructed too to draw up a report on this, and it is notable that in an item on the agenda of a board meeting on 26 April the directors began the investment of a 'dilapidations' fund. (The directors seemed to be acting with great prescience in this for although they intended to renew Wilson Barrett's lease when next it ran out, and Wilson Barrett could therefore be forced to pay for dilapidations, three years later the board was to decide to take the theatre's management upon themselves, and for this the company had to pay for extensive renovations.)

The difficulty of finding insurance for the theatre which in previous years had enjoined the payment of increased premiums, now seemed to be lessening, for, though Morrison was allowed to renew the £1,800 insurance on the rent, Messrs Kettlewell and Son were invited to take over the agency for the bulk of the insurance on the buildings when they offered to do so for a reduced total premium of £256 7s. 9d. The problems of insuring the Assembly Rooms too for occasional amateur dramatic performances were resolved early in the year when the gas battens which had been a source of some anxiety to Kingston in 1891 were given added protection. This satisfied the insurance companies.

Ironically it seemed to be other kinds of function that dominated the Assembly Rooms' use in 1892 when Kingston was able to make two semi-permanent lettings for a year — one for dances every Monday and Saturday, and one for the Temperance League to have every Sunday (this was no charitable arrangement, as can be seen from the fact that the League had to pay more for the rooms during the winter months when their market value was greater — £2 10s. as opposed to two pounds only during the summer).

In 1892 the company paid out a total dividend of £492 to shareholders which was equivalent to the two per cent that had regularly been paid. There were further changes in the composition of the board. George Irwin resigned,

and Edward Shunck and John Rhodes (a Gentleman and a Broker respectively) were appointed directors.

The seasons in 1892 again saw ten and one half weeks of pantomime, but an increase in the number of weeks of comic opera to nine, plus one week of burlesque opera. Again there were two weeks of opera proper, and these constituted the only run of a fortnight. There were only twenty weeks of dramas and comedies — a decrease of one week from 1891 — and four weeks of burlesque. Fourteen weeks were filled with returning productions, and two with revivals — a decrease of two weeks from 1891. The theatre remained closed for four weeks in the summer, and for one and one half weeks for preparation of the pantomime — five and one half weeks in all, which was a decrease of one week from 1891.

The 1891/2 pantomime closed on Saturday, 5 March, and was followed on 7 March by Messrs Harry Nicholls and W. Lestocq's company in a return visit of 'Jane'. The company was substantially the same as that which had given the piece at the Grand Theatre only a few months before, and it was watched by only a 'meagre' audience on the Monday night. Those who did go to see it, however, seemed to the reviewer to 'thoroughly relish it'.¹

'Jane' was followed on 14 March by a return visit of

the Compton Comedy Company in a round of its familiar comedies: 'The School for Scandal' which was given on Monday, 'The Rivals' which was given on Tuesday, 'Money' which was given on Wednesday, 'She Stoops to Conquer' which was given on Thursday, 'The American' which was given on Friday, and 'David Garrick' which was given on Saturday.²

Sheridan's comedy was still capable of thrilling modern audiences and exciting hearty laughter said the reviewer, welcoming the visit.³

The Compton Comedy Company was followed on 21 March by 'The Dancing Girl'. This was a play by Henry Arthur Jones which claimed to deal with scenes and places of actual modern life, said the reviewer,⁴ and accordingly had a properly conventional story and true to life characters. To this he attributed the drama's power, adding that its character drawing (particularly of the two central characters, the Duke of Guiseley — a 'fin de siècle Hamlet' — and the dancing girl herself) was unusually competent, and that the piece enjoyed greater literary merit than most.

Kate Vaughan and Mr H.J. Lethcourt were the stars of the company, and the setting of the piece was 'thoroughly in keeping with the reputation of the house'.

'The Dancing Girl' was followed on 28 March by Horace Sedger's company in 'the latest operatic success',

'The Mountebanks'.⁵ This was a comic opera by Messrs Gilbert and Cellier, and the reviewer asserted that its success proved the equal value of Gilbert to the partnership that created the Savoy operas.⁶ Alfred Cellier (who had recently died) had provided music that, if lacking in the 'distinction and power' of Sullivan's 'graceful and melodious' work, was at least equal to the task.

The central characters of the piece were Bartolo and Nita, clown and dancing girl respectively, and they were watched by a large audience.

'The Mountebanks' was followed on 4 April by Osmond Tearle and his company who gave a week of Shakespearian revivals: 'King Lear' on Monday, 'Richard III' on Tuesday, 'Othello' on Wednesday, 'Macbeth' on Thursday, 'Romeo and Juliet' on Friday, and 'Hamlet' on Saturday.⁷

Osmond Tearle, said the reviewer, was a 'scholarly, earnest, painstaking and withal powerful actor' above the run of Shakespearian actors.⁸ His Lear had scarcely a weak point, he never ranted in the impassioned speeches, and always conveyed the impression of a reserve of power kept in check. Nonetheless he was clearly an actor of the old school touring with an extensive repertoire but a small company, and the reviewer did not think his performances of sufficient interest to give any more than one brief notice on the Tuesday of the week.

Osmond Tearle was followed on 11 April by a return visit of Auguste Van Biene's company in 'Faust up to Date'. Unlike Osmond Tearle who had attracted but thin houses during his week, the burlesque opera had a large audience. There had been several changes in the company, and Mephistopheles and Marguerite were now played by Frank Danby and Mdlle Otta Brony respectively.⁹

'Faust up to Date' was followed on 18 April by the usual return visit of J. Pitt Hardacre's company in 'The Shaughraun' which was given for the week of the Easter holiday. This in turn was followed by Augustus Harris's company in 'The Late Lamented; or, Nicholson's Widow' (with 'Mutual Mistake' as a curtain-raiser).¹⁰

'The Late Lamented; or, Nicholson's Widow' was a farcical comedy which verged on burlesque, adapted from a French source by Fred Harker. Its central device was that the Nicholson of the sub-title had two wives (one in England and the other in Cyprus). After his death they both remarried, and came to occupy flats in the same building in London quite by accident. Misunderstandings and farcical complications thus abounded.

The piece was watched and applauded by a large and enthusiastic audience.¹¹

'The Late Lamented' was followed on 2 May by D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Vicar of Bray'. It was advertised

as having a chorus of 'upwards of fifty voices' in addition to the children of a Mr Stedman's choir.¹²

'The Vicar of Bray' was a comic opera with dialogue and lyrics by Sydney Grundy and music by Edward Solomon. It was received, said the reviewer, with 'sincere enthusiasm and unanimous applause'.¹³ He cited the 'picturesque old English village green' upon which the curtain rose which was occupied by 'carolling lads and lasses in Kate Greenaway costumes', and the final ensemble of 'hunting men in bright scarlet ... ladies of the ballet in rich attire, students in solemn black and attractive damsels in white' as examples of the quality of the experience of this 'bright, brisk, cheerful opera'.

The slight satire on the Church implicit in the subject was handled so delicately as to avoid any offence to the clergy, he assured the potential audience.

'The Vicar of Bray' was followed on 9 March by 'Decima' which, the advertising claimed, had been the success of the London season at both the Criterion Theatre and the Prince of Wales Theatre.

'Decima' was a 'Bowdlerised' adaptation by F.C. Burnand of a comic opera by Auber and Boucheron. The reviewer thought the 'Bowdlerisation' necessary to make the piece fit for staging in England, but conceded that the process left the plot somewhat enfeebled.¹⁴ As it was the piece concerned a seventeen year old young lady in whose character prudery and coquetry tried to coexist. She slid down a

mountain-side at Interlaken, and, stopped by a bush, was rescued therefrom by a man whom she did not know, but whom she later determined to pursue in order to make him marry her. This she seemed to think (prompted by her clerical father) might justify her 'eccentric' behaviour. The piece was devoted to a series of misadventures that occurred to her during this pursuit, until before the fall of the curtain she caught up with the man who turned out to be he whom she had loved all along.¹⁵

'Decima' was followed on 16 May by Wilson Barrett and his company who appeared in 'Ben-my-chree' on Monday, 'Othello' on Tuesday, 'The Acrobat' on Wednesday, 'Hamlet' on Thursday, 'Claudian' on Friday, and 'The Silver King' on Saturday.¹⁶

There had been several changes in the cast of 'Ben-my-chree', but the reviewer expended most of his notice on assessing Maud Jeffries's first performance in Leeds in the role of the heroine of this play.¹⁷ At her only previous visit to Leeds, he said, she had made a good impression which was principally due to her Ophelia. Though the part of Mona Mylrea in 'Ben-my-chree' did not ideally suit her and she seemed slow to get into it, nonetheless that favourable impression was sustained. Wilson Barrett thanked the audience for their reception on her behalf.

The house was crowded in every part to see Wilson Barrett's first essay in Leeds at Othello. His interpretation

seemed to the reviewer not unconventional, but it was notable for the whole-heartedness with which the actor threw himself into a part which he had clearly conscientiously worked out.¹⁸ (Reviews of his performance in Liverpool, however, remarked on the 'earnestness' of his performance and ventured that it was one of the best Othellos of the day.)

The part of Iago was taken by H. Cooper-Cliffe, and the reviewer remarked that some critics regarded this as a superior role to that of Othello in the ability that was required to act it.

Wilson Barrett was followed on 23 May by Augustus Harris's company in 'The Young Recruit'.¹⁹ This was a burlesque opera (with 'not particularly striking music' by Leopold Wennel²⁰) which the reviewer felt did not allow the strong company which Harris had assembled to play it to do full justice to their talents. It was, however, 'splendidly mounted', and the reviewer was impressed by a scene of a ship's deck in the second act.

'The Young Recruit' was followed on 30 May by Messrs Murray Carson and James Mortimer's company in a comedy, 'Gloriana', which was preceded by a one-act farce, 'Two in a Bush'.²¹

'Gloriana' was an adaptation by James Mortimer from a French source which the reviewer thought hardly new or original, but capable of giving two hours of enjoyment.²²

(Indeed, he went on to spend some of his brief notice in praising the unconnected selection of musical pieces that the theatre's orchestra played during the evening.) A 'tolerably well-filled' house received the play and Murray Carson's farce warmly.

'Gloriana' was followed on 6 June for the Whitsuntide holiday week by J. Pitt Hardacre's company in 'Old London'. This the reviewer found 'an interesting drama reminiscent of the days of Jack Sheppard and scenes from Harrison Ainsworth's novel on the same subject'.²³ It attracted a good 'pit and gallery' audience.

'Old London' was followed on 13 June by a return visit of Auguste Van Biene's company in 'Carmen up to Date'.²⁴ This by now well-known piece seemed to have lost little of its attraction and was heartily received. Van Biene had assembled in the reviewer's opinion a talented band of comedians and a 'galaxy' of pretty chorus girls – the essential ingredients of the burlesque.²⁵ Scenically excellent was the Smugglers' Cave scene which Maud Champion enlivened by playing 'with taste' a violin solo.

'Carmen up to Date' was followed on 20 June by a week in which Auguste Van Biene and the company with which he himself normally performed (though he did not take part in this) gave 'La Mascotte' for the first half of the week,

and 'Rip Van Winkle' for the second. Both of these were comic operas with which the audience could be expected to be familiar.

'La Mascotte' had nonetheless never been given in Leeds by so excellent a company in the reviewer's opinion,²⁶ and Van Bieue received 'fairly good' houses.²⁷

'Rip Van Winkle' was followed on 27 June by D'Oyly Carte's company in 'Iolanthe' on Monday and Friday, 'The Mikado' on Tuesday and Saturday, 'The Yeoman of the Guard' on Wednesday, and 'The Gondoliers' on Thursday. There was a large audience for this return visit, 'Iolanthe' receiving a hearty welcome.²⁸

The D'Oyly Carte company brought the season to its end and the theatre remained closed thereafter until 1 August when it reopened with George Edwardes's 'original London Gaiety company' in 'Cinder Ellen up to Date'.²⁹ Every part of the theatre was filled by a holiday audience to witness a 'pleasing' performance of what the reviewer thought was perhaps not the best of Gaiety Theatre burlesques.³⁰ He regretted the absence from the cast of Nelly Farren, but found Letty Lind an adequate substitute whether in rags, school girl attire, or ballroom silks. Fred Leslie was advertised to appear in this piece, but it was claimed that this was the last Gaiety burlesque in which he would be seen.

'Cinder Ellen up to Date' was followed on 10 August by Messrs Calder and Cuthbert's company in 'The Span of Life', a sensational piece by Sutton Vane which derived its name from the spanning of a chasm in the third act. The reviewer thought that it was well written enough,⁵¹ and with adequately drawn characters, to appeal to a wider audience than that which simply enjoyed melodramatic excitement.⁵²

'The Span of Life' was followed on 15 August by 'The Trumpet Call', a 'new and original drama' by G.R. Sims and Robert Buchanan from the Adelphi Theatre.⁵³ It was a military piece of powerful, if not 'thrilling' situations. The hero was an uncomplicated young gentleman who, at the beginning of the play, was happily married, and with a child. However, this was his second marriage, and it turned out that his first wife, the worthless Bertha, was not dead as she had been presumed. Inevitably she turned up, and drove the hero into the army, abandoning his second wife, Constance, to think him dead.

However, the scheming of a former lover of Constance to win her and to 'preserve her honour', fomented the explosion of Bertha's claims by the discovery that she was married even before she knew the hero, so that the piece ended happily.³⁴

'The Trumpet Call' was followed on 22 August by Augustus Harris's company in a 'great Drury Lane drama', 'The Sailor's Knot'.³⁵ In contrast with 'The Trumpet Call'

this was a piece about seamen. It was written by Henry Pettitt, and had the elaborate scenic spectacle inseparable from Harris's Drury Lane dramas. The plot, in itself quite simple, was that Harry Westward, the hero, should suddenly return to the arms of his beloved, but that villainous scheming should almost immediately snatch him away by means of a press gang. Thus he became a sailor in the King's Navy (the piece was 'picturesquely' set in London at the end of the eighteenth century), and thereafter enjoyed many adventures along with watermen, shipbuilders, sailors, soldiers, pensioners, and others, before finding a happy ending. The chief villain of the piece was a French refugee, while Harry was assisted by a foster-brother who turned out to be a real friend, though earlier in the piece he had not seemed to be.

There was, said the reviewer, a large audience despite the fine weather.³⁶

'The Sailor's Knot' was followed on 29 August by George Alexander's company from the St James's Theatre in Oscar Wilde's 'Lady Windermere's Fan', which was given for most of the week, though with 'The Idler' by C. Haddon Chambers advertised for Tuesday and Saturday.³⁷

The reviewer began his notice by saying that Wilde was better known as a leader of the then defunct Aesthetic Movement than as a playwright³⁸ (perhaps uncertainty about his success prompted the broken week), and he averred that many of the audience had come out of curiosity

to see the work of the man rather than the work for its own sake. The piece, however, struck him as being eminently true to human nature, if a little cynical ('They breathe an air of cynicism, yet they are all human, and amid the coldness and hardness of "the thing called Society" the warmer and tenderer feelings of the heart have free play'), and it was the human interest of these flesh and blood characters (in particular Lady Windermere's jealousy and her mother's self-sacrifice) which the crowded house followed with breathless silence and applauded at the end of every act.

A much smaller audience watched C. Haddon Chamber's 'The Idler' than had watched Wilde's piece, and consequently it was withdrawn in the latter's favour on the Saturday night. The reviewer remarked that 'The Idler' with extraordinary coincidence had a scene in which an incriminating fan was found in the room of a clandestinely visited lover, and he thought that the climactic scene of the play seemed strongly influenced by the 'screen scene' in 'The School for Scandal'.³⁹ The company seemed inadequately familiar with their lines, however, and the climax of the play was somewhat impaired by George Alexander's having to reassure the audience that a piece of the ornamental ceiling which had fallen into a box (it had been dislodged by accumulating rain) signified no general danger.

'Lady Windermere's Fan' was followed on 5 September by

D'Oyly Carte's company which returned to give 'The Mikado' on Monday, 'Iolanthe' on Tuesday, 'The Gondoliers' on Wednesday, 'Patience' on Thursday and Saturday, and 'The Yeomen of the Guard' on Friday. 'The Mikado' maintained its popularity, said the reviewer,⁴⁰ and he thought that the company that gave it on this occasion (which was the same as on its previous visit, though not the same as the company which had first toured the piece) was the best which had given it in Leeds.

'Patience' was followed on 12 September by Georgina Burns's 'specially organised' Light Opera Company in Rossini's 'Cinderella'. T.W. Robertson, under whose direction the work was produced, had rearranged the dialogue and made it 'crisp and entertaining'.⁴¹ Georgina Burns and Leslie Crotty, who seemed to have left the Carl Rosa Opera Company at this time, were watched by a crowded house which was enthusiastic. The reviewer remarked that the costumes were 'costly and in good taste' and 'the stage trickery and effects were so wonderfully and so deftly executed that the audience was carried away into fairyland'.⁴²

'Cinderella' was followed on 19 September by Arthur Roberts's company in 'Too Lovely Black-Eyed Susan', a burlesque by Horace Lennard and Oscar Barrett based on Jerrold's melodrama.⁴³ The reviewer, identifying the usual

virtues that he found in the form – 'brightly' written book, tuneful music, good 'business', attractive scenery and dresses, and 'fun' sustained throughout – thought that Arthur Roberts appeared in this piece to better advantage than he had in any other burlesque.⁴⁴ It provided him with ample scope for his talent for mimicry, and the reviewer particularly praised a 'tipsy' scene in which Roberts realised progressive stages of drunkenness while Phyllis Broughton's Susan innocently led him on from duty to love.

'Too Lovely Black-Eyed Susan' was followed on 26 September by a second visit of Wilson Barrett and his company. For the first half of the week they gave 'Ben-my-chree', 'The Silver King', and 'Claudian', on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday respectively, but on Thursday, and for the remainder of the week, they gave the first performance of a new play, 'Pharaoh' which Wilson Barrett himself had written.⁴⁵

Wilson Barrett was greeted by a large and enthusiastic audience for 'Ben-my-chree', and one of the largest audiences that had ever been crammed into the theatre witnessed the first night of Wilson Barrett's new play.⁴⁶ 'Pharaoh', like 'Claudian' was set in eastern splendour, and was, according to the author's programme note, 'a romance, an imaginative attempt to depict the workings of a human passion'. In it Wilson Barrett played Arni, a noble and valiant soldier who was the true heir to the

throne of Egypt which had been usurped by the Pharaoh. Arni was accepted by the Pharaoh at his right hand, and in turn Arni kept to himself his resentment and ambition to take the throne back (though he did spread seditious propaganda about the country).

Such was the situation revealed in the first scene ('a charming view of the Palace of Seti ... The shadows of tall pines rest upon the bright mass of colour, and the glow of the warm sun falls upon the blue waters of the Nile that flows by'⁴⁷). But Arni's scheming came unstuck through female agency. Arni had loved Latika, a lady of the court, but he transferred his affections to Tuaa, a cousin by alliance with whom he thought to make his claim to the throne more secure. Latika, however, was inspired to jealousy, and further, Tuaa and the Pharaoh were secretly in love (though it was undeclared). Tuaa wove the story of her love into a silken scroll, which by chance the Pharaoh read. He promptly declared his passion to Arni, who, realising that this was a threat to his plans, endeavoured to involve Latika in a conspiracy to seize Tuaa and hide her in Latika's house. This done Arni then explained to Latika that he wished to marry Tuaa forthwith, but this threw Latika into a violent rage, and she ran out to betray Arni to the Pharaoh.

To complicate matters still further there was a villain, Narmeni, chief minister to the Pharaoh. He quickly arrived at Latika's house with a troop of soldiers, but

Arni overcame them with the assistance of his hideous, mis-shapen, dwarf henchman, and fled to the Temple of Apia.

Tuaa was taken to the Pharaoh who declared his love to her, and she, not recognising the implications of Arni's actions, craved the boon of the Pharaoh's pardon for him. This the Pharaoh granted, but Narmeni interrupted the transmission of the message and hastened with his guard to the temple in the hope of killing Arni before the news of the pardon reached him. Narmeni caught up with his intended victim who was staggering under the weight of his wounded henchman at the temple, but in a fight Arni flung Narmeni over the battlements (the reviewer thought that when, with a little practice, this feat looked less overtly acrobatic and more real it would make an exciting moment).

Latika, overcome with remorse, then arrived on the scene to beg Arni's forgiveness, but he spurned her, accusing her of treachery and the thwarting of his ambitions, and offering to stab her. With the energy of despair, however, she pre-empted him by grasping the knife thus proffered, and plunging it into her heart. She fell dead at Arni's feet. He, in his turn stricken with grief, and seemingly beset on all sides, took up the dagger, thrust it in his own side, and fell prostrate over Latika's body just as the Pharaoh broke through the temple doors crying out his pardon.

This, however, was not the end of the play, for Arni did

not die, but was seen in a final scene, captive but defiant, upon the battlements of the palace where 'the dark walls of the tower showed their grim outlines against a sky suffused with the rich beams of a silvery moon'.

The henchman, Pennu, was known as 'the Bat' who, mis-shapen and hideous, and exercising a mysterious influence over all around him, seemed to the reviewer the most interesting and original character in the piece, though he might seem to the modern eye to contain something of Quasimodo, and to represent a curious intrusion of Gothic horror into the Egyptian scene.

In a speech at the end of the performance Wilson Barrett said that the audience's enthusiasm in its reception of the play had dispelled the anxieties that he had had about first presenting it in Leeds.

Wilson Barrett was followed on 3 October by the return visit of Horace Sedger's company in 'The Mountebanks'. It was given a hearty reception by a large audience.⁴⁸

'The Mountebanks' was followed in its turn on 10 October by a return visit of Augustus Harris's company in 'The Young Recruit'. For this second visit the piece had been shortened, the dialogue 'brightened', and the business improved to speed the flow of the performance. The dresses, too, were to a large extent new, and in the reviewer's opinion, better.⁴⁹

Three important changes had taken place in the cast: Marie Luella had replaced Miss Wadman, Wilfred E. Shine had replaced his brother, J.L. Shine, and James Danvers substituted for Harry Nicholls who was seriously ill. The reviewer thought that all of these were competent.

'The Young Recruit' was followed on 17 October by a return visit of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'The Vicar of Bray'. A full house watched its first night, and though there had been some changes in the cast the reviewer did not think that there was any falling off in the standard of performance.⁵⁰ Mr Dallas, and Mr White remained from the former company, but Esme Lee, Marie Alexander, and John McCauley were, with John Wilkinson, all new to it.

'The Vicar of Bray' was followed on 24 October by a fortnight's visit of the Carl Rosa Opera Company. In its first week it gave 'Cavalleria Rusticana' preceded by the second act of 'Bohemian Girl' on Monday, 'Carmen' on Tuesday, 'L'Amico Fritz' on Wednesday, 'The Daughter of the Regiment' on Thursday, 'Djamileh' and 'Cavalleria Rusticana' on Friday, 'Cavalleria Rusticana' as a matinee on Saturday, and Meyerbeer's 'The Prophet' on Saturday evening.⁵¹

Pietro Mascagni's 'Cavalleria Rusticana' was first produced in Rome in 1890, and in England in the autumn

of 1891. The reviewer thought that its success lay in its 'emotional and melodious music allied to a libretto which was concise and highly dramatic'.⁵² The characters were 'not altogether pleasant persons, but they were intensely human', and the singers had grasped this. The 'vapid bathos' of 'Bohemian Girl' which preceded it served to show the latter in the best possible of lights said the reviewer.

'L'Amico Fritz' was also by Mascagni, but the reviewer felt that it had been based on a sketch that gave the opera a rather feeble dramatic foundation⁵³ (the libretto was by P. Suardou, and poorly translated by F.E. Weatherley). This he considered a dangerous deficiency in a work designed to follow up one that owed much of its success to its emotional and dramatic nature. The music itself seemed as a consequence to show 'more knowledge but less spontaneity'. However, the latter work showed an advance in the treatment of ensembles and in its orchestration. Mr Hedmond and Ella Russel were again the principal singers.⁵⁴

The third new piece, 'Djamileh', was an early work of Bizet's (first produced some twenty years prior to this revival) which was based on the Arabian Nights. The reviewer found it immature and on the whole unsatisfactory.⁵⁵ It preceded 'Cavalleria Rusticana' in which on this

occasion the principal roles were sung by Miss Esty and Barton McGuckin (the latter had also sung in 'Djamileh').

In its second week the Carl Rosa Opera Company gave 'Aida' on Monday, 'The Bohemian Girl' on Tuesday, the second act of 'The Bohemian Girl' and 'Cavalleria Rusticana' on Wednesday and Friday, 'Faust' on Thursday, 'L'Amico Fritz' as a matinee on Saturday, and Verdi's 'Othello' on Saturday evening.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company was followed on 7 November by a further return visit of Henry C. Arnold's company in 'The Lights o' London' which attracted still a fairly large audience.⁵⁶

'The Lights o' London' was followed on 14 November by a return visit (advertised as a farewell visit) of Minnie Palmer in 'My Sweetheart' which was given for most of the week, though 'My Brother's Sister' was given on Thursday and Friday.⁵⁷

Minnie Palmer attracted an audience that proved the enduring nature of her popularity, though the company had undergone several changes which marked to the reviewer a falling off in quality.⁵⁸

Minnie Palmer was followed on 21 November by a visit of the Kendals who appeared in 'The Ironmaster' on Monday

and Tuesday, 'A Scrap of Paper' on Wednesday, 'All for Her' on Thursday and Saturday, and 'A White Lie' on Friday.⁵⁹

The Kendals had only once previously visited the Grand Theatre (in September 1879) and for this second visit the prices of admission were raised to five shillings for dress circle and stalls, three shillings for the upper circle, two shillings for the balcony, one shilling and sixpence for the pit, and one shilling for the gallery, but the prices of the boxes remained unaltered.

'The Ironmaster' was an adaptation by A.W. Pinero of Olinet's novel, 'Le Maître des Forges'. Its plot dealt with jealousy and long nurtured love. The heroine was Claire, who loved the Duc de Bligny who reciprocated the emotion for the sake of her money which he needed for his dissipated life. Claire's fortune, however, quickly disappeared, and the Duc promptly transferred his affections to Athénais Meulinet, the daughter of a millionaire chocolate manufacturer.

In a fit of peak Claire then married Philippe Derblay, a wealthy ironmaster who had long secretly loved her, but whom she told on their wedding night that she could be his wife in name only. Thereafter they lived estranged but under the same roof with consequent domestic misery until the Duc de Bligny and Athénais (whom he had married) were their guests for dinner. This aroused Claire's jealousy to the point that she ordered her rival to leave the house. The Duc interpreted that as an insult and

demanded a duel with Philippe to which the latter agreed. Claire then began to feel remorse and the stirrings of an unrecognised love for Philippe, and when the duel took place (it was the climax of the play) she was accidentally shot in an attempt at intercession. However, she was not seriously wounded, and in the emotional catharsis that this scene provoked she and Philippe discovered and declared their mutual love.

A large audience watched 'spell-bound' and 'breathless' the delineation of this plot which the reviewer regarded as masterly.⁶⁰

A large and cordial audience watched 'A Scrap of Paper', a comedy adapted by Palgrave Simpson from 'Les Pattes de Mouche'.⁶¹ The reviewer thought that this piece (which the Kendals had given on their previous visit) had maintained its 'sparkling vivacity', and was an excellent vehicle for Mrs Kendal. Mr Kendal was seen at his best in Sydney Grundy's 'A White Lie', which had a plot that shared some of the ethos of 'A Scrap of Paper', since it depended upon a deception engaged in by the heroine to save her sister-in-law from the consequences of indiscreetly encouraging the advances of a friend of her husband. (Mr Kendal played that 'cynical man of the world who, though almost dying of ennui, retained an acute perspicacity'.)

The Kendals were followed on 29 November by Auguste

Van Biene and his company in 'The Broken Melody' (which was followed by a concluding piece, 'The First Night').⁶²

'The Broken Melody' was a play specially written for Auguste Van Biene by Herbert Keene and James Leader who had woven a plot of political intrigue and feminine scheming round Van Biene's skill in playing the 'cello. (He had been known as a 'cellist longer than he had been known as an actor, asserted the reviewer.⁶³)

The terrors of Nihilist conspiracy (Van Biene played an exiled Russian) and the depravity of a Duchess out to supplant the hero's wife often outraged probability in the reviewer's opinion, but the audience seemed greatly pleased by Van Biene's musical performance at least. (The play began with him playing his instrument but the melody was interrupted when a letter caught his eye, and that melody was only finished when his returned wife fell into the 'cellist's arms, thus bringing down the curtain.)

'The Broken Melody' was followed on 5 December by Charles Lauri, 'the world renowned pantomimist', M. Agoust, and a company of 'selected Drury Lane artistes' in a revival of 'Le Voyage en Suisse'.⁶⁴ The piece was advertised as the Hanlon-Lees' Parisian absurdity, and clearly maintained its identity with them, though their broad comedy, clever acrobatics, and 'careful' pantomime were adequately rendered by Charles Lauri.⁶⁵

'Le Voyage en Suisse' was the last production of the autumn

season and after it the theatre remained closed for thirteen days, to reopen on Thursday, 22 December, with the pantomime, which was again 'Dick Whittington'.

The reviewer thought that this pantomime was inferior to some of its predecessors, and his impressions were not helped by a first night lack of smoothness in its performance, and the indisposition of the star, Miss Wadman.⁶⁶ However, Fred Locke's book did little to make the Whittington story emerge from the clowning of the low comedians and much interpolated variety business.

As well as a new author the pantomime also had several new scenic artists: R.C. Durant, F. Bryer, and P. Holder assisted Stafford Hall, while the ballets were arranged by Henri Dewinne (as in the previous year). The costumes too were designed by new people: Messrs Howell Russel and T. Bradley. Thus a distinct change in style from the pantomimes that the reviewer had earlier enthused over was created.

The first scene was 'The Bells of Bow', and contained a vision of Dick Whittington and his cat. It was followed by the conventional scene in Fitzwarren's shop. The succeeding carpenter's scene was of Highgate Hill, the prettiness of which brought Durant a call. There followed a ballet entitled 'Night and Morning' before another conventional scene: 'London Docks'. Here intending voyagers arrived amidst much comic business including a cock fight between Walter Stanton as Fitzwarren's Giant Rooster and a trained bantam. The house 'roared'

with amusement at it. A sailors' chorus then formed a preliminary to the fully built ship onto which they were embarking setting sail and 'floating' out of the dock.

There followed a scene between decks where more comic business was suddenly interrupted by a storm, and this led to the wrecking of the ship which the reviewer thought was effective.

In the next scene the shipwrecked crew arrived one by one outside the stables of the Emperor of Morocco where, after their examination by the Grand Vizier, the Levite Troupe brought out their tandems for some 'lively frolics'.

The scene changed then to Stafford Hall's by now usual magnificent palace set. This scene included an Oriental Ballet in which 'superbly costumed, dark-eyed houris roused the enthusiasm of the house ... to an unwonted degree'. Mr Dewinne was called forth to be applauded, and there followed a serpentine dance by Minnie Vivian. The scene changed to Cheapside where amidst the spectacle and pageant of the Lord Mayor's Show the plot was wound up, though the pantomime was actually concluded in a carpenter's scene ('Bolton Wood') where the seal was set on Dick Whittington's romantic happiness. This allowed the preparation of the transformation scene, 'Whittington's Bridal Castle'. The evening was brought to a close by a Harlequinade written and arranged by the Levite Troupe.

Notes

- 1 Yorkshire Post, 8 March 1892, p. 6.
- 2 The company included Mr Lewis Ball, and Clarence Blakiston.
- 3 Yorkshire Post, 15 March 1892, p. 5.
- 4 Yorkshire Post, 22 March 1892, p. 6.
- 5 The company, which was largely unknown to the Leeds audience, though it was rehearsed by Gilbert himself, included Harry Parker, Annie Montelli, Jenny Dickerson, Tom Shale, Roland Carse, Nannie Harding, Miss Comyns, and Mr Cairn James.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 29 March 1892, p. 5.
- 7 The company included Grace Edwin, and Josephine Morse.
- 8 Yorkshire Post, 5 April 1892, p. 5.
- 9 The company included Madame Dorée, Amy Augarde, Harry Yardley, and danseuses Lillian Spencer, Sophie Scolti, Ada Binning, and Jennie Richards.
- 10 The company included Marie Illington, Florence Harrington, Percy F. Marshall, and Fred Marvin. 'A Mutual Mistake' was a farce by W.H. Denny.
- 11 Yorkshire Post, 27 April 1892, p. 5.
- 12 The company included Mr J.J. Dallas, Charles Kenningham, Edward White, Frank Thornton, Carrie Donald, Graham Coles, and Louise Rowe.
- 13 Yorkshire Post, 3 May 1892, p. 6.
- 14 Yorkshire Post, 10 May 1892, p. 5.
- 15 The company included David James (whose 'moral couplets' and 'gagging' greatly contributed to the success of the

piece in the reviewer's opinion), Charles Conyers, Mr Walton Dayle, Mr S.H.S. Austin, Sybil Carlisle, Miss M.A. Victor, and Bertha Vere.

- 16 The company included Mr H. Cooper-Cliffe, Mr Franklin McLeay, Mr Elliott, Edward Irwin, and Ambrose Manning.
- 17 Yorkshire Post, 17 May 1892, p. 4.
- 18 Yorkshire Post, 18 May 1892, p. 8.
- 19 The company included Miss Wadman, Kate Sullivan, Effie Clements, Mr J.L. Shine, Mr W. Morgan, Mr A. Alexander, James Danvers, Harry Nicholls, and Violet Malvern.
- 20 Yorkshire Post, 24 May 1892, p. 4.
- 21 The company included Murray Carson, Mr T.W. Percyval, Mr J. Willes, James Welch, Florence West, Maggie Byron, and Louisa Gourlay.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 31 May 1892, p. 5.
- 23 Yorkshire Post, 31 May 1892, p. 5.
- 24 This touring company included Marie Luella, Edmund Payne, Alice Barnett, Mr H.C. Barry, Miss Louie Norman, Lillie Leigh, Violet Mervyn, and Evelyn Parr.
- 25 Yorkshire Post, 14 June 1892, p. 6.
- 26 Yorkshire Post, 21 June 1892, p. 5.
- 27 The company included Florence St John, Mr J.C. Piddock, Belle Harcourt, George Honey, Charles Mclagan, and Signor Luigi Catalani.
- 28 Yorkshire Post, 29 June 1892, p. 4.
The company included George Thorne, Richard Clarke, Thomas Redmond, Fred Billington, Margaret Cockburn, Kate Forster, and Dorothy Vane.

- 29 The company included Sylvia Grey, Katie Seymour, Fred Storey, Charles Danby, Miss Holmes, Violet Darkin, Miss F. Lloyd, Miss Erle, Miss Louie Pounds, Maud Wilmot, Topsy Sinden, Adelaide Astor, Lily McIntyre, Phoebe Carlo, Miss C. Solomon, Mr Barry, Mr E.D. Wardes, and Mr Hill. The music was by Herr Meyer Lutz.
- 30 Yorkshire Post, 2 August 1892, p. 5.
- 31 Yorkshire Post, 10 August 1892, p. 6.
- 32 The company included William Calder, George H. Harker, and Frank Adair.
- 33 The company included Mr Harrington Reynolds, Minnie Turner, Henry W. Hatchman, Arthur C. Percy, Joe Bracewell, Mary Ruby, Arthur Whitehead, Ralph Roberts, and Ada Rogers. The piece was well mounted, a scene in a doss house particularly impressing the reviewer.
- 34 Yorkshire Post, 16 August 1892, p. 6.
- 35 The company included Mr W.S. Hartford, Henri Renouf, Grace Warner, Mr Dalton Somers, Lillian Millward, Mr W.H. Quinton, Edmund Grace, Harold Maxwell, and Herbert Budd.
- 36 Yorkshire Post, 23 August 1892, p. 4.
- 37 The company included George Alexander, Marion Terry, Winifred Emery, Fanny Coleman, Laura Graves, Miss Granville, Miss B. Page, Miss A. O'Brien, Miss W. Dolan, Mr Nutcombe Gould, Mr H.H. Vincent, Mr A. Vane, Mr Tempest, Ben Webster, Alfred Holles, and Mr V. Sansbury. The play was mounted with exemplary lavishness and taste, averred the reviewer who was particularly pleased with

the ladies' ball gowns. 'Midsummer Day' was given as a curtain-raiser.

38 Yorkshire Post, 30 August 1892, p. 6.

39 Yorkshire Post, 31 August 1892, p. 5.

40 Yorkshire Post, 6 September 1892, p. 4.

41 Yorkshire Post, 13 September 1892, p. 8.

42 The company included Georgina Burns, Leslie Crotty, Henry Beaumont, Alice Barth, Alice Barnett, Charles Durand, Mr M.R. Morand, and the première danseuse was Rosina Lupino.

43 The company included Sam Wilkinson, Frank M. Wood, James Leverett, Nellie Christie, Ada Barry, Minnie Jeffs, and Fritz Rimma. An augmented orchestra was directed by Alfred Plumpton, and there was a large audience.

44 Yorkshire Post, 20 September 1892, p. 5.

45 The company included Wilson Barrett, Maud Jeffries, Franklin McLeay, Mr H. Cooper-Cliffe, Austin Melford, Gwendoline Floyd, and Edith Desmond (who played a singing slave).

46 Yorkshire Post, 30 September 1892, p. 5.

47 The scenery was by Walter Hann, Bruce Smith, and E.T. Ryan. Costumes were by Madame Bernstein.

48 Yorkshire Post, 4 October 1892, p. 5.

The company included Harry Parker, Annie Montelli, Miss Waldeck Hall, Lillie Comyns, Maud Holland, Sidney Tower, Clarence Hunt, and Roland Carse.

49 Yorkshire Post, 12 October 1892, p. 6.

50 Yorkshire Post, 19 October 1892, p. 6.

- 51 The company included Ella Russel, Mr E.C. Hedmond (who had recently joined it), Alec Marsh, Miss Meisslinger, Minnie Hunt, and Rhys Thomas.
- 52 Yorkshire Post, 25 October 1892, p. 5.
- 53 Yorkshire Post, 27 October 1892, p. 4.
- 54 The company included Mr Lemprice Pringle, Pauline Jordan, Mr Campbell, Mr Somers, and Miss Shortland.
- 55 Yorkshire Post, 29 October 1892, p. 7.
- 56 The company included Henry C. Arnold, Mrs R. Power, Charles Weir, Miss Sash Millward, Charles K. Chute, Adam Leffler, John S. Haydon, Sybil Claridge, and Minnie Sadler.
- 57 The company included Mr J.C. Haton, and Gladys Homfrey, and these two were excluded from the reviewer's strictures.
- 58 Yorkshire Post, 15 November 1892, p. 5.
- 59 The company included Mr and Mrs Kendal, Mr F.H. Macklin, Matthew Brodie, Howard Sturge, Mr J.E. Dodson, Gilbert Farquhar, Mr G.P. Huntley, Mr Owens, Mr H. Deane, Mr J.L. Mackay, Mr Harris, Mr Sharpe, Florence Bennett, Annie Irish, Adrienne Dairolles, Nellie Campbell, Barbara Huntley, and Mr C.M. York.
- 60 Yorkshire Post, 22 November 1892, p. 5.
- 61 Yorkshire Post, 23 November 1892, p. 4.
- 62 The company included Edith Olive, Grace Armytage, Joseph Carne, George Honey, William Benson, Leslie Murray, Stephen Caffrey, Mrs Campbell Bradley, and Cissy Fitzgerald.

- 63 Yorkshire Post, 29 November 1892, p. 5.
- 64 Charles Lauri and E. Zanfretta took the principal roles as footmen, while M. Agoust retained his old role of the professor.
- 65 Yorkshire Post, 6 December 1892, p. 5.
- 66 Yorkshire Post, 23 December 1892, p. 4.
- 67 The company further included Blanche Wolsley (who substituted for Miss Wadman), Mr H. Wright, Mr M.R. Morland, Mr H.C. Barry, Ted Lauri, and Stephen Caffrey.

CHAPTER XVII:1893

Wilson Barrett's lease of the theatre had been renewed in December 1888 after the directors (who had wanted not to renew it) had been forced to capitulate. That lease had been renewed for five years, and so it expired at the end of 1893. In February of that year Alfred Barrett wrote to the board saying that companies were pressing for engagements in 1894, and requesting a renewal of the lease. In furtherance of this request he added that there had been recent improvements made to the theatre by the lessee, and that he would always be pleased to carry out any suggestions that the directors might make.

The board considered this application on 10 February, and wrote to Alfred Barrett that they would renew the lease for a period of five years, but at an increased rent of £2,850 per annum. Alfred Barrett replied that though he admitted that the theatre was worth the original rent, six hundred pounds had recently been spent on improvements to the theatre (including the installation of gas lighting on the exterior of the building which brought extra gas bills). These things he said did not add to the theatre's profitability, but they did add to its value, and so he asked that the rent should not be increased. Failing that, he asked that the new lease be for seven years so that they might have some opportunity to have some return on their expenditure.

Alfred Barrett was invited to a board meeting on 22 February at which Sagar-Musgrave and Armitage Ledgard were appointed to form a committee to discuss these proposals. This they did at a private meeting on the following day, when they agreed that the rent should remain as it was until the end of April 1894, but that thereafter it should be £2,850 until the expiry of the lease in 1899. Otherwise there were to be small modifications to the lease: the clause on fire appliances was to be strengthened to make it obligatory upon the lessee to have them tested at intervals, and to allow a representative of the company to inspect them from time to time. If the lessee did not keep them in good order then the company could order whatever was required and charge the cost to the lessee. The lessee was also to pay the cost of having his cash books inspected by the company when he was in arrears with his rent, and he was to provide the directors with passes for the theatre. Alfred Barrett raised the possibility at this meeting that the lessee should rent one of the shops (number 40, New Briggate had stood tenantless for some time) to use as a booking office in place of Archibald Ramsden's shop, in Park Row, and that Wilson Barrett might take over the theatre's bars.

The results of the discussion at this meeting were put before a board meeting for consideration on 14 March, and Alfred Barrett was asked to attend a further meeting

on 29 March at which (among other matters) another development of Wilson Barrett's plan to take over the bars of the theatre was raised. This was that the supper room of the Assembly Rooms (which lay directly over the theatre's entrance) was to be converted to a smoke room for the theatre. Taken all in all Wilson Barrett seemed to be indicating a quite positive intention to develop the theatre, and perhaps to seek profit in tending more to his patrons' comforts. In fact the lease was only to have a short while to run, as we shall see, but at this point the directors were confident enough of the future of Wilson Barrett's lesseeship to turn down almost peremptorily in a letter of 11 April an inquiry whether the theatre was 'on the market' from C.H. Beresford of D'Oyly Carte's company.

At this time the company's shares had increased in value to fifteen pounds per fifty pound share, and when Wilson Barrett's lease was eventually terminated a further inquiry about the sale of the theatre came from Augustus Harris. It seems clear therefore that the value of the theatre was increasing in this period, and that though the directors consequently had greater leeway in deciding what should happen to the theatre, they seemed quite happy for Wilson Barrett's management to continue.

Indeed a large proportion of their energy went again into the matter of securing a right of entry into performances, and Alfred Barrett was brought to agree that

under the new lease the lessee was to provide the directors with passes to the theatre. (In fact two gold, and seven silver medals inscribed with the directors' names were commissioned from a Leeds firm by the company — perhaps they thought it unreasonable to insist that Wilson Barrett pay ten pounds for ornaments over the design of which the directors took some trouble.)

Meetings with Wilson Barrett himself were held on 7 and 14 July, and a draft of the new lease was sent to him on 21 July. The new lease was signed on 19 September, but it was only a short one — running to the end of April, 1895. The preliminary discussions had been of periods of five or seven years, and five years had eventually been agreed upon. However, the lease was re-drafted in July. This was after Wilson Barrett's return from America, and during his fortnight's engagement in Leeds. Perhaps he suffered doubts about the continued viability of the theatre — his payments of rent had seemed to be made only with difficulty especially at this period. Both Alfred Barrett and the directors had been discussing a longer lease, so that it seems likely that the short lease was at Wilson Barrett's request.

Though Alfred Barrett had enough confidence to request the renewal of the lease, and the directors to accept it, from the difficulty that Wilson Barrett had in paying his rent in 1893, they might have found cause to entertain some doubts.

It had been agreed that Wilson Barrett should pay through his son weekly instalments of £135 during the pantomime. Ten such instalments were promised, and would have made a substantial contribution to the payment of the second quarter's rent - usually the most difficult to find. However, Alfred Barrett wrote after he had paid the eighth instalment that there had been a heavy reduction in pantomime receipts and that consequently the directors would much oblige him if they waited for their rent for a week. He further adduced the difficulty of communicating with his father as a reason for the delay. No money was forthcoming, however, and at their meeting with Alfred Barrett on 29 March the directors had to be content with extracting a promise of one hundred pounds from him. Even for this a reminder had to be sent to him on 5 April.

On 1 May the second quarter's rent became due and Wilson Barrett then owed £420 19s. 11d. On 5 May Kingston wrote to Alfred Barrett asking to be allowed to inspect the theatre's books so that he could report to a board meeting on 11 May. This meeting was adjourned until the nineteenth when Alfred Barrett was invited to attend, and at that meeting two hundred pounds was got from him on account of the rent arrears.

No more money was forthcoming, and on 7 July Kingston wrote to Wilson Barrett seeking that a room be put at his disposal so that he might make a second inspection of the

books. On 9 September the third quarter's rent was also due, and on 25 October Kingston calculated that Wilson Barrett owed £1,400 - though this included the first quarter of 1894 as well, and Kingston was apparently working out what would have to be paid from pantomime receipts. Wilson Barrett was asked to attend a board meeting on 26 October to discuss the situation, at which he seems to have promised to pay one hundred pounds immediately, a further one hundred pounds at the beginning of November (rather smaller payments than under similar arrangements in previous years), and instalments of £120 during the pantomime. The first of these payments of one hundred pounds was made immediately, but the second came with some delay via the Rev. Frank Heath while Wilson Barrett was once more in America. Alfred Barrett does not seem to have been considered as attorney for his father for 1893/4.

Perhaps this was a consequence of his handling of the board's frequent requests for the fire appliances to be put in proper order, and for the theatre generally to comply with the recommendations of the Corporation Brigade's Inspector, Superintendent Baker. Baker reported in February that two firemen (instead of the previous one) should be employed at the theatre every night, that the hoses and buckets needed a thorough overhaul, that the chandeliers which were used in the transformation scene of the 1892/3 pantomime were unsafe and had caught fire

on a number of occasions, and that straw kept in the cellar should be removed.

Alfred Barrett was at once apprised of this report with an addendum that the chairman of the directors had pointed out some of these deficiencies shortly before Christmas, and was 'surprised' that nothing had been done about them.

No doubt this provoked the strengthening of the clause on fire appliances in the lease, but it seemed to have little effect on Alfred Barrett for though he was requested to have the Fire Brigade inspect the apparatus in a letter of 24 February, and although Baker had recommended as a result of that inspection that the hoses be renewed and that new buckets be provided, nothing had been done about it by 13 May. Consequently Kingston wrote a stiff and formal complaint which added that since nothing had been done the directors themselves would undertake the replacement of such apparatus as was needed and charge Wilson Barrett with the cost. Further, he added, the directors required the lessee to comply with the covenants of the lease or they would terminate it.

One hundred yards of best quality rubber lined hose and sundry buckets were accordingly ordered from the Fire Brigade by the company, but it seemed that Alfred Barrett's indifference was not yet at its limit, for Kingston learned on 25 May that he had withdrawn the two firemen from the theatre on 22 May, leaving the theatre, as Kingston put it, 'without professional aid in case of

emergency'. Kingston promptly requested the attendance of two firemen from the Brigade saying that the company would pay their wages, and charge them to Wilson Barrett. Alfred Barrett was informed of this at the same time.

In the event new hoses and buckets were provided at a cost of £34 15s. 11d. by the company, and the amount charged to, and paid by, Wilson Barrett. Similarly the two firemen were paid for by Wilson Barrett via the company - their wages came to less than one pound per week. Alfred Barrett does not seem to have made it a matter of principle not to co-operate in these matters, nor in the event did he avoid having to pay, and perhaps it was simply a lack of funds at the time that prevented his complying. If this was the case he did achieve the deferment of payment until it was included in Wilson Barrett's arrears of rent which were paid off during the following pantomime.

There were eleven weeks of pantomime (an increase of one half of a week on 1892) in 1893, nine weeks of comic opera (including one week of burlesque opera - and one week less than in 1892), and the usual two weeks of opera. The number of weeks of dramas and comedies increased from twenty in 1892 to twenty-three in 1893, and four of these weeks were given by Wilson Barrett and his company in two fortnight visits. Fourteen and one half weeks were filled by returning productions, and two weeks were of

revived productions - one of these was produced by the Leeds Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society. There were only two weeks of burlesque (though several comedies verged upon them) which was a halving of the figure for 1892. The theatre remained closed for only three weeks in the summer, and one week for preparation of the pantomime.

The 1892/3 pantomime closed on Saturday, 11 March, and was followed on 13 March by Willie Edouin's company which brought a return visit of Mark Melford's comedy, 'Turned Up'. Willie Edouin, who was the original creator of the central role of Bones, was supported by an entirely different cast from that which had first brought the play to Leeds. This new cast included Stephen Caffrey who had taken part in the pantomime which had just closed.¹

'Turned Up' was followed on 20 March by Augustus Harris's company in an 'up-to-date sporting drama', 'The Prodigal Daughter'.² This was another 'Drury Lane drama' written by Henry Pettitt and Augustus Harris. It had first been produced in 1892. Its otherwise conventional plot (acted out by one villain 'of the stage type', and two pairs of frustrated lovers who were eventually reconciled) was original in two respects in the reviewer's eyes: firstly for its sporting nobleman, Lord Banbury, whose attempts to revert to the ways of his gambling bachelorhood

were impeded by his demure, Quaker wife, and secondly (but principally) by the realistic staging of the Grand National by six steeplechasers including Voluptuary, an actual Grand National winner, which 'played' the Duke, the winner of the staged race.³

All the excitement of the stables, the race itself, the jumps, and the yelling crowd were appreciated by audience and reviewer, and the latter commended the play for excitement and realism.

'The Prodigal Daughter' was followed on 27 March by a return visit of D'Oyly Carte's company which gave 'The Gondoliers' on Monday, 'Iolanthe' on Tuesday, 'The Yeomen of the Guard' on Wednesday, 'Patience' on Thursday, and 'The Mikado' on Saturday. (The theatre was closed on Good Friday.) The company remained substantially unchanged since its previous visit to Leeds.

'Patience' was followed on 3 April and during Easter week by Gilbert Elliott's company which gave a revival of 'The Romany Rye' to crowded 'holiday' houses, and this was followed on 10 April by a revival of 'La Fille de Madame Angot' given by the Leeds Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.

The reviewer thought that this 'bold experiment' had paid off, giving as evidence the likelihood that parts other than the stalls and the dress circle would have to be booked during the week.⁴

Stafford Hall had painted new scenery for the amateurs, but he had also painted a new act drop — depicting a central medallion surrounded by drapery. On this, its first exhibition, he was twice called by the audience to receive its approbation.

The reviewer concluded his notice by recording that most of the amateurs' costumes were appropriate to the period of the work.

'La Fille de Madame Angot' was followed on 17 April by H.C. Arnold's company in a revival of the Drury Lane drama, 'A Million of Money', which, like 'The Prodigal Daughter', boasted horses, but in this case only three.⁵ Nonetheless it attracted and 'riveted' the attention of the popular audience.⁶

'A Million of Money' was followed on 24 April by Horace Sedger's comic opera company in 'The Magic Ring'.⁷ This was a revised and renamed version of 'The Magic Opal', a comic opera by Senor Albenitz and Arthur Law. The reviewer considered, however, that even this version was too conventional in plot to maintain much interest, and the libretto too weak to rise above the commonplace.⁸ Senor Albenitz was better known as a writer for, and performer upon, the piano, and the reviewer conceded that the music was of some merit, and especially strong in passages for chorus and orchestra.

'The Magic Ring' was followed on 1 May by another of

Horace Sedger's companies in 'The Mountebanks' which was given for the first half of the week, and 'Incognita' which was given for the second half of the week.⁹

'The Mountebanks' still attracted a large audience which seemed to the reviewer not at all weary of the piece.¹⁰ The company had undergone some changes (generally for the better in the reviewer's opinion) since it was last in Leeds.

'Incognita' was originally by F.C. Burnand and Charles Lecocq, though this version was the product of adaptation and addition – to an extent that the reviewer thought might explain why the piece seemed so familiar or so similar to many others. At times the work came close to burlesque.¹¹

'Incognita' was followed on 9 May by the Calvert-Cowper company in a new 'romantic drama', 'Life and Honour', which was given on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, 'The Country Girl' which was given on Tuesday and Thursday, and 'The School for Scandal' which was given on Friday for Clara Cowper's benefit.¹²

'Life and Honour' was a military piece set in France at the close of the eighteenth century. Its hero was one Colonel Ferrau who was falsely convicted of treachery and sentenced to be shot. He escaped, however, entered the army as a sergeant, and speedily earned the favour of his general. The villain of the piece was one Colonel Corat who held the only evidence of Ferrau's innocence,

but had designs upon Madame Ferrau (whose marriage was but nominal anyway) and a series of adventures was required to bring the play to an orthodox, happy ending.

'The Country Girl' was described by the reviewer as an old comedy, and was accompanied by 'Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady'.

'Life and Honour' was followed on 15 May by Willie Edouin's company in 'Niobe (All Smiles)' which was advertised as the success of two London seasons and still playing to crowded houses at the Strand Theatre.¹³ It was preceded by a curtain-raiser, 'a dramatic incident', 'Fleeting Clouds'.

'Niobe (All Smiles)' was a comedy by Harry and Edward Paulton loosely based on the Greek myth. In fact the piece revolved round a stone statue of Niobe which belonged to a London art dealer and was insured for ten thousand pounds by a company with which Peter Amos Dunn, the hero, was connected. He took the statue home to be sure of its safety, but an accident with electric wiring brought the statue to life. The revived Niobe became attracted to Dunn in an embarrassing fashion, and when his family returned he tried to explain her away as a new governess. This subterfuge created rapidly ramifying complications before being penetrated, and the comedy thus proceeded on conventional, farcical lines.

The reviewer regarded the play as 'a masterpiece of fantastic comedy' which, he said, was enjoyed by a large audience.¹⁴

'Niobe (All Smiles)' was followed on 22 May by 'The Green Leaves of England' (preceded by 'Domestic Bliss'), and was advertised as an 'enormous attraction' for Whitsun. Save to call it an appropriate holiday piece, the reviewer did not comment upon it.¹⁵ It was followed on 29 May by D'Oyly Carte's company in the latest Savoy success, 'Haddon Hall'.

'Haddon Hall' was a comic opera by Arthur Sullivan and Sydney Grundy — though the reviewer thought that it contained more 'romantic interest' than most comic operas, and therefore could almost claim to be something more elevated.¹⁶ The piece was based upon the elopement of John Manners and Dorothy Vernon, and was set in the period immediately preceding the Restoration (an anachronism justified by the needs of the drama, averred the reviewer). There was in fact little dramatic incident other than this, and humour was derived from such means as having Puritans dance a Highland fling.¹⁷

'Haddon Hall' was followed on 5 June by Nita Vincent and company in a return visit of 'The Still Alarm', by Joseph Arthur.¹⁸ This was a sensational piece, set in New York, and the reviewer thought that the harnessing of trained horses to a fire engine in a New York fire station which formed the climax of the third act was one of the scenic triumphs of the age.¹⁹ Otherwise the piece concerned a conventional 'fin de siècle' villain — John Bird, late partner of a New York merchant — and his

eventually 'poetically' frustrated machinations against the happiness of the hero and heroine.

'The Still Alarm' was followed on 12 June by a return visit of Horace Lingard's company in 'Falka' (this was advertised as its farewell performance) which was given on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and 'Pepita' which was given on Wednesday and Friday. Though the company had undergone several changes, the popularity of 'Falka' seemed undimmed to the reviewer.²⁰

'Falka' was followed on 19 June by a return visit of Auguste Van Biene's company in 'Cinder Ellen up to Date'. The company had changed since it was last in Leeds, and the reviewer regarded this as an impoverishment.²¹

'Cinder Ellen up to Date' was followed on 26 June by Charles Arnold and his company in 'Captain Fritz' which was given all week except Friday when 'Hans, the Boatman' was presented.

'Captain Fritz' was first produced in America under the title 'Rosedale', and then transplanted to the Haymarket Theatre, London, as 'Her Ladyship's Guardian'. Henry Hamilton had re-written it 'to English tastes' for Charles Arnold before it had embarked on this tour.

The plot concerned Fritz, an Englishman despite his name, who had acquired a German accent while a captain in the German Navy. Thus as an Anglo-German officer - as

he was in 'Hans, the Boatman' - Charles Arnold was able to frustrate villainy aimed at Lady Vereker's proper inheritance, complicated by gipsy cunning. The reviewer thought the piece 'a pretty, bright, musical comedy', which had 'fun', 'sentiment', and 'pathos' enough to please an audience which was large for the time of year.²²

'Captain Fritz' was followed on 3 July by Wilson Barrett and his company in their first appearance in England after another 'successful' American tour. They played for a fortnight. In the first week they gave 'Claudian' on Monday and Wednesday, 'Pharaoh' on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 'Hamlet' on Saturday.²³

Scarcely had there been so good a house since Wilson Barrett's last visit nearly a year before, said the reviewer.²⁴ Herman and Wills's 'Claudian' seemed to have intuitively diagnosed English preferences, and Wilson Barrett's performance raised the piece to a psychological study, he added.

In his second week Wilson Barrett gave 'Ben-my-chree' on Monday and Tuesday, 'Our Pleasant Sins' on Wednesday and Friday, 'Othello' on Thursday, and 'The Acrobat' also on Friday. Of the seven plays in which Wilson Barrett appeared in this fortnight, 'Our Pleasant Sins' was the only new one (though it had had a 'nominal' production at the Grand Theatre in the winter of 1892/3 for copyright

purposes). It was written by Wilson Barrett and Charles Hannan, and it concerned legitimacy and rightful inheritance combined with sexual treachery and simple fraud. Lady Eva Glendale (the injured woman of the piece) had been deceived into a 'mock' marriage by one Captain Curver. When she discovered the falseness of her position she left the house, and later bore him a child. These things she kept secret, however, when later still she married Lord Glendale.

After twenty years Captain Curver happened upon them and began to blackmail Lady Eva. Further, he corrupted her legitimate son, Charles, into gambling, and thereby ruined him. Denton (the illegitimate son of the first marriage) had been adopted by Glendale, and he and the ruined son were co-trustees of the fortune of Nora, of whom they were both fond. Curver enticed Charles into a conspiracy to steal Nora's money and to this end forged Denton's signature. Lady Eva, knowing of Charles's debts, but not of his abuse of the trust, insisted that Charles should marry Nora (who really loved Denton). Under the strain Charles confessed to Denton what he had done, and Denton decided to shield him by claiming to be the forger and the thief. He left the household, but eventually through a friend's persistent faith in his honesty, and through several 'pathetic' scenes of revelations, a happy domestic resolution was reached.

The reviewer regarded the play as having 'happy touches

of nature', as well as curtain tableaux of more originality than was usual.⁵⁵

Wilson Barrett's fortnight brought the season to its end, and the theatre remained closed for the ensuing three weeks, to reopen on 7 August with a return visit of Charles Dornton's company in 'The Silver King', which was given for the bank holiday week. In its turn it was followed on 14 August by W.S. Penley's company in 'Charley's Aunt' (preceded by 'Confederates').²⁶

Though the concept of the impersonation that formed the basis of the plot might have belonged to the third rate music hall, averred the reviewer, it had been handled with such delicacy and ingenuity, and the situations, dialogue, and bye-play were so amusing that it was not in the least so tainted.²⁷ The temperature in the theatre was in the region of eighty-five degrees Farenheit, but this did not deter a large audience from enjoying Brandon Thomas's play.

'Charley's Aunt' was followed on 21 August by a return visit of Kate Vaughan and her company in 'The Dancing Girl'.²⁸ The central device of this play was that a ruined Duke should be rescued from the brink of suicide (a light-heartedly undertaken one) by the pure love of a dancing girl who reformed him. Kate Vaughan's 'graceful' dancing formed but a small part of the play.²⁹

'The Dancing Girl' was followed on 29 August by George Edwardes's Gaiety Burlesque Company in their latest piece, 'In Town'. This was primarily concerned with the activities of a Ducal family in the green room of the 'Ambiguity Theatre'. That the music was reminiscent of the music hall, therefore, said the reviewer, was justified in its appropriate creation of local colour.³⁰ The piece had 'merry songs, jovial choruses, quaint dances, and unlimited "business"' so that though advertised as a musical comedy it was clearly suited to the talents of a burlesque company.

Arthur Roberts had been the original creator of the principal role, the impecunious Captain Coddington, but since he was touring at that time in another piece (to be seen at the Grand Theatre the following week), this part was taken by John Treshar.³¹

'In Town' was followed on 4 September by Arthur Roberts's company in 'A Modern Don Quixote', styled 'a new and original musical comedy' in the bill, but clearly a burlesque. The company worked under the disadvantage that two of the principal ladies, and others, had missed the boat from the Isle of Man where the piece had been playing the previous week, and the stage manager came before the curtain at the beginning of the performance to crave the audience's indulgence on this account.³² However, he promised that Arthur Roberts's efforts would be redoubled in compensation. In the event the reviewer

was sufficiently pleased with the performance to prophesy full houses for it throughout the week.⁵³

'A Modern Don Quixote' was followed on 11 September by F.G. Latham and T.W. Robertson's company in an 'original farcical romance' by A.W. Pinero (whom the reviewer took to be a writer of more serious and sentimental stuff⁵⁴), 'The Amazons'. The play concerned the three daughters of a Marchioness whom, regretting that they were not boys, the latter had had brought up as such nonetheless. They had been dressed as boys and trained in shooting, boxing, and fencing. Thus they were seen during the course of the play training, walking about the estate as men, and even indulging in 'slang' — a purely masculine prerogative. However, though the Marchioness might disguise their appearance and manner, she could not alter the fact that they each fell in love (with an earl, a 'frisky Frenchman', and a Viscount cousin who had to rescue his paramour from a difficult situation that she had got herself into in the West End while dressed as a man, and called upon accordingly for an act of chivalry). After some farcical love scenes in a wooded corner of Overcote Park, the Marchioness relented and permitted an orthodox ending.⁵⁵

'The Amazons' was followed on 18 September by George Alexander's company from the St James's Theatre, London, in 'Liberty Hall' by R.C. Carton, which was given on

Monday, Tuesday, and as a matinee on Saturday, and Pinero's 'The Second Mrs Tanqueray' on the remaining evenings of the week.⁵⁶

'Liberty Hall' had been called a species of Dickens of the stage, said the reviewer, and it was an opinion that he endorsed.⁵⁷ The piece enjoyed 'a lofty strain of human sentiment' admixed with whimsicality and tearful pathos.

The central characters of the piece were two daughters, Blanche and Amy, left penniless by Sir Norman Chilworth. The title and their home were inherited by the hero of the piece, Hartley Owen Chilworth. He invited the women to stay in the Hall, but Blanche's pride would not allow her to accept charity from someone she had never seen. The daughters therefore took up residence with a poor relative who ran a bookshop in Bloomsbury. Most of the action of the play took place here. It involved Hartley Chilworth who, disguised as a dealer in soap, came to lodge in the house for the purpose of being close to Blanche. He persuaded her to paint Christmas cards when her sketches would not sell, thereby engendering in her a desirable humility. His protection extended further — when a rejected suitor (a boorish ingenu) threatened to have the daughters and their host evicted, Hartley paid the necessary money for their rent in the guise of future rent for his room. His suit of Blanche was developing well when, as a consequence of frustrating a foolish elopement by Amy, he was discovered in a compromising

situation with her. In the last act, of course, he was able to shed his disguise and precipitate a happy ending.

The reviewer found the setting which was of the back room of the bookshop with a view through a glass partition of the customers examining the books particularly interesting.

'The Second Mrs Tanqueray', however, struck him as 'rank', 'unsavoury', and 'cynical', and he protested against it, even though he admitted that this might fill the theatre.³⁸ Whereas he could recognise the dexterity with which Pinero had handled his 'social problem', he felt this in no way justified the writing of the play. Nor could George Alexander's excellent performance. Further, he suggested that provincial audiences might not take to it so easily as had those in London.

'The Second Mrs Tanqueray' was followed on 25 September by Cissy Grahame and her company in two 'triple-bills': 'The Highwayman', 'A Commission', and 'A Pantomime Rehearsal' which was given on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and 'A Commission', 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern', and 'A Pantomime Rehearsal' which was given on Thursday and Friday.

'The Highwayman' and 'A Commission' were two short pieces which preceded 'A Pantomime Rehearsal' in what was

essentially a variety performance. The last piece was set on the stage of the 'Frivolity Theatre' where an aristocratic company were rehearsing under the pantomime author, and gave scope for fast and furious burlesque, as well as including three songs and some dancing.³⁹

Cissy Grahame was followed on 2 October by 'Morocco Bound', a burlesque opera by Arthur Branscombe and Adrian Ross with music by F. Osmond Carr. The piece was given under the direction of F.J. Harris as produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London.⁴⁰

There was an 'overflowing' audience to see 'Morocco Bound'. Its humour was not of a very high order, thought the reviewer, since it was based on a retired costermonger's efforts to ape a gentleman. However, an exceptionally strong company gave it life.⁴¹

'Morocco Bound' was followed on 9 October by a return visit of D'Oyly Carte's company in 'Haddon Hall' which it gave on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and 'The Vicar of Bray' which it gave on Tuesday and Wednesday. The company seemed unchanged.

'Haddon Hall' was followed on 16 October by Wilson Barrett and his company whose appearance for a fortnight was advertised as a farewell performance before a visit to America. In his first week he appeared in 'Pharaoh' on Monday, 'Othello' on Tuesday, 'Claudian' on Wednesday, and

the first performance of a revival of 'Virginus' on Thursday, which was repeated for the rest of the week.

The company was unchanged in its principals, and the reviewer found little to say about the now quite familiar pieces that filled the first half of the week, save that at times Wilson Barrett ran the risk of enunciating too fast.⁴² Sheridan Knowles's 'Virginus' had been modified in the last two acts to suit Wilson Barrett's purposes, and included some 'striking effects'. The climax of the play was reached when Virginus fell lifeless over the funeral bier of his daughter whose sufferings had driven him mad — an ending that was becoming almost a trade mark of Wilson Barrett's performances. The interest of the story was greatly enhanced, said the reviewer, by the series of stage pictures which illustrated it (the scenery had been painted by Stafford Hall, Walter Hann, and Telbin). Wilson Barrett was given scope amidst Roman splendour to exercise his talent for displaying domestic intensity and paternal anguish.

In his second week Wilson Barrett appeared in no new pieces; he gave 'Ben-my-chree' on Monday, 'Hamlet' on Tuesday, 'Virginus' on Wednesday and Thursday, 'The Lady of Lyons' and 'Chatterton' on Friday, and 'Claudian' on Saturday.

He was succeeded on 23 October by the Carl Rosa Opera Company which gave the second and third acts of 'L'Amico Fritz', and 'Cavalleria Rusticana' on Monday, 'Orpheus

and Eurydice', and Pagliacci' on Tuesday, Aida' on Wednesday, Carmen' on Thursday, Tannhauser' on Friday, The Daughter of the Regiment' as a matinee on Saturday, and Il Trovatore' on Saturday evening.

Gluck's Orpheus and Eurydice' the reviewer thought revolutionary in its time, but eminently suited to Victorian tastes.⁴³ In this performance, however, he thought that it was treated as a curtain-raiser — the orchestra's playing being 'rough and perfunctory', the singers giving amateurish performances, and even the stage carpenters conspiring to spoil one air. Leoncavallo's Pagliacci' formed the main meat of the evening, and this, a great contrast, based on a classic legend with the supernatural added, and withal tragic denouement and human passion, 'riveted' the audience's attention.⁴⁴

Wagner's Tannhauser' received a generally excellent performance though the reviewer felt that the orchestra, augmented as it was, was too small to do justice to it. There was an exceptionally large and 'brilliant' audience.⁴⁵

In their second week the Carl Rosa Opera Company gave The Rantzau', and Pagliacci' on Monday (the performance began fifteen minutes early), Faust' on Tuesday, Fra Diavolo' on Wednesday, Orpheus and Eurydice', and Cavalleria Rusticana' on Thursday, The Daughter of the Regiment' on Friday, Carmen' as a matinee on Saturday, and Tannhauser' on Saturday evening.

The reviewer thought that Mascagni's 'The Rantzaus' lacked dramatic interest, and consequently had little spontaneity and charm.⁴⁶ His impression cannot have been helped by his feeling that the company were not sufficiently familiar with their parts.

'Fra Diavolo' was by Auber and was first performed in 1830. The reviewer thought that it had 'a piquancy, melodious beauty, and brilliant yet refined orchestral colouring' typical of the French.⁴⁷ It was given virtually as a dress rehearsal for a Royal Command Performance to be given at Balmoral on the following Monday.

The Carl Rosa Opera Company was succeeded by D'Oyly Carte's company on 13 November in a return visit with 'The Mikado' which was given on Monday, and 'Iolanthe', 'The Gondoliers', 'The Yeomen of the Guard', 'Patience', and 'The Pirates of Penzance' which were given on successive evenings. The company was unchanged, and attracted well-filled houses.

The D'Oyly Carte company was followed on 20 November by Charles Wyndham's company in 'The Bauble Shop' by H.A. Jones.⁴⁸ This piece dealt with problems of morality which public men must suffer. In it Lord Clivebrooke, Leader of the House of Commons, on the eve of the introduction of a 'Public Morals' Bill, fell in love with the daughter of a reprobate toy-maker who was also caretaker for Stoach, an opposition M.P. Clivebrooke

cultivated the company of the girl and her father with the avowed intent of reforming the latter. Stoach, however, got wind of the visits to the toy-shop, and used it to his political advantage. Clivebrooke had to retire from politics, but asked the girl to marry him despite the opposition of his family and the sneers of Stoach.

The reviewer thought that the play pointed the virtues of unalloyed moral purity, and castigated hypocritical cant, while neatly unfolding its story in a dialogue full of cynical epigrams.⁴⁹ It was watched by a well-filled house.

'The Bauble Shop' was followed on 27 November by a return visit of the Compton Comedy Company in 'David Garrick' which was given on Monday and Friday, 'The School for Scandal' which was given on Tuesday, 'The American' which was given on Wednesday and Thursday, 'Heir-at-law' (preceded by 'Oliver Goldsmith') which was given on Friday, and 'Sydney Carton', a comedy based on Dickens's 'A Tale of Two Cities', which was given for the first time in Leeds on Saturday.

The Compton Comedy Company was followed on 5 December by H. Cecil Beryl's company in 'The Lady Slavey'.⁵⁰ In this a large amount of 'riotously funny' business was woven around a slender narrative which basically involved an impecunious Major with three daughters (one of whom

was the Lady Slavey of the title), an American millionaire who was in search of a wife, and a scheming lady artiste from the music halls. The reviewer thought that the piece incorporated much from the music halls both in tone and in content, though he found that this was not to its disadvantage.⁵¹

'The Lady Slavey' brought the season to its end, and the theatre was closed during the following week for preparation of the pantomime, 'Red Riding Hood and Bonny Boy Blue, the Ugly Wolf and the Terrier True'.

The reviewer greeted the 1893/4 pantomime with general approbation, though he confessed that there had been superior predecessors at the Grand Theatre.⁵² Again it was written by Fred Locke (with some lyrics and local allusions by F.W. Waithman), and, as is clear from the title, it was an admixture of nursery stories such as greatly to reduce the significance of the plot.

The pantomime opened in 'The Ruined Temple of Diana', a scene which departed from the usual 'weird' beginning, and it was followed by 'The Village of Rustimustidum', a full set in which tiny boys in white smocks and little maidens in dainty costumes sang an opening song before Boy Blue entered singing a hunting song. Then the other principal characters were introduced one by one. These included Baron Badenuff, his large son, Sammy, in a 'grotesque infantile costume', Johnny Stout, Simple Simon, Mother Hubbard, Miss Muffit, and Red Riding Hood. The

scene concluded with a hop pickers' dance in which, said the reviewer, 'an otherwise beautiful combination of colours was ... spoilt by a dash of blue of rather too aggressive tone'.

In the next scene, 'On the Border of the Forest', a fairy, conventionally disguised as an old woman, gave Red Riding Hood a magic flower which would shield her from evil, and naturally it became the Baron's intent to rob her of it. Johnny Stout and Simple Simon were employed to assist him for the purpose.

There followed burlesque fooling and a scene in 'The Parish Courthouse' which the reviewer regarded as too boisterous and in need of toning down. The scene then changed to 'The Wehr Wolf's Lair' in which Boy Blue sang a serenade, and the Wolf sang too. An 'Enchanted Glade', painted by Stafford Hall, followed, which contained splashing cataracts disappearing into the distance. This scene contained a Grand Equestrian Ballet which the reviewer thought should be excised since it was 'neither graceful nor pretty' and fully merited the derisive laughter that it provoked.

'The Palace Gates' then preceded Stafford Hall's usual Grand Palace which the reviewer thought merited a ballet which it did not have (indeed, he found the pantomime generally wanting in ballets). The transformation scene was entitled 'The Fairy Conservatory' and had two 'graceful' fountains as its principal feature. The pantomime was concluded with a Harlequinade given by the Paynes.⁵⁵

Notes

- 1 The company included Alexander McKenzie, Mr C.S. Fawcett, Mr H. Eversfield, Annie Esmond, Cynthia Brooke, Maggie Byron, and Fanny Watson. 'On Credit', by Emily Coffin, was given as a curtain-raiser.
- 2 The company included Harry Nicholls, Edith Bruce, William Rignold, Theo Balfour, Henri Renouf, Walter Gay, Charles Dodsworth, Dalton Somers, Grace Warner, and Agnes Verity.
- 3 Yorkshire Post, 22 March 1893, p. 5.
- 4 Yorkshire Post, 11 April 1893, p. 8.
- 5 The company included Mr Coventry Davies, Mr L. Cory-Thomas, Hetty Chattel, Maud Digby, Fred Shepherd, Mr H.J. Turner, Louisa Peach, and George F. Leicester.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 19 April 1893, p. 5.
- 7 The company included Annie Schunbert, Florence Seymour, Leonard Russel, William Philips, Mr W. Cheeseman, and Arthur Ryley.
- 8 Yorkshire Post, 25 April 1893, p. 5.
- 9 The company included Harry Parker, Nellie Murray, Sydney Tower, Clarence Hunt, Hugh Seyton, Miss Waldeck Hall, Evelyn Albert, and Jessie Moore.
- 10 Yorkshire Post, 2 May 1893, p. 4.
- 11 Yorkshire Post, 5 May 1893, p. 4.
The company further included Mr J.B. Watson, Nelly Cozens, Nora Leigh, George Tate, and Lizzie Royal.

- 12 The company included William Calvert, Clara Cowper, Henry Moxon, and Charles Medwin.
- 13 The company included Sydney Harcourt, and Lillie Belmore.
- 14 Yorkshire Post, 16 May 1893, p. 4.
- 15 Yorkshire Post, 23 May 1893, p. 6.
- 16 Yorkshire Post, 30 May 1893, p. 4.
- 17 The company included Mr J.T. Macmillan, Florence Lofting, Wilson Sheffield, Florence Hunt, Esme Lee, Marie Alexander, Mr J.J. Dallas, Robert Cunningham, and Robert Evett. The theatre was well-filled, and the audience appreciative, said the reviewer.
- 18 The company included Pascoe Bioletti, Nina Vincent, Frederick Maxwell, Miss Carew, Emily Armstrong, Edgar Smart, Mr S. Harcourt, Mr Roberts, and Mr T.J. Morton. The piece was familiar to the Leeds audience, and the reviewer thought that this might explain the thinness of the house.
- 19 Yorkshire Post, 7 June 1893, p. 4.
- 20 Yorkshire Post, 20 June 1893, p. 4.
The company included Horace Lingard, Rita Presano, Mr W.H. Rawlins, Charlie Usher, Lytton Grey, Olga Schubert, Miss E. Hunter, Miss Wentworth, Jessie Carrie, Ada May, Harry Victors, and Connie Rosall.
- 21 Yorkshire Post, 21 June 1893, p. 4.
The company included Mr W. Louis Bradfield, Frank Denby, Harry Phydora, Mr T.W. Volt, Kitty Loftus, Grace Clifton, and Fred Esmond.
- 22 Yorkshire Post, 28 June 1893, p. 4.

- 23 The company included Maud Jeffries, Franklin McLeay, Mr H. Cooper-Cliffe, Daisy Belmore, Horace Hodges, and Mr T.W. Percyval.
- 24 Yorkshire Post, 4 July 1893, p. 4.
- 25 Yorkshire Post, 13 July 1893, p. 4.
Austin Melford was also in the company.
- 26 The company included Stanley Code, Sydney Barraclough, Mr A. Atwood, Francis Darbyshire, Helen Palgrave, Henry Crisp, Zoe Davis, Phyllis Selbourne, and Florence Burt.
- 27 Yorkshire Post, 15 August 1893, p. 5.
- 28 The company included Mr H.J. Lethcourt, Reginald Walter, Arthur Lyle, Alfred Ferrand, and Eleanor Haddon.
- 29 Yorkshire Post, 22 August 1893, p. 5.
- 30 Yorkshire Post, 29 August 1893, p. 5.
- 31 The company also included Mr F. Vaughan, Florence Lloyd, George Honey, Alice Barnett, Katie Barry, Marie Luella, Phoebe Carlo, and Belle Harcourt.
- 32 The company included Arthur Roberts, George Dance, Yata Whynier, Ada Dorée, Lizzie Aubrey, Louis Norman, and Mr E.W. Coleman (Mr Phydora did not perform the part specially written for him the previous week as a consequence of the changes made necessary by the absent actors).
- 33 Yorkshire Post, 5 September 1893, p. 5.
- 34 Yorkshire Post, 12 September 1893, p. 8.
- 35 The company included Ida Logan, Mary Clayton, and Nellie Hardinge (the girls, whom the reviewer found equally 'fascinating' in either of their personae), Mr M.R. Morand,

- Mr L. Cory-Thomas, Charles Vane, Eileen Munro, Leslie Greenwood, Mr Harrison, Albert Sims, Mr D. Doody, and Sidney Jerram. The play was preceded by 'A Night in Town', a dramatic monologue in which Frank Lindo impersonated Henry Irving, Beerbohm-Tree, and Wilson Barrett to enthusiastic applause (said the reviewer).
- 36 The company included Marion Terry, Edward Righton, Ben Webster, Maud Millett, Mr Murray Hawthorne, Mr H.H. Vincent, Fanny Coleman, Alfred Holles, Lizzie Webster, and Richard Saker.
- 37 Yorkshire Post, 19 September 1893, p. 4.
- 38 Yorkshire Post, 21 September 1893, p. 4.
- 39 The company included Horace Mills, Cissy Grahame, John Benn, and Mr W.E. Morgan.
- 40 The company included John Wilkinson, George Minshill, Maud Hill, Florence Dysart, Marie Salvian, Arthur King, Cecil Webb, and J. Wilson.
- 41 Yorkshire Post, 3 October 1893, p. 5.
- 42 Yorkshire Post, 17 October 1893, p. 4.
- 43 Yorkshire Post, 1 November 1893, p. 5.
- 44 The company included Miss Meislinger, Minnie Hunt, Ethel Hunt, Miss de Lussan, Barton McGuckin, Alec Marsh, Rhys Thomas, and Max Eugene.
- 45 Yorkshire Post, 4 November 1893, p. 10.
- The company included Mr Hedmond, Miss Duma, Mr Pringle, Mr W. Llewellyn, Mr P. Somers, and Elkan Allen.
- 46 Yorkshire Post, 7 November 1893, p. 4.

- 47 Yorkshire Post, 9 November 1895, p. 5.
- 48 The company included Matthew Brodie, Frank Hill, Emma Hutchinson, May Blayney, and Mr T.A. Palmer.
- 49 Yorkshire Post, 22 November 1895, p. 8.
- 50 The company included Kitty Loftus, Edith Rossenthal, James Danvers, Mr J.C. Piddock, Frank Sherlock, and Mr T.W. Volt.
- 51 Yorkshire Post, 5 December 1895, p. 4.
- 52 Yorkshire Post, 26 December 1895, p. 5.
- 53 The company included Harriet Vernon, George Hoves, George Bernard, Alfred Hemmings, Edward Lauri, Edgar Granville, Lottie Collard, Mabel Love, Messrs Murphy and Macguire, Karl Mora (the Wolf), Nellie Christie, Nellie Cozens, Annie Vivian, Nora Leigh, Nannie Goldman, Lillie Russel, and Alec Payne. The pantomime was produced by Alfred Hemmings and Mr E. Bulwer, the resident stage manager. The scenery was painted by Stafford Hall, Frederick Bryer, and Percy Mitchell. The dresses were designed by Messrs Howard Russel and T. Bradley, and the music was composed by J. Sidney Jones.

CHAPTER XVIII:1894

The Rev. Frank Heath honoured the agreement to pay £120 per week during the pantomime punctually, and Kingston wrote to him on 24 February thanking him for this, and expressing the hope that in view of the 'very successful' run that the 1893/4 pantomime had had, Wilson Barrett would be able to pay off the second quarter's rent from it as on occasion he had done before.

This was outside Heath's brief, so he wrote back saying that he would make inquiries of Wilson Barrett and Bulwer, the theatre's stage manager and treasurer. His reply was considered at a board meeting held on 13 March, but it seemed less significant than the question of what the board should do in view of the shortness of Wilson Barrett's lease. Clearly, if Wilson Barrett felt unsure of his future at the theatre, then the directors must be uncertain too. The board had also to consider at this meeting the falling in of the debentures in July of 1894, and the arrangement of business for the Annual General Meeting.

In any event they decided that they would not renew Wilson Barrett's lease again, and wrote to him the following day to this effect. They would not entertain an application for an extension of the lease, they said, but wrote to give him the earliest possible notice of his need to make other arrangements. There would also be

plenty of time to discuss adjustments for scenery, properties, and dilapidations between the company and himself. Wilson Barrett was in America at this time, of course, so the letter was addressed to him via Frank Heath.

Heath had made the last payment from the pantomime receipts on 10 March, and this left the rent account in credit until the end of April, and when Heath wrote on 13 April to ask that the directors wait until Wilson Barrett's return from America in early June for further payments they seemed to accept it. Thus there was little need for any further correspondence with Wilson Barrett at this time.

In the meantime the directors were able to devote their energies to making arrangements for the future management of the theatre. They held a board meeting on 20 March, and this continued on 21 March.¹ They appear to have had a number of inquiries, but principal among these was that of John Hart, manager of the Theatre Royal, Bradford. A further meeting of the board was held on 4 April during which Hart was telephoned, and a meeting between him and the directors was arranged for the following Friday, 6 April. At this meeting the form of the eventual arrangement seems to have been discussed: the agenda specifically incorporated the idea that the directors should take the theatre's management into their own hands. This seems to have been a radical departure from the intentions of the company through the theatre's early

years, and it is perhaps relevant to note in this context that only four of those who formed the company were at this time still on the board (Sagar-Musgrave, C.E. Bousefield, T.W. Harding, and A.J. Lawson - Frederick Barr resigned on 3 April 1894, three days before the meeting with John Hart),² and these were not its most active members in its early days.

The terms of the agreement with Hart were further discussed at a meeting on 18 April, and that agreement signed and sealed on 23 April 1894. He was to become managing director of the theatre and its refreshment rooms, and to this end to take shares in the company, and one thousand pounds worth of debentures.

On its part the company decided to increase the amount of debentures that it issued to fifteen thousand pounds - perhaps because it felt that the dilapidations fund was going to be inadequate to the renovation and renewal (for example the removal of a tier of boxes and the installation of electric stage lighting as well as substantial redecoration and refurbishing of the auditorium) that it was to undertake, and perhaps, also, so that it might meet whatever other investment was necessary. This was not as easy as the directors might have hoped, for despite the fact that the share valuation had risen to seventeen pounds per fifty pound share in 1894, they had difficulty in allotting all the debentures. Firms in Bradford and Leeds were asked to assist in this endeavour, on commission, but though Messrs Middleton and Fraser in

Bradford had started with some confidence, on 30 July they wrote to the board to say that they could not find any takers.

However, the directors must have received some encouragement when Augustus Harris telegraphed on 26 April to inquire if the theatre was on the market, and if so at what price. They replied that they intended to take the management upon themselves, and this prompted a suggestion from Harris that as he had just entered a group booking arrangement with Messrs Howard and Wyndham at Newcastle (and he already had such an arrangement in Glasgow and Edinburgh) they should consider extending the circuit to Leeds, thereby, in Harris's view, undoubtedly gaining favourable terms from the companies.⁵ He further suggested that they might enter on an agreement over the production of the pantomime.

By early June the directors were discussing making an assessment of dilapidations during Wilson Barrett's tenancy since few other matters were left to resolve. When, therefore, after his fortnight's 'farewell visit' in August, he had a solicitor (T. Piercey of Park Row, Leeds) write to ask that the lease be extended, there was little hope of anything but a negative answer, which in fact was promptly given. On the first night, and the final Friday, of this engagement Wilson Barrett had addressed the audience saying that it was not by his wish

that he was giving up the management of the Grand Theatre, yet at the same time he (seemingly somewhat truculently) reproached the Leeds public for being unwilling to pay the admission prices that their Manchester and Liverpool bretheren were prepared to pay. In these later years of his management the Grand Theatre seems to have provided a practical and emotional base for his American tours - it was here that he appeared immediately on his return, and often just before his departure to rehearse and give a first airing to a new production. But the fact that the audience stayed away if he raised the admission prices to attempt to make the theatre break even during most of the seasons must have weighed against this convenience. It seems likely that this was at the root of his vacillation over the lease - and which led to his losing it.

There remained only the adjudication over dilapidations and the assessment of the value of the new scenery and properties, as well as the modifications that Wilson Barrett had made to the building, to be arranged. The company were keen that there should be a signed agreement as to who should represent both parties, and to whom those representatives should go as umpire. Wilson Barrett seemed reluctant to have such an agreement though he did agree at a board meeting several days prior to his departure for America that Bulwer should represent him, and Hart the company (with Beryl of the Nottingham theatre as umpire)

in the matter of scenery and properties, and Charles Appleton, and Thomas Winn, architects, should represent him and the company respectively with regard to the building and its furnishing. As a final gesture Piercey was given Wilson Barrett's power of attorney to agree to these settlements while he was away.

Wilson Barrett's arrears of rent had fallen somewhat into the background during these discussions, but they serve to show the difficulty that he had in running the theatre at this time. When he returned to England in the early summer he made no effort to pay off the £579 0s. 9d. arrears that had accumulated, and Kingston wrote to him on 4 July asking him for it (the figure included Millwaters's rent which the latter had not paid). Wilson Barrett made no reply, but Millwaters forwarded one hundred pounds three days later, and it seems reasonable to infer that this was in response to pressure from Wilson Barrett.

Kingston wrote again on 18 July expressing surprise that he had received no reply and stating that the board would not leave matters as they were. Wilson Barrett replied to this by suggesting that he should meet the directors on 17 or 24 August when he would arrange payments and discuss other matters pertinent to the interests of the company. Kingston wrote back on 25 July that the directors would be pleased to meet him, but would not let the rent wait until then. This provoked an immediate

reply from Wilson Barrett that it was 'utterly impossible' for him to make any payment before then. He added: 'I have no desire to keep the directors waiting, nor even trouble them to write if I could avoid it. I shall be in Leeds in three weeks. I must request them to wait until then'.

The board accepted the finality of this, and wrote back offering 15 August as a date for the meeting, but in the meanwhile asking that Wilson Barrett have his accountant (I.M. Gordon of Leeds, who had also become the company's accountant on the death of Routh) send a statement of the theatre's profit and loss from the close of the 1892/3 pantomime.

Bulwer wrote on 31 July confirming the meeting and promising to send the statement, but pleaded that Wilson Barrett was unable to write personally because his daughter's illness rendered him unfit to correspond. Indeed, he asked for a cancellation of the meeting in a letter on 14 August, seemingly in view of this illness. The board, however, insisted that it was too late to postpone it.

At this meeting Wilson Barrett seems to have promised to pay a lump sum of £250 in September, and then to pay off the arrears together with the rent up to the end of his lease (£1,472 ls. 5d.) in instalments of £150 during the pantomime. A further meeting was held on 21 August to make a preliminary examination of the condition of the interior of the theatre (at four in the afternoon as this

was thought least likely to interfere with Wilson Barrett's rehearsals).

In 1894 the number of weeks of pantomime increased by one over 1893 to twelve, while the number of weeks of comic opera declined dramatically to only four. However, the number of weeks of burlesque increased to six. The theatre remained closed for seven weeks in the summer, and two weeks for preparation of the pantomime. Consequently the number of weeks of dramas and comedies declined to nineteen. There were fewer return visits in 1894, also, their number declining from fourteen and one half weeks in 1893 to eight weeks in 1894, but the number of weeks of revived productions increased from two to three. Other than Wilson Barrett's fortnight there was only one engagement of over one week — three weeks of opera given by the Carl Rosa Company (an increase of one week over 1893).

The pantomime closed on Saturday, 10 March, having, according to advertising in the Yorkshire Post, broken all previous records in takings, and having attracted excursions from a radius of two hundred miles. It was followed on 12 March by J. Comyns Carr's company in 'Sowing the Wind'.⁴ This was a play by Sydney Grundy which had a relatively simple plot: a Mr Brabazon had an

illegitimate daughter by a woman of dubious repute before the piece opened. He had abandoned her, and married. The action of the play took place twenty years later when Brabazon's adopted son (a 'gilded youth' of the time) fell in love with that daughter (unrecognised, of course), who was by then a thoroughly virtuous popular vocalist.

The reviewer drew from the piece a twin moral: firstly that the sins of the father must be visited upon the children, and that consequently the innocent must suffer for the guilty; and secondly, that that which a man might almost with propriety get away with, a woman might not.⁵ This second theme was the source of a heated discussion between Brabazon and his daughter which, said the reviewer, held the audience spell-bound and was greatly applauded. The reviewer had begun his notice by complaining that the piece was tainted with the distastefulness of 'The Second Mrs Tanqueray', but found some redemption in its moral.

'Sowing the Wind' was followed on 19 March by a return visit of Percy Marshall's company in 'The Late Lamented'. This was followed over the Easter period (in the week beginning 26 March) by 'Les Cloches de Corneville' given by the Leeds Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.

The amateurs enjoyed a large audience and the reviewer approved of their choice of subject, though he thought that the adaptation that had been made for them, which included local allusions, introduced jarring notes that in themselves sounded foreign.⁶

'Les Cloches de Corneville' was followed on 2 April by Miss Fortescue and her company in 'Hypatia'.⁷ This was a free adaptation in blank verse of a book by Charles Kingsley. It was done by G. Stuart Ogilvie, who in fact invented the two main characters of the piece — a young Christian monk, Philammon, and a machinating Jew, Isachaar — who relegated Hypatia herself (who had also, averred the reviewer, been shorn of her skill in metaphysical discourse in deference to the audience⁸) to a lesser status, even though she was played by the 'star'.

The elements of the legend were, however, maintained: Hypatia was a high priestess of Paganism against which the Church, in the person of Philammon, was pitted. Isachaar saw in this an opportunity to free his race from oppression, and conspired with a gullible Orestes, whom he persuaded with hints of dominion over all Africa to make suit to Hypatia.

The scheme foundered upon conventional lines. Isachaar's daughter, Ruth, was in love with Orestes who had made love to her, and Philammon, despite his high principles, fell in love with Hypatia. In the denouement of the piece Philammon was slain in the defence of Hypatia who was sought out by fanatic Christian monks (who were victorious anyway), and Isachaar himself slew Orestes for the disgrace he had brought Ruth.

The piece was set in Alexandria, and the scenery, which formed a strong feature of the production for the reviewer, was by Alma Tadema.

'Hypatia' was followed on 9 April by Augustus Harris's company in 'A Life of Pleasure'.⁹ This was one of his Drury Lane pieces written by Henry Pettitt who in the reviewer's opinion had provided the piece with a dialogue that was generally commonplace, and occasionally vulgar, and a plot so thin that it hardly connected the scenes.¹⁰ However, the attraction of a Drury Lane drama was in its stirring incidents and its visual spectacle, and these 'A Life of Pleasure' had aplenty.

The play opened with an eviction in Ireland, then transferred to the upper reaches of the Thames, and into the Empire Music Hall. But the climax of the spectacle was set in Burmah in a battle scene in which real Maxim guns were used, and gave, said the reviewer, an indication of their deadly power.¹¹

'A Life of Pleasure' was followed on 16 April by a return visit of Willie Edouin's company in 'Niobe (All Smiles)'. For this the company was substantially unchanged with the exception that the principal actress, Lillie Belmore, had been replaced by Ida Logan who the reviewer thought acquitted herself well despite labouring under the disadvantage of comparison.¹²

'Niobe (All Smiles)' was followed on 23 April by a return visit of W.S. Penley's company in 'Charley's Aunt'.¹⁵ Two of the principal roles had changed hands (they had fallen to Alfred Kenarick and E. Thurlow) though Stanley

Cooke still played the 'Aunt', and the rest of the company remained the same. It was greeted by a well-filled house.

'Charley's Aunt' was followed on 1 May by D'Oyly Carte's company in a new comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan, 'Utopia Limited'.¹⁴ The reviewer found this but a tired endeavour on Sullivan's part, and thought that though Gilbert maintained his piquancy and satire, he had not worked out his central idea as far as he might.¹⁵

'Utopia Limited' was followed on 7 May by Henry Neville and F.G. Latham's company in the latest Adelphi Theatre success, 'A Woman's Revenge'.¹⁶ In this piece, said the reviewer, the author (Henry Pettitt) had not been seduced by the passing novelties of the 'cold unrealities of the Ibsen school' or by the 'unsavoury memories' of the boulevards, but contented himself with a conventional domestic tale of a married couple dogged by the unrequited love of another woman.¹⁷ The play eventually reached its climax at the Old Bailey where it concluded in orthodox happiness.

'A Woman's Revenge' was followed on 14 May by Victor Stevens's burlesque company in 'Bonnie Boy Blue' which was given for the Whitsun holiday week, and above being 'bright, tuneful, and prettily staged', did not inspire the reviewer to any comment.¹⁸ It was followed on 21 May

by Mrs Bandmann-Palmer's company which gave 'Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots' on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 'Hamlet' on Wednesday (this, asserted the press advertising, was for the benefit of E. Bulwer, who played the Ghost), and Saturday, and 'The School for Scandal' which was given on Friday.¹⁹

'Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots' was an adaptation by the Hon. Lewis Wingfield of Schiller. The reviewer thought it full of interest as it must be in view of the subject, well worked out, and generally well produced — though he did complain that Mrs Bandmann-Palmer's delivery was too rapid and monotonous.²⁰ Though no further reviews were published in the Yorkshire Post during the week, the reviewer stated in his Tuesday's notice that he thought that interest would be focused especially on Mrs Bandmann-Palmer's interpretation of Hamlet, which, he added, she would not be the first tragedienne to essay, though this had not been done in Leeds for some years.

'Hamlet' was followed on 28 May by Horace Lingard's company which gave 'Falka' on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 'The Old Guard' on Tuesday and Thursday, and 'Pepita' on Saturday.²¹ The programme claimed that this was a farewell visit, though the reviewer disputed this, asserting that the popularity of 'Falka' had not yet run its course. The company, however, was inferior to its predecessors.

'Pepita' brought the season to its end, and thereafter the theatre remained closed for seven weeks, to reopen on 23 July with Weedon Grossmith's company in 'The New Boy', a farcical comedy by Arthur Law which was enjoying at that time a prosperous career at the Vaudeville Theatre in an otherwise 'dull' London season.²²

The central character of 'The New Boy' was the small husband of a large wife. In fact she had remarried to him at peril of her inheritance, and in order to conceal it from a relative, the husband, Archibald, was compelled to pretend to be his wife's son, and to disguise himself as a fourteen year old schoolboy. This led to his being sent to school where he displayed great precocity, was flirted with by a classmate, and suffered great ignominies at the hands of the school bully.

Archibald was forced to give up the deception, however, when threatened with flogging by a court which had found him guilty of stealing apples.

'The New Boy' was followed on 30 July by George Edwardes's 'No. 1 Gaiety Burlesque Company' in 'Don Juan'.²³ This piece, which the reviewer styled a 'variety show', had enjoyed two hundred and fifty performances at the Gaiety Theatre before coming out on a provincial tour which had started in Dublin the week before this visit to the Grand Theatre.²⁴ It had lyrics by Adrian Rose, and music by Herr Meyer Lutz, and was given an unusually hearty reception on its first night.

'Don Juan' was followed on 6 August by W.W. Kelly's company in an historical drama, 'A Royal Divorce', by W.G. Wills.²⁵ Though this was the play's first production in Leeds, it had enjoyed popularity for some years, and the pit and gallery were 'crammed to suffocation'.²⁶

The plot concerned Napoleon, Josephine's loyalty to him (she defended the offspring of her hated rival against the vengeance of the people after Moscow, adduced the reviewer in proof of this), and his relationship with Marie Louise. The reviewer found a striking 'vraisemblance' throughout the piece (despite a free treatment of history), picturesqueness, and sentiment which appealed to every sympathetic heart. Tableaux at the end of the fourth act showed Napoleon on a white charger during and after the battle of Waterloo, and these were applauded 'to the echo'.

'A Royal Divorce' was followed on 13 August by Wilson Barrett's 'farewell' engagement at the theatre. He gave 'Claudian' on Monday, and Friday, 'Ben-my-chree' on Tuesday, and Saturday, 'Hamlet' on Wednesday, and 'Othello' on Thursday of the first week of his fortnight's visit.

At the end of the first performance of 'Claudian', Wilson Barrett, called to make a speech, said that he was glad to be back at what he and his company had looked upon as their theatrical home during many years of wandering. This was the last season of his management of the theatre, and he wished to make it clear that this was through no fault of his. It was not a time to disguise

things from friends. When he had taken on the theatre everyone had prophesied that he could not keep it going for two years with its great expense. It was the most expensive theatre in the kingdom to manage, but whereas the prices of the stalls in Liverpool and Manchester were six shillings, and in Birmingham four shillings, he had never been able to charge more than three shillings without discouraging patronage. He had brought 'every attraction' to the theatre in his seventeen years, and some of the stars had come because they were his friends rather than because they wanted to, yet when he raised his prices there was grumbling. He would not think of entering an iron foundry or a cotton mill and telling a man who had spent his life there what he should do, and yet any 'drunken loafer' who was thrown out of the pit might write to the paper and tell him how to run his theatre. He had never spoken to the Yorkshire public in vain before. Plain speaking cleared the air, and he intended to speak plainer than he had done later on.²⁷

There were crowded houses throughout the week.

In his second week Wilson Barrett gave 'Virginus' on Monday, 'The Acrobat' on Tuesday, and the first production of a new piece, 'The Manxman', on Wednesday, and for the remainder of the week. The advertising in the Yorkshire Post carried the notice that Wilson Barrett would 'say a few words' to his patrons on his benefit night — Friday.

The reviewer averred that the Roman centurion in 'Virginus' might be Wilson Barrett's finest role.²⁸ He wondered that Wilson Barrett should have created so many other roles before essaying this classic. In it he played a part that was noble and dignified as a soldier, but also 'most impressively', a devoted father who 'saw the security of his daughter's honour only in her death', and finally, driven mad by his passionate concern, died upon her bier.

There was a 'fairly large' audience for 'Virginus', and a 'well-filled' house for 'The Acrobat', but the piece of principal interest during the week was the new one, 'The Manxman'. This was an adaptation by Wilson Barrett of Hall Caine's novel of the same name (which was published only a fortnight before this production). Though the reviewer was deeply disgusted at one passage in the novel — the seduction scene — which he called a 'liberty with public taste that had no parallel in modern fiction', the stage adaptation suffered no such blemish, and the reviewer quite clearly drew a distinction between what was permissible in the novel, and what was allowable at a public performance.²⁹

There were three principal characters in the play: Philip Christian, grandson of the Deemster (like Caine's previous piece it was set on the Isle of Man), who wished to atone for his father's fall from grace, and to become Deemster himself; Pete, his cousin, who had been brought

up as a farm lad, and who, though lacking refinement, had a 'generous heart', and a frank and noble nature; and Kate Cregeen, beloved of them both.

Pete declared his love to Kate first, and he asked Philip to intercede with her father on his behalf. Kate's 'avaricious and sanctimonious Calvinist' father demanded wealth as the price of his acceptance. Accordingly Pete went off to the Kimberley diamond mines to make his fortune.

Before leaving, however, he charged Philip with Kate's physical and moral welfare (under an old Manx custom). Out of this relationship of trust, Kate and Philip grew to love each other. Pete's reported death gave them the freedom they required (though the report was of dubious validity). His impending return, therefore, put them both into a state of alarm.

Neither of them dared reveal what had passed between them, and fears that marrying beneath him might adversely affect his career induced Philip to withdraw from the affair. Pete and Kate were married, but after twelve tortured months during which a child was born to Kate, she fled from Pete's home and went to seek solace with Philip. She revealed to him that the child was his, and it was then his turn to suffer remorse.

But Pete's situation was 'pathetic beyond measure', and he too went to Philip for sympathy and help. Kate overheard the ensuing conversation, and, harrowed by it, and contrite, she returned to Pete's home. However, she told

him that she did not love him, and that the child was not his.

'With great magnanimity' Pete released her, and promised to pay her father twelve pounds a month for her maintenance. Moreover he undertook to seek a divorce. Amidst the general clearing of consciences Philip confessed his paternity, and renounced his position and dignities. Thus the play ended in general woe.

The reviewer regarded it as having superior literary qualities to 'The Silver King', though there were obvious parallels between the roles that Wilson Barrett played in the two pieces. The play also shared the Manx ethos that had contributed to the success of 'Ben-my-chree'. The principal achievement of the piece was, however, the 'manly vigour, the tenderness, and the deep pathos' with which Wilson Barrett invested the character of Pete.

At the end of the performance Wilson Barrett and Maud Jeffries were called several times, and Wilson Barrett made a brief speech in which he said that the reception of the Leeds audience of the piece meant that it must be successful everywhere. Hall Caine was called to be applauded too, and Wilson Barrett thanked Stafford Hall for the scenery which he had painted. He said that many of the audience might not realise what an anxiety a first night was to a manager, author, and leading actor, and pronounced himself much satisfied.

After the performance on Friday Wilson Barrett made a

speech in which he reminded the audience of what he had said when he opened the theatre, and told them of a promise that he had made to the Leeds clergy that he would endeavour to give the Leeds people 'something to elevate them, something to take away which would help make them better men and better women'. He informed them that he had lately received 'a most exquisite Worcestershire vase' inscribed with gold letters: 'From the Bishop of Truro to Wilson Barrett in grateful acknowledgement of a promise nobly kept'.

He then referred to kindly greetings that were given to him by passers-by in the street who regretted his leaving but wished him God speed if he must go, and, showing a large bundle of letters and telegrams, said that it contained messages from nearly every actor and manager of standing in London expressing good wishes for his benefit and tributes to his 'businesslike promptitude, honourable dealing, and success both as an actor and manager'. These, he said, were proof that the Grand Theatre had been well managed.

The curtain was then raised to reveal 'a handsome trophy bearing a medallion with Mr Barrett's monogram, flanked with flags of Great Britain and the United States', and E. Bulwer and the other heads of department to present it. Bulwer said that Wilson Barrett was 'the most kind-hearted chief a man could serve under', and that at one period he had been 'the largest employer of theatrical labour not only in the United Kingdom, but also in the world'.

Austin Melford, one of the oldest members of Wilson Barrett's company, presenting him with a sword to use in 'Hamlet', said that some of the company had been with Wilson Barrett for twenty years, some, like Maud Jeffries 'had been drawn across the water to him', and that the average length of service with the company was roughly fourteen years — this, he said, was unparalleled.³⁰

Wilson Barrett's fortnight was followed on 27 August by Richard Edgar's comedy company in 'Aunt Jack' on Monday, and Wednesday, 'The Magistrate' on Tuesday, and Saturday, 'Dandy Dick' on Thursday, and 'Sweet Lavender' on Friday.³¹

Richard Edgar's company was followed on 3 September by F.R. Benson's company in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', a revival which had first been produced at the Globe Theatre.³² The scenery and costumes were toured, and one hundred and fifty auxiliaries hired locally.

The reviewer called the play 'charmingly fantastic'.³³ Its scenery had been painted by Hemsley 'in pleasing accord with the picturesque episodes from fairyland'. Mendelsohn's music was used throughout — with special chorus, and augmented band to play and sing it.

The reviewer particularly identified Bottom's begarlanded appearance in Titania's bower, the staging of the palace interior, and the dignified entrance of Theseus and Hippolyta with the other wedded lovers as pleasing and characteristic aspects of the production.

There was a 'moderately well-filled' house on the Monday night, and the reviewer thought that the audience should increase during the week when the quality of the work became known.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' was followed on 10 September by George Alexander's company in 'The Masqueraders' on Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday (given with the original scenery, furniture and effects with which it had been produced at the St James's Theatre), and 'The Second Mrs Tanqueray' which was given on Wednesday, and Thursday.³⁴

'The Masqueraders' was a powerfully emotional piece by Henry Arthur Jones which worked up the audience to a high pitch of excitement at its climax.³⁵ The play concerned Brice, a roué Baronet, Dulcie Laroudie, a young lady of good family, but who was working at the beginning of the play as a barmaid (partly 'out of fun', and partly as a protest at her reduction in means), and the hero, David Remon.

At a hunt ball Brice, a notorious gambler, set up an auction for charity of a kiss from Dulcie. She was embarrassed, but he went ahead with it, and Remon bid against him for her sake. However, Remon had to withdraw from the auction when Brice bid three thousand pounds. Dulcie would not at first accept this, but when Brice threw in marriage as well, she capitulated.

The action then jumped forward four years when Dulcie

was shown to have become a leading society lady, while Brice was fast approaching ruin. Remon meanwhile had inherited a fortune, and become renowned for his astronomical observations. He harboured still a secret affection for Dulcie, and when he departed for France to set up an observatory, he gave her his cheque book with which to stave off the consequences of Brice's gambling.

Another jump in time and space followed: Dulcie and Brice were discovered living from hand to mouth in an hotel in Nice. Here Remon stumbled across them, and acceded to Brice's suggestion that they should cut a pack of cards with Dulcie and her child, and Remon's fortune as stakes.

In a scene of great emotional intensity Brice and Remon each won a trick, then with Dulcie watching, they made the third and decisive cut. Of course Remon won, but with surprising passion he thereupon grasped Brice's lapels and extracted from him a promise that he would renounce all claim upon Dulcie and her child. Brice agreed.

The concluding act offered something of an anti-climax. Set in Remon's observatory, the latter was indulging in visions of the happiness in store for him and Dulcie, but he was persuaded by her and her sister that he must wait until she was divorced from Brice. 'You have made so many sacrifices for her, make this one last sacrifice,' said the sister, 'keep her pure for her child.' Remon's brother entered then to announce that the exploration

party that Remon was to lead to Africa was waiting for him. Accordingly, after a tender leavetaking, Remon departed.

'The Masqueraders' was followed on 17 September by Horace Lingard's company in a burlesque opera, 'Brother Pelican'.³⁶ The piece was subtitled, 'Falka's Baby', and indeed, it formed a sequel to 'Falka' in which Falka herself was married and her only child was stolen away by gipsies. Her husband disguised himself as a woman in order to become matron of a children's home where he suspected the child had been hidden, and Falka disguised herself as a Captain in the King's bodyguard. This led to farcical complications.

'Brother Pelican' was followed on 25 September by George Edwardes's company in a musical comedy, 'A Gaiety Girl' which had dialogue by Owen Hall, lyrics by Harry Greenbank, and music by J. Sidney Jones jnr (the son of the musical director of the Grand Theatre).³⁷ Musical comedy was a description of burlesque, and this piece consisted of a miscellanea of variety talents woven together with a not over elaborate plot concerning 'the amours of a susceptible doctor and a judge of the divorce court', the flirtations of an officer of the Household Guard, and 'a bevy of charming Gaiety Girls and society ladies'.³⁸ The reviewer regarded it as one of the 'brightest' things that he had seen at the Grand Theatre for a long time.

'A Gaiety Girl' was followed on 1 October by a visit of Henry Irving and the Lyceum company in 'Becket' by Alfred Lord Tennyson, which was given on Monday and Tuesday, 'Faust' which was given on Wednesday and Thursday, 'A Story of Waterloo' and 'The Bells' which were given on Friday, and 'The Merchant of Venice' which was given on Saturday.

The reviewer found that Becket was a necessarily somewhat monotonous character, but praised Irving for making him so alive that those traits which the reviewer identified as unacceptable motives were nonetheless forgotten, and Marion Terry's Rosamund introduced a corrective beauty and pathos.³⁹ There was greater scope for the actor in 'Faust' it seemed; in Mephistopheles Irving's 'method, mannerisms, and whole personality' blended into one.⁴⁰ The reviewer had high praise for Marion Terry's Marguerite, too, though he admitted it would have been affectation to pretend that he did not miss her sister in the part.

'A Story of Waterloo' was a one-act play by Conan Doyle in which Irving played the last moments of an heroic veteran of the battle who relived his dash through a blazing coppice with a wagon load of explosives needed by his regiment. A sergeant and a colonel from that regiment visited him during the course of the play, and

these drew out different aspects of the tale (along with providing the veteran with the promise of a soldier's funeral) as did his niece who looked after him.

Principally the piece gave Irving great scope for characterising the old man in a way that combined 'tears and smiles', and thoroughly pleased both reviewer and audience.⁴¹

Henry Irving was followed by a return visit of Cissy Grahame with her triple bill. The main piece of the evening was still 'A Pantomime Rehearsal', but it was preceded by two different pieces: 'The Burglar and the Judge', and 'Faithful James'. Cissy Grahame was followed on 15 October by a return visit of H. Cecil Beryl's company in 'The Lady Slavey' which attracted a well-filled house. The company was virtually unchanged.

'The Lady Slavey' was followed on 22 October by the first of three weeks of opera given by the Carl Rosa Opera Company. In the first week it gave 'Faust' on Monday, 'Orpheus and Eurydice' and 'Lucia di Lamermoor' on Tuesday, 'Tannhauser' on Wednesday, 'The Daughter of the Regiment' on Thursday, and as a matinee on Saturday, 'Lohengrin' on Friday, and 'Esmerelda' on Saturday evening.⁴²

In its second week it gave 'Carmen' on Monday, and as a matinee on Saturday, a new opera, 'At Santa Lucia', on Tuesday, 'Faust' on Wednesday, 'Pagliacci' and 'Cavalleria Rusticana' on Thursday, 'Rienzi' on Friday,

and 'Tannhauser' on Saturday evening.

Pierantonio's 'At Santa Lucia' was based on melodrama, as was 'Cavalleria Rusticana' to which the reviewer likened it.⁴³ It was another tale of Italian passion, jealousy, and revenge that was dramatically effective, and highly picturesque, but not quite as edifying as the reviewer would have liked it. It suffered in this performance from rather ragged playing from the orchestra.

As it had only two acts it was preceded by a 'somewhat perfunctory' rendering of the second act of 'Maritana'.

'Rienzi' was by Wagner, but jokingly called 'Meyerbeer's best opera' for it was written in the style of Parisian Grand Opera. Its central character was the last Roman tribune. This role was sung by Barton McGuckin who, noted the reviewer, eschewed the appearance on horseback in the military pageant of the second act (whether for want of a suitably docile horse, or suitable horsemanship in McGuckin, he could not say).⁴⁴

In its third week the Carl Rosa Opera Company gave 'Tannhauser' on Monday and as a matinee on Saturday, 'Pagliacci' and 'Cavalleria Rusticana' as a matinee on Tuesday, 'Bohemian Girl' on Tuesday evening, 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' on Wednesday, 'Lohengrin' on Thursday, 'Faust' on Friday, and the second and third acts of 'The Daughter of the Regiment' and 'Cavalleria Rusticana' on Saturday. The Tuesday matinee was given to accommodate those who had been issued with 'overflow' tickets on the previous Thursday and were unable then to get in.

Nicolai's 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' was first produced in Berlin in 1849, and though it was given in London under the title of 'Falstaff' in 1864, it was not until 1878 that the Carl Rosa Opera Company gave it a full production (in English) at the Adelphi Theatre where it had a run of several successive nights. The reviewer welcomed this revival of a work which he thought likely to captivate the average opera-goer rather than the cultivated musician, though he complained that the performance seemed to lack adequate preparation.⁴⁵

The Carl Rosa Opera Company was followed on 12 November by a burlesque opera, 'Little Christopher Columbus' by G.R. Sims, and Cecil Raleigh, with music by Ivan Caryl.⁴⁶ (It was first produced at the Lyric Theatre, London.)

The reviewer described it as a 'variety entertainment' which included 'smart business, fairly good singing, novel and clever dancing, and excellent fooling'.⁴⁷ The central character was a Mrs Blocks, an American private detective played by a man (Henry Wright) who appeared throughout the piece in a number of guises (a chief of police, a Spanish governor, a British peer at the Chicago Exhibition, and a showman). The play also contained topical allusions to 'Prudes on the Prowl' (a County Councillor), and the Empire Music Hall which the audience relished.

'Little Christopher Columbus' was followed on 19 November

by another burlesque, 'Jaunty Jane Shore', which was given by Alice Atherton, Edward Lewis, and the Strand Theatre Company.⁴⁸

The reviewer thought that the piece had music of surprising quality for such an entertainment, and also contained graceful and eccentric, but clever dancing.⁴⁹ The dialogue was 'light and racy' and the dresses and staging 'beautiful'. The two principals sustained most of the performance.

'Jaunty Jane Shore' was followed on 26 November by a third week of burlesque when Sidney Cooper's company appeared in 'Crusoe the Cruiser'.⁵⁰ It was written by Wilton Jones, and had music by Alfred Christensen and Michael Connelly (the latter was also musical director of the company).

The reviewer regretted that Wilton Jones's book was an encumbrance to the talents of the comedians, dancers, and singers who made up the company.⁵¹ And though Alfred Christensen's name figured large in the bills, he had only contributed a patter song, a waltz, and a Christy Minstrel piece which were as islands in a morass of dullness not worthy of the Grand Theatre's traditions.

'Crusoe the Cruiser' was followed on 5 December by H.H. Morell and F. Mouillot's company in Oscar Wilde's 'A Woman of No Importance'. This was a touring company

giving a version of Beerbohm Tree's production at the Haymarket Theatre.

The reviewer felt that after a rather slow first act the story of 'A Woman of No Importance' got under way and was interesting and skilfully developed.⁵² He imagined that with a stronger company the meeting of a woman with her betrayer after twenty years and their subsequent rivalry over their son might have been more intense and 'realistic', but even so the play was a worthy successor to 'Lady Windermere's Fan'.

Epigrams it had aplenty, he said, and though they seemed to him mechanically produced, as though by a patent brick machine, he recognised that they substantially contributed to Wilde's success, and the latter had by no means exhausted his supply. The reviewer chose a number of examples for his reader: 'The happiness of the married man depends upon the woman he had not married'; 'A man who can dominate a London dinner table can dominate the world'; 'Duty is what one expects of others, and not what one does oneself'; 'A woman who will tell her real age will tell you anything'; 'My husband is a sort of promissory note; I am tired of meeting him'; 'A bad man is a man who admires innocence, and a bad woman is the sort of woman that a man never tires of'; and 'When a man says he has exhausted life, one knows that life has exhausted him'.

'A Woman of No Importance' brought the season to its

end on Saturday, 8 December, and the theatre remained closed thereafter until Saturday, 22 December, when it reopened with the last pantomime given under Wilson Barrett's aegis, 'Aladdin'. (In fact it was produced by Bulwer, A.D. Corry, and F.W. Barrett, and under the stage direction of Alfred Hemmings.)

The book was written by a new author, W. Wade, with topical allusions interpolated by T.H. Hardman, and though the former had adhered reasonably directly to the story, his treatment seemed somewhat uninspired, and the reviewer was undeniably disappointed with the whole pantomime.⁵³ For, with the exception of Stafford Hall's Grand Bazaar scene, and the transformation scene, neither scenery, ballet, nor costumes seemed up to the Grand Theatre's former standard.

A note of banality was struck in the opening scene in which Genies argued over possession of the magic lamp which was being wrought in a forest glade. And it was sustained in the humour of the next scene - 'Hi and Lo Street, Peking', by Stafford Hall - where the principal characters were introduced, and joked about the royal coach being appropriated by the Mayor of Leeds.

A 'Masher Ballet' costumed in the style of Beau Brummel (save for a 'semi-Korean hat') preceded the arrival of the Chinese Emperor who was 'got up à la Japanese', and who was subjected to some base punning by his Grand Vizier.

The scene changed then to the Widow's Cottage where followed the conventional suborning of Aladdin to Abanazar's scheme (though some attempt was made to invest the plot with political overtones), but the scene notably contained a burlesque (which the reviewer regarded as being in doubtful taste) on 'The Manxman'. The scene was ended by a parting duet between Aladdin and the Princess.

The Cave of Jewels which followed was styled 'unpretentious' by the reviewer. A beam of moonlight served to illumine the costumes of the dancers of a Ballet of the Jewels which the reviewer regarded as the least satisfactory part of the entire pantomime.

The plot rapidly marched on to bring the performance's next strong point before the audience - twelve children dressed in white gowns, stockings, and nightcaps, and armed with dolls and cradles who assisted Aladdin in a 'Baby' song. This 'touch of nature' greatly delighted reviewer and audience alike.

Thereafter the Princess was quickly surrendered to Aladdin, and 'without ceremony' a front cloth lifted to reveal Aladdin's Palace wherein the latter sung a song entitled 'Made in England'. Abanazar, inveighing against British Ironclads, and policemen, then gained possession of the lamp, and demanded to be transported not to Egypt as was the convention, but to a London music hall - for no other reason, opined the reviewer, than to allow a 'grand divertissement' by the Albert and Edmunds Troupe.

The plot was picked up again, the Princess excoriated the 'new woman', and Aladdin outwitted Abanazar so that the final spectacular set piece might be revealed. The Grand Bazaar scene was 'a blaze of colour and a profusion of pretty dresses'. In it a sequence of entrances by principals, children, and supernumeraries formed an evolving tableau. This established, there was a musical bell ballet, 'some extraordinary clever bicycle tricks', and a 'rowdy' song sung by Aladdin and thirteen girls in 'Newmarket' coats.

A carpenter's scene followed before a cloth painted with a view of the Leeds Medical School (conceivably Corson's building). This allowed the preparation of the transformation scene. '"A Dream of China" ... illustrated in two plates [sic]' for which the reviewer thought it well worth waiting until half past eleven.⁵⁴

Notes

- 1 The Yorkshire Post carried a brief item on 22 March stating that the directors would not renew Wilson Barrett's lease, and were considering taking the management of the theatre upon themselves.
- 2 Further, when the increased amount of debentures was being canvassed, Sir Andrew Fairbairn, along with other holders, was asked to accept more of them, but on the contrary he not only declined to take more, he also would not renew them. This may simply have been a consequence of his financial affairs at the time, but it does serve to show how far the company and the board had changed from its original composition and purpose.
- 3 Under Wilson Barrett's management companies had varying arrangements, the most expensive to the manager being: Henry Irving, who commanded forty pounds plus seventy per cent of the box office takings; the Kendals, who commanded seventy per cent of the takings on their visit in 1892; the Carl Rosa Opera Company which commanded two thirds of the takings; and George Alexander's company, and D'Oyly Carte's company, which demanded sixty per cent of the box office takings.
- 4 The company included Mr W.H. Vernon, Evelyn Millard, Henry Osman, Laurence Cautley, Mark Paton, and Fred Emery.
- 5 Yorkshire Post, 14 March 1894, p. 5.
- 6 Yorkshire Post, 26 March 1894, p. 4.

- 7 The company included Mr Murray Carson, George Hippisley, Mr W. Farren, and Miss B. Selwyn.
- 8 Yorkshire Post, 3 April 1894, p. 5.
- 9 The company included Harry Nicholls, Maude Elmore, Mr Coventry Davies, Laura Linson, Frank Fenton, and Charles Dodsworth.
- 10 Yorkshire Post, 10 April 1894, p. 5.
- 11 They were advertised as being on exhibition in the theatre's vestibule with a gunnery officer to explain their working from noon to three in the afternoon.
- 12 Yorkshire Post, 18 April 1894, p. 5.
- 13 It was preceded by a one-act piece, 'In the Eyes of the World', by A.C. Fraser Wood, with incidental music by John Farmer.
- 14 The company included Mr J.T. Macmillan, Maud Elliott, Gertrude Aylward, Florence Hunter, Mr G.W. Cockburn, Arthur Watts, Louise Lancaster, and Mr Wheeler.
- 15 Yorkshire Post, 1 May 1894, p. 5.
- 16 The company included Henry Neville, Mary Kingsley, Frank Drummond, and May Lonsdale.
- 17 Yorkshire Post, 9 May 1894, p. 5.
- 18 Yorkshire Post, 15 May 1894, p. 6.
- 19 The company included Lillie Clements, and Fred Scarth.
- 20 Yorkshire Post, 22 May 1894, p. 4.
- 21 The company included Horace Lingard, Rosie St George, Fred Walton, Harry Walsh, Fred Farr, James Mason, and Beatrice Hat. A 'pas de quatre' had been introduced

into the piece, entitled a 'pas des coquettes' and forming, for the reviewer, a 'pretty feature' of the performance.

22 Yorkshire Post, 24 July 1894, p. 6.

The company included Henry Desley, Edwin G. Waller, Mr C.H. Fenton, Annie Hill, and Lillian Millward.

There was a curtain-raiser, 'The Gentleman Whip', which the reviewer felt was 'of pretty sentiment and ... prettily rendered', and of higher merit than the usual one-act piece.

23 The company included Arthur Roberts, Edmond Payne, Robert Nainby, Colin Coop, Lillian Stanley, Ada Reeve, Katie Seymour, Lillie Belmore, and Josephine Findlay.

24 Yorkshire Post, 31 July 1894, p. 4.

25 The company included Henry Vibart, and Lesley Bell.

26 Yorkshire Post, 7 August 1894, p. 6.

27 An account of the speech was given in the Yorkshire Post, 14 August 1894, p. 4.

28 Yorkshire Post, 21 August 1894, p. 4.

29 Yorkshire Post, 23 August 1894, p. 4.

30 An account of the speech was given in the Yorkshire Post, 25 August 1894, p. 6.

31 The company included Richard Edgar, Jennie Taylor (his wife), George Autley, Alfred Ferrand, Eileen Munro, and Miss A. Marriott Edgar.

32 The company included F.R. Benson, Mr Graham Brown, Mona H. Oram, Miss C. Robertson, Mrs Benson, Frank Rodney, Nannie Goldman, Annie Nelson, Miss Mitchelmore,

Mr G.R. Weir, Mr A.E. George, Oscar Ascle, Mr V. Stenhouse,
Mr O.B. Clarence, Mr G. Fitzgerald, and Miss Vincent.

33 Yorkshire Post, 4 September 1894, p. 4.

34 The company included George Alexander, Herbert Waring,
and Evelyn Millard.

35 Yorkshire Post, 11 September 1894, p. 5.

36 The company included Rosie St George, Horace Lingard,
Willie Scott, Olive Maston, Constance Burton, Miss R. Doote,
and Miss K. Templeton.

37 The company included Mr C. Wibrow, James Leverett,
Mr W.J. Manning, George Maddie, Blanche Horlock,
Andrée Corday, Christine Mayne, Topsy Sinden, and
Madge Russel.

38 Yorkshire Post, 25 September 1894, p. 4.

39 Yorkshire Post, 2 October 1894, p. 4.

40 Yorkshire Post, 4 October 1894, p. 5.

41 Yorkshire Post, 6 October 1894, p. 8.

42 Admission prices for the dress circle and stalls were
raised to four shillings, and the upper circle to three
shillings reserved, and two shillings unreserved.

Balcony, pit, and gallery remained at their usual prices.

43 Yorkshire Post, 31 October 1894, p. 4.

44 Yorkshire Post, 5 November 1894, p. 6.

45 Yorkshire Post, 8 November 1894, p. 4.

The company included Alice Esty, Mr Lempriere Pringle,
Alec Marsh, Minnie Hunt, Mr W.H. Stephens, Mr F.A. Wood,
Mary Linck, and Mr Llewellyn.

- 46 The company included Maud Fisher, Mr E.T. Steyne, Laura Maxwell, Marie Montrose, May Fisher, Gertie Fisher, Lily Milbank, and Daisy Melville.
- 47 Yorkshire Post, 13 November 1894, p. 5.
There was a large audience which gave the piece an 'encouraging' reception.
- 48 The company included Rita Presano, Fred Emney, Marie Shields, Arthur Nelstone, and Rhoda Whindrum, Edith Denton, Daisy Jackson, and Gladys Charwell danced a 'pas de quatre'.
- 49 Yorkshire Post, 21 November 1894, p. 5.
- 50 The company included Susie Bevan, Nita Clargoing, Clifford Campbell, Mr W.W.J. Churchill, and Mr Hilton St Just, with a quartet of dancers.
- 51 Yorkshire Post, 27 November 1894, p. 4.
- 52 Yorkshire Post, 4 December 1894, p. 4.
- 53 Yorkshire Post, 24 December 1894, p. 6.
- 54 The company included Maggie Duggan, Austin Melford, Alfred Hemmings, George Delaforce, Julia Kent, Mr H.M. Edmunds, Willie Albert, Violet Dukin, and Mr W. Payne.

CHAPTER XIX:1895

The Rev. Heath's payment of instalments of the rent was interrupted after only one month, and Kingston telegraphed the directors' surprise on 22 January. A board meeting was hastily called to discuss what should be done about this default, but Heath resumed payment before any action was necessary. This immediate response of the directors would seem to indicate a high degree of sensitivity during this period: perhaps they feared that if Wilson Barrett was allowed to defer payment until after his lease expired the money might be difficult to reclaim; or perhaps the directors felt that they should be especially diligent in the maintenance of cash reserves when they were about to embark on management.

Heath did not increase their feeling of security when he sent less than half of an instalment on 18 February. He asserted in an accompanying letter that he had merely deducted property tax in accordance with the normal practice. Kingston wrote back immediately to explain that this deduction had been made when the sum that Wilson Barrett would have to pay during the pantomime had been calculated. There was still £358 14s. 9d. due, assuming that Millwaters paid his rent.

Within three days, however, Kingston learned that Millwaters did not intend to pay his full rent. He sent

only £55 18s. 6d., asserting that the rest was owed him by Wilson Barrett for goods and money paid to him.

Kingston immediately recalculated Wilson Barrett's liability to the company as £440 6s. 3d., and wrote to Heath and Bulwer accordingly. He added in his letter to Heath that the two last instalments must be of £303 15s. 11d., and £140 10s. 4d. respectively if the liability was to be met. Seemingly unimpressed, Heath replied asking to be permitted to delay making further payments.

The reason for this Kingston could not understand, and he wrote saying that the directors considered that there was no need for delay since the pantomime receipts had been 'so satisfactory'. Accordingly Kingston redemanded the property tax, and the rest of Millwaters's rent.

Heath responded to this obliquely, asserting that he had by this time paid nine instalments. Kingston again explained his view of the situation in a letter of 2 March, and since the pantomime was approaching its end, followed it with a letter on 6 March demanding £140 10s. 4d. to close the account. Heath was again dilatory, and Kingston sent him a telegram on 13 March demanding immediate payment.

This Heath could not ignore, and consequently the reason for his reticence in payment became clear. He sent a cheque for the amount demanded, but when Kingston presented it at the bank, payment was refused. He wrote, somewhat petulantly, to Heath on 20 March regretting that the cheque had not been honoured. Bulwer had told him, however,

that there would be enough money in the account to cover the cheque on the following Saturday morning, and so Kingston closed merely by suggesting that 'ordinary business foresight' should have prevented this incident, and that he hoped Heath would use his best endeavours to ensure that the cheque was honoured.

The incident serves to demonstrate quite graphically that Bulwer's day to day management of the theatre must have proceeded on a very tight rein.

Meanwhile the agreement on arbitration over the value of the scenery and properties that had been added to the theatre's stock, and the cost of wear and tear against the improvements that had been made during Wilson Barrett's management, was signed on 18 February. Beryl came to Leeds on 27 February to act as umpire over the scenery and properties, and, after Corson had been asked to provide summaries of original costs, agreed figures were arrived at. Beryl's award for scenery and properties seems to have been of £754 5s. 7d. to Wilson Barrett, while the architects seem to have made an award for dilapidations of £360 to the company.

Calculations at the end of April showed a balance of £354 13s. 10d. in Wilson Barrett's favour. On 1 May Kingston wrote to Heath adding £107 to this since Millwaters had by then paid more on his rent account, and on 30 May he added a further sixty pounds for scenery in the cellar which appeared to have been overlooked when the arbitration was made.

Wilson Barrett seems, therefore, during his tenancy of the Grand Theatre to have added rather more to its value, both in stock scenery and general appointments, than the wear and tear which the building received during that period cost it.

The pantomime closed on 9 March and thereafter there were only six weeks remaining of Wilson Barrett's lease of the theatre. Of those six weeks one was taken up by comic opera - 'Erminie' given by the Leeds Amateur Operatic Society during the Easter week. As well as this revival there were two visits of returning comedies. The season closed on 27 April 1895.

The pantomime was followed on 18 March by a return visit of Weedon Grossmith's company in 'The New Boy' (which at this time had completed its third year at the Vaudeville Theatre, London). It was watched on the first night of its return to Leeds by a 'fairly good' house. The company had changed very little.¹

'The New Boy' was followed on 25 March by a return visit of W.S. Penley's company in 'Charley's Aunt' which was preceded by a new one-act play, 'The Journey's End'. Again, this piece was watched by a 'fairly good' house,

and the reviewer thought that the audience laughed as though they were seeing the play for the first time.²

There were but two changes in the company: Mr W.E. Richardson was a new Steven Spettigue, and Charles Langley was a new Colonel Chesney.

'Charley's Aunt' was followed on 2 April by J. Comyns Carr's company in 'The New Woman' by Sydney Grundy, from the Comedy Theatre, London.³ The bills suggested that the play was a satire or burlesque on the 'new woman' whom the reviewer regarded as a passing craze like Aestheticism.⁴ But as well as undoubted elements of satire (for example one of the new women was sick as a result of smoking cigarettes, and another, having written a book entitled 'Man, the Betrayer', married a sexagenarian, while they all displayed 'manly' traits), he also found a more solid basis in drama.

A third new woman was married to a man with whom she had little or no intellectual sympathy, and she collaborated with a younger man on the writing of a book which expounded new womanhood. In the course of this, not unexpectedly, they fell in love, but then the younger man suddenly married a charming but gauche country girl. The new woman was peaked. However, during the second act the young man, the novel delights of his marriage having dimmed with habit, began to suspect that he had married beneath him. He thereupon returned his affections in their

original direction. The country girl thus was able to overhear him and the new woman exchanging sympathies (from behind a curtain - she immediately swooned). Further, in the third act the new woman's husband began to make overtures to the forsaken country girl.

However, all was resolved with propriety in the final act.

Though the dialogue was not always in what the reviewer felt was the best of taste, for it 'bristled with smart things', it nonetheless sustained interest and was written in Grundy's 'best style'. The characters, also, were cleverly drawn, and ably presented.

'The New Woman' was followed on 8 April by W.J. Holloway's company in 'The Foundling' by W. Lestocq and E.M. Robson. It was first produced at Terry's Theatre, London, and was given all the week in Leeds, save Good Friday.

The reviewer thought that the play had neither story, wit, nor humour, and though it kept its audience amused on the Monday night, was not likely to be a great attraction, for its effects were of the 'broadest' kind, and achieved by 'commonplace' means.⁵ The company's talents deserved better. Like an increasing number of pieces, this one included a music hall song and dance.

'The Foundling' was followed on 15 April by the Leeds Amateur Operatic Society's production of 'Erminie', which in its turn was succeeded by the last production under Wilson Barrett's management, 'A Bunch of Violets', which

was given by H. Beerbohm Tree's company.⁶

The play was written by Sydney Grundy, and the reviewer commended it for its human interest and sentiment, though he confessed that it left a gloomy feeling in the spectator.⁷ It chiefly concerned two business men, one a representative of the 'conscience of the City' (he was so touched by his daughter's presenting him with a bunch of violets that he was prepared to barter his life and reputation for them), and a villainous speculator (which the reviewer identified as being of the Jabez Balfour type) who cloaked his dealings under a garment of piety and concern for widows and the like.

At the close of the final performance (which had been advertised as Wilson Barrett's farewell night, under the patronage of Colonel Belford, and officers of the Seventeenth Lancers, and at which Beerbohm Tree had intended to play the leading role in the play, but he had landed from America with insufficient time) E. Bulwer spoke to the audience. Reading from a letter from Wilson Barrett (who was, of course, in America at this time) he reiterated Wilson Barrett's regret that he must give up the Grand Theatre, and stressed that it was not by his desire that he did so. He did not intend at that time to go ahead with plans to build another theatre in Leeds (it will be remembered that such a suggestion was made both in 1876 when the Amphitheatre burnt down, and in 1888 when the directors of the Grand Theatre company tried not to renew his lease).⁸

A clock was then presented to Frank W. Barrett in his father's stead by Stafford Hall, and an illuminated address which had been signed by all the theatre's staff. The heads of department left the theatre with the end of Wilson Barrett's management, for none of them were employed by the new regime. Only Bulwer was to stay in Leeds — as Wilson Barrett's representative in England.

Notes

- 1 The company included Henry Besley, Gladys Ffolliott, Fred Shepherd, Mr W.F. Hawtreay, Laurence Caird, Mr E. Grisbrook Waller, Ida Liston, and Douglas Munro. 'Hal the Highwayman' was given as a curtain-raiser. It was written by H.M. Paull.
- 2 Yorkshire Post, 26 March 1895, p. 4.
- 3 The company included Mrs Charles Calvert, Laura Graves, Miss Radcliffe, May Blayney, Mr J.G. Grahame, and Mr A. Bromley Davenport.
- 4 Yorkshire Post, 2 April 1895, p. 5.
- 5 Yorkshire Post, 9 April 1895, p. 4.
- 6 The company included Mr C.W. Somerset, Stanislaus Calhaem, George Riddell, Mr Stuart Dawson, Muriel Wylford, Agnes Russel, and Maggie Hunt.
- 7 Yorkshire Post, 24 April 1895, p. 6.
- 8 An account of the speech was given in the Yorkshire Post, 29 April 1895, p. 6.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX AShareholders

A list of their holdings, names, and occupations

30 Fairbairn, Sir Andrew	Machine Maker
20 Denison, William Beckett	Banker
20 Fishwick, Henry	Gentleman
20 Kitson, James jnr	Ironmaster
20 Rhodes, John	Broker
14 Barr, Frederick Horatio	Solicitor
12 Corson, George	Architect
12 Fraser, John	Civil Engineer
10 Barrett, Wilson Henry	Theatrical Manager
10 Briggs, Riley	Flax Spinner
10 Buckton, Joshua	Engineer
10 Harding, Thomas Richard	Card, Comb & Pin Manufacturer
10 Harding, Thomas Walter	Card, Comb & Pin Manufacturer
10 Jackson, William Lawies	Tanner
10 Kitson, Frederick William	Ironmaster
10 Sagar-Musgrave, John	
Musgrave	Esquire
10 Tennant, Robert	M.P.
10 Wheelhouse, Claudius	
Gallen	Surgeon
6 Atkinson, John William	Solicitor
6 Croft, Samuel	Gentleman
6 Ryder, Charles	Brewer

6	Watson, James Robinson	Architect
6	Wood, James	Builder
5	Butler, John	Ironfounder
5	Firth, Arthur	Ironmaster
5	McGuire, Thomas	Jeweller
5	Illingworth, William jnr	Timber Merchant
5	Meggeson, George	Bank Manager
5	Nussey, Thomas	Woollen Manufacturer
5	Taylor, Herbert	Ironmaster
4	Bousefield, Charles Edward	Merchant
4	Fowler, Barnard	Engineer
4	Goodman, Benjamin	Esquire
4	Greenwood, Arthur	Machinist
4	Greenwood, George	Machinist
4	Heald, Alfred William	Woolstapler
4	Hives, George Augustus	Gentleman
4	Irwin, George	Merchant
4	Irwin, John Arthur	Merchant
4	Kitson, John Hawthorne	Locomotive Engine Manufacturer
4	Lawson, Arthur Tredgold	Machinist and Engineer
4	Lawson, John	Machinist and Engineer
4	Marshall, Arthur	Flax Spinner
4	Marshall, Henry Cowper	Flax Spinner
4	Marshall, Reginald Dykes	Esquire
4	Nelson, James Henry	Ironfounder
4	North, John	Solicitor
4	Price, William Nicholson	Surgeon

4 Routh, John	Accountant
4 Somers, Francis	Ironfounder
4 Taylor, Thomas Albert- Oakes	Ironmaster
3 Ford, John Rawlinson	Solicitor
3 Inchbold, Henry	Stationer
3 Mawer, Charles	Stone Carver
2 Beck, William James	Stationer
2 Bishop, Edwin	Merchant
2 Dawson, Charles & Nunneley, Thomas	Builder
2 Eddison, Robert William	Engineer
2 Franks, John	Plasterer
2 Hardwick, Winter	Auctioneer
2 Hargrave, James	Mason and Builder
2 Hawthorn, John Fletcher	Gentleman
2 Jackson, George William & Kidson ^W Sales	Painter
2 Lindley, Joe	Plumber
2 Lupton, John	Gentleman
2 Lupton, Joseph	Ironfounder
2 Mallorie, Thomas Peter	Wine Merchant
2 Marshall, Thomas	Solicitor
2 Meldrun, James	Contractor
2 Nelson, Charles Thomas	Ironfounder
2 Nich ^k ols, Richard jnr	Tanner
2 Nussey, Obadiah	Woollen Merchant
2 Parker, George Watson	Insurance Broker
2 Pawson, Albert Henry	Cloth Manufacturer

2 Pawson, John Edward	Merchant
2 Pepper, Joseph Ellershaw	Engineer
2 Pepper, Thomas	Carrier
2 Pepper, William	Carrier
2 Pollard, John Taylor	Painter
2 Schunk, Edward	Merchant
2 Smith, Charles Gray & Frank	Manufacturers
2 Snowden, Henry	Solicitor
2 Spark, Frederick Robert	Newspaper Proprietor
2 Taylor, Jasper	Tile Merchant
2 Teale, Thomas Pridgin	Surgeon
2 Turner, Richard Bickerton	Esquire
2 Webb, Joseph Paulter	Merchant
2 Wigrain, Reginald	Engineer
2 Wild, Edwin	Paper Hanging Manufacturer
2 Wolfenden, Joseph	Plumber
2 Wood, Richard	Tobacco Manufacturer
2 Wormald, John Batcoon	Slate Merchant
2 Worsnop, James	Slate Merchant
2 Wurtzburg, John Henry	Machinist
2 Young, George Jute	Auctioneer

APPENDIX BSummary of total cost of theatre and Assembly Rooms

For brick, stone, and wood — James Wood	£16,295	0s.	10d.
Beams, floors, stage iron work, gearing etc. — Dawson & Nunneley	£ 3,852	11s.	9d.
Plumbing, glazing, gas fitting etc. — Joe Lindley	£ 2,618	0s.	11d.
Plastering, concrete steps, Carton- Pierre work — John Franks	£ 2,293	14s.	4½d.
For digging etc. — James Wood	£ 2,010	3s.	9d.
Furnishing etc. — Pearson Bros	£ 1,797	8s.	1d.
Tiling etc. — James Taylor	£ 1,520	2s.	6d.
Expenditure on stage, scenery, gearing, cleaning etc. under J.R. Watson's inspection	£ 1,177	13s.	4d.
Heating etc. — James Nelson & Sons	£ 850	15s.	3d.
Slating etc. — Watson Worsnop & Co.	£ 666	2s.	3d.
Decoration — F. Jackson & Co.	£ 646		
Painting and decoration — J.T. Pollard	£ 594		
Locks, gas fittings etc. — C. Smith & Sons	£ 431	10s.	
For timber etc. for stage etc. — James Wood	£ 273	8s.	2½d.
Canvas — T.H. Good	£ 272	5s.	1d.
Furnishing Assembly Rooms — Curtis & Son	£ 256		

Ironfounders - Grayson & Hardistry	£	193	2s.	7d.
Hoists - Wm Denison	£	168	8s.	9d.
Stair alteration - James Wood	£	165	10s.	
Ropes - Edinbro' Roperie Co.	£	122	12s.	8d.
Gas - Leeds Corporation	£	117	1s.	10d.
Act Drop - Wm Telbin	£	101		
Foyer Furniture - Pearson Bros	£	82		
Gratings - J. Bedford	£	81	10s.	10d.
Limelight - David Purves	£	66		
Colours etc. - J.T. Pollard	£	65	5s.	7d.
Battens - I.L. Smith	£	30		
Stage work - Pearson Bros	£	14	8s.	5d.
Timber - Illingworth & Ingham & Co.	£	13	8s.	7d.
Tinware - Calvert & Briggs	£	11	8s.	6d.
Marble slabs - A. Welsh	£	11		
Brushes - C.T. Tiffany	£	9	2s.	8d.
Ironmongery - A. Armstrong	£	4		
Tiling - Beckwith & Franklin	£	3	10s.	
		<hr/>		
TOTAL	£	36,814	6s.	9d.

APPENDIX CThe capacity of the theatreFrom a paper

	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Extra</u>	<u>Has Held</u>
Pit	750 (850*)	250	1,485
Stalls	195 (132*)	30	249
Dress Circle	184	50	302
Upper Circle	300	100	526
Amphitheatre Circle	80	40	324
Gallery	550	250	727
28 Boxes	150	—	—
	<u>2,209</u>	<u>720</u>	<u>3,613</u>

*Corrected by giving back two rows of pit stalls to the pit.

From the Inventory

	<u>Seats</u>
Pit: 36 long bench seats	
2 3ft. 6ins. benches	
Pit Stalls: 64 double tip-ups	
4 singles	132
Dress Circle: 175 with numbers (folding)	
8 extra	183
Upper Circle: 18 benches	
Amphitheatre Circle: 6 benches	
Gallery: 12 benches without backs	
10 benches with backs	
28 Boxes: 98 seats (stuffed)	
48 seats (cane)	146

The paper from which the figures at the top of the preceding page are taken is attached to a box plan that shows two extra rows of pit stalls (56 extra seats). If we take away those 56 extra seats, and give back two rows to the pit, this would make the estimates from the paper and from the Inventory very similar for the pit stalls, the dress circle, and the boxes. It is clear from the Inventory that those three were the only parts of the house that had countable individual seats. All the other parts had benches. A plan drawn by the City Engineer in 1909 shows 759ft. 11ins. of bench seating in the pit. If we allow roughly one foot per person this would accord with the estimate at the top of page 816. It seems reasonable to accept the estimate of seating for 2,209 people, and consequently also 720 people standing. This would mean that the theatre when fairly tightly packed held 2,929 altogether. The 1909 plan shows only thirty-two long benches (4 benches, or 2 rows, less than in the Inventory) but two extra rows of pit stalls. In fact, increasing numbers of rows were converted from pit benches to stalls in subsequent years. If we readjust the figures on the paper in the light of the information in the Inventory, giving back the two extra rows of pit stalls to the pit where they would have accommodated roughly one hundred pittites, we can make the following estimate of the capacity of the different parts of the house. The second column shows those figures as a percentage of the total house, the third column the cost

of admission to those parts of the house, and the fourth the percentage of income that each part of the house could provide.

	<u>Capacity</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Admission</u>	<u>% of total</u>
Pit	850	38%	1s.	26%
Pit stalls	132	6%	2s. 6d.	10%
Dress circle	183	8%	3s.	17%
Upper circle	300	13%	2s.	19%
Amphitheatre circle	80	$\frac{1}{2}$ %	1s. 6d.	4%
Gallery	550	25%	6d.	9%
28 Boxes	146	$6\frac{1}{2}$ %	1gn. (ave.)	19%

The prices of the boxes were given on the programmes as 2gns., $1\frac{1}{2}$ gns., 1gn., and $\frac{1}{2}$ gn. I have assumed that the proscenium boxes would command the highest prices, and that the three tiers would therefore average out at $1\frac{1}{2}$ gns. for the dress circle, 1gn. for the upper circle, and $\frac{1}{2}$ gn. for the amphitheatre circle (which cannot have been very popular as it was removed in 1895).

These figures do not include standing room.

From the table above we can also see that the pit and the gallery constituted a lesser proportion of the total revenue than they did of the total numbers when the house was full. Together they were sixty-three per cent of the audience, but provided only thirty-five per cent of the revenue. The other thirty-seven per cent of the audience provided sixty-five per cent of the revenue, and

each of these parts of the house provided a greater percentage of the total revenue than it was of the total audience.

Clearly, it might be economically more dangerous to offend the middle and upper class thirty-seven per cent than the pit and the gallery, despite the fact that the latter provided the greater part of the audience.

APPENDIX D

Summary of profits and expenses from 18 November 1878 to 20 November 1886

<u>Year ending</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Profit</u>	<u>Expenses allowed to Wilson Barrett</u>
15 November 1879	£ 22,549 5s. 6d.	£ 22,109 14s. 0d.	£ 439 11s. 6d.	£ 310
13 November 1880	£ 25,330 15s. 1½d.	£ 21,881 0s. 0½d.	£ 3,449 15s. 1d.	£ 520
19 November 1881	£ 28,905 10s. 0d.	£ 27,127 19s. 2½d.	£ 1,777 10s. 9½d.	£ 520
18 November 1882	£ 28,913 10s. 8½d.	£ 26,610 6s. 8d.	£ 2,303 4s. 0½d.	£ 520
17 November 1883	£ 27,999 17s. 9½d.	£ 27,186 0s. 1½d.	£ 813 17s. 8d.	£ 520
15 November 1884	£ 29,360 12s. 6d.	£ 26,924 11s. 4¾d.	£ 2,433 1s. 1½d.	£ 520
14 November 1885	£ 27,559 19s. 7d.	£ 26,797 8s. 9½d.	£ 726 10s. 9½d.	£ 520
20 November 1886	£ 27,612 4s. 6d.	£ 27,010 3s. 3d.	£ 602 1s. 3d.	£ 530
TOTAL	£218,231 15s. 8d.	£205,650 3s. 5d.	£12,581 12s. 3d.	£3,960

Net profit from 1878 to 1886: £16,541 12s. 3d.

Average profit per annum: £2,067

Summary for the half year ending

14 May 1887 £ 14,282 16s. 0d. £ 12,669 11s. 6d. £ 1,612 14s. 6d. £ 250

APPENDIX E

Attendances and takings during Wilson Barrett's visit from 6 to 11 September 1886

<u>Day</u>	<u>Dress Circle</u>	<u>Stalls</u>	<u>Upper Circle</u>	<u>Amph. Circle</u>	<u>Pit</u>	<u>Gallery</u>	<u>Nightly Total</u>	<u>Private Boxes</u>	<u>Total takings</u>
Monday	96	142	99	70	617	217	1,241	0	£ 150 6s. 0d.
Tuesday	141	170	121	76	621	191	1,320	5	£ 182 3s. 0d.
Wednesday	125	151	77	76	668	177	1,274	4	£ 164 6s. 6d.
Thursday	146	167	146	82	719	158	1,418	2	£ 187 15s. 6d.
Friday	187	201	242	103	970	401	2,104	11	£ 281 1s. 6d.
Saturday	67	126	97	101	719	235	1,345	1	£ 152 17s. 0d.
Week's Total	762	957	782	508	4,314	1,379	8,702		£1,118 9s. 6d.
Nightly Capacity	240	200	400	200	1,300	600	2,940		
Weekly Capacity	1,440	1,200	2,400	1,200	7,800	3,600	17,640		

APPENDIX FList of Stock SceneryA. Set Scenes composed of cloths, borders, wings, etc.1 Old Street

Artist: John Galt

Ten eighteen foot framed wings with profile edges,
three of these with extra top pieces

One cut-cloth (forty-six feet by thirty feet), with
arch opening

Artist: Lester Sutcliffe

One small or distant backing (twenty-four feet by
twenty-four feet)

Two side cloths (twenty-four feet by thirty feet)

2 Garden

Artist: John Galt

One cloth (forty-six feet by thirty feet) depicting
garden backing

Two framed balustrade pieces (eight feet long by
six feet high), with vases on top

Two similar pieces (sixteen feet long by six feet high),
and two more pieces (sixteen feet long by nine feet
six inches high)

One arbour piece

Two large, and two small statues

3 Rampart

Artist: Lester Sutcliffe

One moonlight cloth ('Hamlet') (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

Two framed wall pieces (sixteen feet long), one with tower piece

4 Snow Wood ('The Old Love and the New')

Artist: Lester Sutcliffe

One backing landscape (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

Several cut-cloths (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

5 Forest

Artist: John Galt

One backing cloth (forty-six feet by thirty feet), and a smaller cloth ('As You Like It')

Four cut-cloths (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

Two borders (forty-six feet wide)

One high, and one low ground row (both thirty-six feet long, and in three pieces)

6 Cave Scene

Artist: Lester Sutcliffe

One backing cloth ('Muckcrosshead') (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

One cut-cloth of a cave (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

Two cave borders (forty-six feet wide)

7 Rocks

Artist: Lester Sutcliffe assisted by C. Brew

One backing cloth with water and rocks (forty-four feet by thirty feet)

One framed raking piece (eighteen feet by seven feet)

Eight framed wings (eighteen feet high)

Two set pieces (six feet square)

One set piece (four feet by three feet)

Two set pieces (three feet square)

One set piece (eight feet by five feet)

One set piece (five feet by four feet)

One set piece (seven feet by three feet)

One set piece (four feet square)

Two set pieces (fourteen feet square)

One raking piece (eight feet by three feet six inches)

One raking piece (five feet square)

8 Picture Scene ('The School for Scandal')

Artist: C. Fox

One cut-cloth of an arch (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

One backing cloth (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

Four eighteen foot framed and profiled wings

Pictures, loose on framed backs

9 Baronial Hall Scene

Artist: Stafford Hall

One backing cloth (thirty-six feet wide and twenty-four feet high)

One masking cloth (thirty-three feet wide and twenty-four feet high)

Three borders (forty-six feet wide and twelve feet deep)

Two borders (forty-six feet wide and fifteen feet deep)

Four wings (six feet wide and eighteen feet high)

One wing (seven feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Two wings (seven feet six inches wide and eighteen feet high)

Five wings (nine feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Three wings (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Two side pieces (five feet wide and twelve feet high)

Two side pieces (two feet six inches wide and nine feet high)

One side piece (two feet six inches wide and eighteen feet high)

One side piece (three feet six inches wide and eighteen feet high)

One centre piece (thirteen feet wide and twelve feet high)

Two sides to the centre piece (ten feet six inches wide and six feet high)

One top piece (six feet wide and two feet high)

Four top pieces (six feet square)

Two top pieces (seven feet six inches wide and six feet high)

One top piece (nine feet wide and six feet high)

10 Chapel

Artists: Stafford Hall and Lester Sutcliffe

Three cut-cloths of stone arches (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

One backing cloth of the apse (forty-six feet by thirty feet)

11 Palace Interior

Artist: Stafford Hall

One cloth showing three arches (forty-four feet by thirty feet)

One front 'octagon' cloth (forty-two feet by thirty feet)

One cut-cloth (thirty-six feet by twenty-four feet)

One backing cloth, with cut ripple (twenty-eight feet by eighteen feet)

Three 'cusp' cloths (forty-four feet, forty-five feet, and forty-six feet by thirty feet)

Two side masking-in cloths (eighteen feet by thirty feet)

One drapery border at front proscenium

Two drapery borders to mask in the gas battens

Three ceiling borders to mask in tops of cloths

One stage cloth (forty feet by thirty feet)

One step cloth (twenty feet by nine feet)

B. Box or Chamber Sets assembled from flattage

1 Light French Chamber

Artist: Stafford Hall

One framed piece with large arch opening (fifteen feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Two framed door pieces with doors (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Two framed window pieces with opening French window sashes (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Two framed plain pieces (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

One plain filling-in panel to one of window openings

2 Light Pink Chamber

Artist: C. Fox

Two framed door pieces with doors (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Three framed side pieces with openings for windows (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high), and two pairs of framed folding doors to fit into the openings

Three framed folding bay windows to set behind the above pieces

Two framed plain pieces (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

One framed centre piece with folding doors (ten feet wide by eighteen feet high)

3 Library Interior with oak and gilt leather panels

Artist: Stafford Hall

Seven framed pieces (each ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

One framed piece (seven feet wide and eighteen feet high) and two flaps (eighteen inches wide and eighteen feet high)

One framed fire-place piece with hinged flaps

One framed folding window piece

Eight framed filling-in panels, four with doors, three with books, and one with a cabinet

4 'Black and Gold with Frieze of Figures'

Artist: Stafford Hall

One plain framed piece (ten feet wide and eighteen feet high)

Two framed pieces (six feet wide and eighteen feet high)

One framed centre piece, with framed doors (ten feet wide by eighteen feet high)

One fireplace piece (ten feet wide by eighteen feet high)

C. Borders

Four kitchen borders

Four straight chamber borders

Five arched sky borders

Two straight sky borders

D. Cloths

1 Old Street (front cloth) C. Fox

2 Garden (front cloth) C. Fox

3 Oriental Street (with cut opening and backing)	John Galt
4 Oriental Garden	John Galt
5 Conservatory (small backing cloth)	L. Sutcliffe
6 Old Ship Scene with Tower (with cut opening)	L. Sutcliffe
7 Wood (front cloth)	John Galt
8 Landscape (front cloth)	John Galt
9 Landscape (front cloth)	L. Sutcliffe
10 Snow Landscape, with a Blasted Heath on the back	L. Sutcliffe
11 Lake	L. Sutcliffe
12 Coast (' <u>Les Cloches de Corneville</u> ')	L. Sutcliffe
13 Horizon	L. Sutcliffe
14 Tapestry Chamber	L. Sutcliffe

E. Sundries

1 Built out house	
Two framed pieces (ten feet by eighteen feet) with two loose framed filling-in panels	L. Sutcliffe
2 Two chamber flats with doors	L. Sutcliffe
3 Old Street - a pair of flats	C. Fox
4 'Adam's House' - a pair of flats	C. Fox
5 Cottage exterior - a pair of flats	L. Sutcliffe
6 Framed Church porch piece (ten feet by eighteen feet)	S. Hall

- 7 Ruin piece (eleven feet wide and
sixteen feet high) L. Sutcliffe
- 8 Framed wall pieces - two pairs of flats
fourteen feet wide, each pair with edge
pieces two feet wide L. Sutcliffe
- 9 Two framed wall pieces, each eighteen
feet long Crawford
- 10 Framed fountain piece John Galt
- 11 'Herne's Oak' - framed piece with foot-
hold cleats at back L. Sutcliffe

For painting on

- Nine cloths (forty-six feet by thirty feet)
- Four small cloths (twenty-two feet by twenty feet)
- Six framed wings, one with practical door and window,
and one with bracket and hinged roof

F. Additional Scenery provided in 1881 for painting on
and for alterations

Flats eighteen feet high

- Eight flats three feet wide
- Eight flats four feet wide
- Eight flats five feet wide
- Eight flats six feet wide
- Twelve flats seven feet wide
- Eight flats eight feet wide

Twelve flats ten feet wide

Twelve flats twelve feet wide

Ten flats fourteen feet wide

Four flats sixteen feet wide

Miscellaneous flats

Four flats six feet square

Two flats seven feet six inches by six feet

One flat nine feet by six feet

Cloths

Four cloths forty-six feet by thirty feet

F. Curtain, Act Drop etc.

1 Working cloth curtains to proscenium opening with cloth border at top of arch, working lines, guide rods, etc.

Each curtain was forty feet high and twenty-six feet wide, and weighed ten stones.

2 Telbin's act drop, with roller, batten, working, and dead lines

3 Telbin's pair of hinged proscenium wings

4 Telbin's framed arch to proscenium wings

5 Telbin's drapery border with working and dead lines