

**Comedy Opera Company Ltd.,**  
**(Under the management of Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte)**  
**Touring *Trial by Jury* and *The Sorcerer***

**9th – 30th March 1878: Liverpool**

PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS  
PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.

The comic opera of "The Sorcerer" (the libretto of which has been written by Mr. W. S. Gilbert and the music by Mr. Arthur Sullivan), was produced for the first time in the provinces at the Prince of Wales Theatre last evening. The play has had a magnificent run of months at the Opera Comique in London, and bids fair to rival the wonderful success which has attended the representation of "Our Boys" at the Strand Theatre. So intensely has it secured metropolitan favour, that a duplicate company has been formed for its representation in the provinces; and those who have had the opportunity of comparison are bound to admit that the present localised company is but little inferior to that of the great centre.

The public were able, from the representation of "Trial by Jury," to form some estimate of the ability of Mr. Sullivan to utilise an extravaganza for musical purposes, and it scarcely needed the prestige which "The Sorcerer" has gained to command an anticipation which was certainly not disappointed. Good as "Trial by Jury" is, and having at its introduction all the merit of freshness in the English theatrical world, it must give way to "The Sorcerer" in originality of design and an amount of classical working-up, musically speaking, that will ensure more than an ephemeral fame.

There is, and it is not saying much, about the same amount of plot which usually belongs to opera. The design on the part of the author has been to create a series of ludicrous incidents based upon a most extravagant idea – the engagement of "Mr. Wells," of the firm of J. W. Wells and Co., "Sorcerers," St. Mary Axe, to disseminate at a rustic party in the village of Ploverleigh his widely advertised "Love Philtre," which has the potent effect of causing young men and maidens, old and young, to become enamoured of the first person he or she meets. An extraordinary state of things is thereby created. The old become coupled with the young, and the young with the old. The "Sorcerer" (Mr. J. H. Ryley) himself becomes entangled against his will, and cannot escape the too-endearing attentions of Lady Sangazure (Miss Rosina Brandram). Her ladyship's daughter Aline (Madame Pauline Rita), who has previously been betrothed to Alexis (Mr. George Bentham), the son of Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, is smitten by the robust but somewhat elderly vicar of Ploverleigh (Mr. Furneaux Cook), and "Mr. Wells" finds that his "philtre" has had an effect far in advance of the wildest-conceived intention on his part, and has no antidote to remedy the intricacy of matters excepting that he or the young guardsman must die. The guardsman is naturally reluctant to accept the fatal situation, and "Mr. Wells," to relieve himself of the incubus of an elderly female, albeit a baronet's widow, proffers his own extinction, and as he descends midst crimson fire, original lovers become united and all ends gaily and comfortably.

The music is all that might be expected from Mr. Sullivan. Every bar has a delightful piquancy, and occasionally from out of a light fantastic air or chorus blooms a passage almost Mendelssohnian in character, or possessing the refinement of Verdi. The concerted portions (and particularly the chorus which closes the first act) are excellently scored, and in many instances are models of harmony and contrapuntal work.

Speaking of the impersonation of the several characters, it would be not only invidious but absolutely impossible to discriminate among all that was good. The "Aline" of Madame Rita was perhaps a trifle too staid in character, but her airs were almost faultlessly sung, and with the true ring of a good stage vocalist. The "Lady Sangazure" of Miss Brandram was rendered with much carefulness, and with the dignity which should belong to one of the upper classes. The duet between herself and "Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre" (Mr. Arthur Rousby) was one of the most enjoyable incidents of the night, and fully merited the encore it received. Mr. Rousby's delineation of the character was a perfect study and a splendid example of the gallantry of the olden times. Miss Harriet Coveney as "Mrs. Partlet" was as becoming and prude (excepting in one instance, which "brought down the house") as should be "a clean, tidy widow" having a very pretty daughter, "Constance," a pupil teacher (Miss Douglas Gordon), who plays her part with much grace and ease. The "make-up" of Mr. Cook as "Dr. Daly," the vicar, was so perfect in every detail that he might have been imported for the occasion from the ruridecanal conference sitting at the time at St. George's Hall. But his garments and the wear of them were not his only credentials. He possesses a good voice and knows how to use it, and was particularly effective in a lament that the marriageable portion of his flock were all engaged to "Mr. So-and-so." What we have said of Mr. Cook is equally true of Mr. Cummings as the notary: for a legal and musty appearance he could only be equalled by a real live barrister in Lincoln's Inn. Mr. Bentham's fine figure did him good service in the character of "Alexis," the guardsman; but to Mr. J. H. Ryley as "Mr. John Willington Wills" (*sic*) is due the credit of promoting the farcical attraction of the play. As the purveyor of every kind of demoniacal contrivance, of blessings and curses, ready at a moment's notice with a reduction in price if a quantity be taken, as a supplier of Aladdin's lamps, and, above all, of the famous love "philtre," his performance was unique; and a patter song was received with shouts of delight.

It only remains to be said that most of the airs are exceedingly catching, that the chorus was exceptionally good, and that the orchestra, which was considerably augmented, rendered its portion of the music with much care and precision (an instance or two excepted) under the able baton of Mr. Hamilton Clarke; and that the general mounting of the piece did great credit to the management, the scenery (painted by Mr. C. D. Leigh) considerably tending to the success of the piece. We venture to anticipate for this new Gilbert-Sullivan operetta a very successful run during the three weeks' engagement of the clever company. A morning performance of "The Sorcerer" will be given on Saturday. [*Liverpool Mercury* etc. (Liverpool, England), Tuesday, March 12, 1878; Issue 9409.]

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. – Lessee and Manager, Mr. Frank Emery. – The event of the week was the first performance in Liverpool at the "little house" of the Gilbert-Sullivan comic opera *The Sorcerer*, last Monday evening, and the unmistakable verdict of a crowded house then showed that it was quite in unison with that given by a Metropolitan audience, about the middle of November last. A first-class company, strong chorus, and capable band were brought to give the work its first representation here; and, as usual, Mr. Emery left not a stone unturned to give it an effective and imposing place on the stage. The mounting was admirable, and the scenery – supplied by Mr. C. D. Leigh, the resident artist – was both charming and appropriate. Respecting the character and quality of the sparkling and original music, and the crisp and catching libretto, nothing need now be said, as both these points have been noticed at length in these columns. The happy combination of musicianly tact and talent displayed in the vocal and orchestral scoring is far in advance of

anything which Mr. Sullivan has yet given to the stage, reminding one of Auber in his happiest moods; and the text of Mr. W. S. Gilbert is as funny and characteristic as anything which he has ever written in the same line. "The London Opera Company (Limited)," under the able management of Mr. D'Oyly Carte, contains some capable artists, and the result was generally satisfactory. Taking the cast as per programme, we find Miss R. Brandram set down for Lady Sangazure, and in the impersonation she showed the possession of a good voice and excellent acting style. The duet in which her ladyship takes part with Sir Marmaduke, "Welcome Joy" – one of the choicest tit-bits in the opera – was deservedly encored. Madame Pauline Rita represented her daughter, Aline, with considerable spirit, but with the least touch of stiffness, and she rendered the music of the part with the command of a thorough artist. Miss Douglas Gordon played Constance with easy grace and refinement, and Miss Harriet Coveney was as effective and discriminating as ever in the role of Mrs. Partlet, the peculiar per-opener. Mr. Arthur Rousbey made good capital out of the part of Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre; and Mr. G. Bentham, in his original character of Alexis, displayed vocal and histrionic talents of a high order. One of the two "palpable hits" of the cast was the Doctor Daly of Mr. Furneaux Cook, whose make-up, deportment, and characteristic vocalisation could hardly have been improved upon. His clerical lament was rendered with remarkably telling effect. Mr. R. Cummings's Counsel was a thoroughly genuine realisation of the part. The other "hit" of the opera was the Mr. Wells of Mr. J. H. Ryley, unique in its every detail, and embodied with an amount of spirit which was perfectly surprising. The patter song of the first act was vociferously redemanded, and his share in the comical incantation music. *À la Der Freischutz*, was another successful and artistic effort. The chorus did their share of the work with rare ability, and the strong orchestra, under the capable guidance of Mr. Hamilton Clarke, also furnished the instrumental portion of the opera with much credit. A morning performance of the opera will be given to-day. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, March 17, 1878; Issue 2060.]

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. – Lessee and Manager, Mr. Frank Emery; Acting-Manager, Mr. G. Redmond. – *The Sorcerer* has here exercised the potent drawing influence which was anticipated, and overflowing audiences testify how accurately Mr. Emery has again gauged the particular tastes of his many patrons. In place of the somewhat flimsy operetta *Breaking the Spell*, which did duty as the playing-in portion of the programme until Wednesday evening, the ever-welcome and most successful dramatic cantata *Trial by Jury* was promised on Thursday evening as the concluding feature of the performance. The very strong cast comprised Mr. J. H. Ryley, the Learned Judge; Mr. Arthur Rousbey, Counsel for the Plaintiff; Mr. Walter Wadmore, the Defendant; Mr. Mudie, Foreman of the Jury; Mr. R. Cummings, Usher; and Miss Douglas Gordon, the Plaintiff. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, March 24, 1878; Issue 2061.]

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. – Lessee and Manager, Mr. Frank Emery. – The strong bill at this Theatre during the week, which comprised *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury*, again proved sufficient to crowd the Theatre to overflowing each evening, and to meet the great demand for places a morning performance had to be given on Wednesday in addition to that on Saturday. The revival of *The Trial* has proved a great hit, and no better representation of the celebrated cantata has ever been given in Liverpool. Mr. J. H. Ryley was inimitable as the Judge, fairly revelling in the fun of the part, and the other characters were performed with much success by the members

of the company named last week. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, March 31, 1878; Issue 2062.]

#### **1st – 6th April 1878: Bradford.**

PRINCE'S THEATRE. – Lessee, Mr. W. Morgan. – The production of *The Sorcerer* here may be chronicled as one of the musical successes of the season, the joint work of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan having been received with unmistakeable demonstrations of approval and delight. Nothing could exceed the admirable rendering of the pretty ballads with which the opera abounds, and the choruses full of melody and brightness are well interpreted. Miss D. Gordon plays Aline, rendering her share of the music with exquisite skill. Miss R. Brandram is successful as Lady Sangazure. As Mrs. Partlet, Miss H. Coveney is quaint and diverting; and Miss T. Cummings plays Constance well. The Alexis is Mr. G. Bentham, who meets the success his original impersonation so richly merits. Mr. J. H. Ryley makes a humorous J. W. Wells, creating roars of laughter in the burlesque incantation scene. As Sir Marmaduke Mr. A. Rousbey scored a complete success. Mr. F. Cook's Vicar is perfect. Indeed, there is not a part that is not well filled and the principal performers are repeatedly called before the curtain. *Breaking the Spell* is the operetta preceding *The Sorcerer*, which is to be repeated each evening during the company's stay. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, April 7, 1878; Issue 2063.]

#### **8th – 20th April 1878: Glasgow**

THEATRE ROYAL.— Lessees, Messrs Glover and Francis.—The London comic opera company commenced a eighteen nights' engagement here on Monday evening, when *The Sorcerer* was performed for the first time in this city, and met with the unqualified approval of a large audience. Of the artists engaged in interpreting the work we can speak in terms of praise. They were all well suited to their respective parts, and the result was highly satisfactory. Miss Douglas Gordon, who possesses a sweet, though not powerful, voice, appeared to advantage as Aline. Lady Sangazure was represented with great acceptance by Miss Rosina Brandram; and Miss Harriet Coveney drew a highly characteristic portrait of the "tidy widdy" Mrs Partlet, a pew opener. Miss Theresa Cummings displayed considerable vocal ability and acted well as the modest pupil teacher Constance. The character of Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre was cleverly rendered by Mr Arthur Rousbey, who shared with Miss Brandram the honour of an encore for the charming duet "Welcome Joy" and minuet which follows it, and Mr George Bentham was vocally successful as Alexis. Mr. W. H. Ryley, whose style is quite refreshing, made a great hit as J. W. Wells (the family sorcerer), and secured an enthusiastic encore for the patter song in the first act. His burlesque incantation, too, was received with unmistakable signs of delight. The Doctor Daly of Mr. Furneaux Cooke was vocally and histrionically a most artistic performance, his rendering of "Time Was" being warmly applauded. Mr. Cummings was excellent as the Counsel. The choruses were exceptionally well rendered, and the augmented orchestra, under the *baton* of Mr. H. Clarke, got through their work with much credit. The opera was mounted with great care and taste, the beautiful scenery being from the brush of our clever young townsman Mr. R. S. Smythe. *Breaking the Spell* preceded, the characters being sustained by Messrs. F. Cooke, W. Esmond, and Miss Clara Jecks, a promising young actress and vocalist. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, April 14, 1878; Issue 2064.]

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mr. Wm. Glover. – *The Sorcerer* has proved a great attraction at this house, and is received nightly with every manifestation of delight. *Trial by Jury* is the concluding item this week, and finds as much favour as when first produced in this city some eighteen months ago. Mr. J. H. Ryley is irresistible as the Judge, and Mr. Cummings makes the most of the Usher. The other parts are fairly sustained. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, April 21, 1878; Issue 2065.]

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mr. Wm. Glover; Acting-Manager, Mr. E. L. Knapp. – The highly successful engagement of the London Comic Opera Company terminated this week. *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury* still form the programme, and a more enjoyable evening's entertainment could scarcely be desired. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, April 28, 1878; Issue 2066.]

### **29th April – 4th May 1878: Aberdeen**

"THE SORCERER" AND "TRIAL BY JURY. – Yesterday evening the entertainment at Her Majesty's Opera House was of a different nature to what has recently prevailed on the boards, the programme consisting of Sullivan's very successful comic opera, "The Sorcerer" and the well known "Trial by Jury," "The Sorcerer" is a very bright little piece and quite deserves the success it has attained. The libretto written by Gilbert is airy and sparkling, the plot turning upon the effects of a love philtre, which, being administered to a whole village, has the effect of making all the inhabitants pair off in the most incongruous couples. In texture it is as slight as the plots of comic opera usually are, but it gives scope for a great deal of amusing incidents. The music is also very pleasing, and the present company is strong enough to render it full justice, there being besides the principals a chorus of about thirty voices and a considerably enlarged orchestra. The house, which was a very fair one, received the opera enthusiastically, and was kept in constant roars of laughter. The chief honours fell to Mr. J. H. Ryley, as Mr Wellington Wells, the family sorcerer, whose art produces the peculiar and somewhat undesirable effect already alluded to. In addition to Mr. Ryley's singing, his acting and by-play were exceedingly good all through. Miss Douglas Gordon was a captivating Aline, and sang very well. Mr. Bentham, the tenor, who had the part of Alexis, was suffering from indisposition, and his solos had to be omitted, which was the only drawback about the whole thing. Miss Harriet Coveney, as Mrs. Partlet, and Miss Rosina Brandram, as Lady Sangazure, were also particularly good, and the other solo singers, notably Mr. Furneaux Cook as Dr. Daly, sang well, and gave admirable support by acting. The costumes and accessories were of the most complete order, and every detail gave evidence of the most careful management. The chorus was very effective, and of just the proper strength. Of "Trial by Jury" we need not speak at length; suffice it to say that it was performed so as to be productive of the highest amusement. On the whole, we can confidently recommend this week's performances at Her Majesty's Opera House to the attention of Aberdeen playgoers as a special treat, and trust they will support the present company well enough to enable us to hope for a more frequent supply of this very enjoyable form of dramatic and musical entertainment. [*Aberdeen Journal* (Aberdeen, Scotland), Tuesday, April 30, 1878; Issue 7237.]

### **6th – 18th May: Edinburgh**

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mr. J. B. Howard. – Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *The Sorcerer*, supported by the company under the direction

of Mr. D'Oyly Carte, was presented here on Monday evening, before a crowded and enthusiastic audience. The reception accorded to the work was most hearty, and the whole entertainment passed off with brilliant success. The acting was capital in every instance, while from a musical point of view the performance was all that could be desired. A great hit was made by Mr. J. H. Ryley, who as J. W. Wells acted with commendable spirit and energy, giving the popular patter song with a perfectly Mathewsian volubility. Another admirable performance was the Sir Marmaduke of Mr. Arthur Rousbey, which for genuine humour and artistic finish could not be excelled; while in the several vocal numbers of the character his splendid voice was heard to advantage. Mr. Furneaux Cook was well received as the Vicar, his singing being good; and Mr. Bentham played Alexis very nicely, but without the songs. Miss Douglas Gordon, who has talent both as an actress and vocalist, made a charming Aline; and Miss Rose Cummings (*sic*) was highly effective as Constance, Misses H. Coveney and R. Brandram completing the cast. The mounting of the opera was picturesque and effective. The performances opened with Offenbach's *Breaking the Spell*, in which Mr. Wilfred Esmond, a clever actor and skilful vocalist, appeared as Peter, supported by Mr. Cook as Matthew, and Miss Clara Jecks as Jenny. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, May 12, 1878; Issue 2068.]

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mr. J. B. Howard. – Since our last *The Sorcerer* has drawn large and enthusiastic audiences, the merits of the opera, the charm of the music, and the clever acting of the company finding unanimous favour. This week *Trial by Jury* has been added to the programme, the capital performance on Monday evening bring received throughout with laughter and applause. Mr. Ryley, now a great favourite here, was truly humorous as the Judge. Mr. Rousbey made an excellent Counsel; and Mr. Wilfred Esmond acted and sang with characteristic spirit as the Defendant. Miss Douglas Gordon appeared as the Plaintiff with complete success, playing delightfully and with a hearty appreciation of the part. The rest of the cast were satisfactory. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, May 19, 1878; Issue 2069.]

### **20th – 25th May 1878: Nottingham**

THEATRE ROYAL. – Manager, Mr. Thomas W. Charles. – The saying "from grave to gay" never received a more apt illustration than on Monday last, when the somewhat sombre play *It's Never Too Late to Mend* was replaced by Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's sparkling comic opera *The Sorcerer*. Put upon the stage with a picturesque and careful mounting, well sung and acted, it is not to be wondered at that its success was complete, and that laughter and applause were pretty evenly dealt out during the whole of the evening. J. Wellington Wells, by Mr. J. H. Ryley, was a sublimely ridiculous impersonation; its comicality had a strong effect on the risible muscles of the spectators. Mr. Furneaux Cook's rich voice was heard to great advantage in the part of the Vicar. Mr. Arthur Rousbey's Sir Marmaduke was a performance replete with fun, and the Alexis of Mr. George Bentham left nothing to be desired. The ladies, Mesdames Douglas Gordon, Rosina Brandram, Theresa Cummings, and Harriet Coveney, were all highly effective in their various characters. A capital representation of *Trial by Jury* has concluded the programme each evening. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, May 26, 1878; Issue 2070.]

**27th May – 8th June 1878: Manchester**  
PRINCE'S THEATRE.

Coincidentally with the withdrawal from the boards of the Opera Comique to make room for "H.M.S. Pinafore" – another work by the same authors – "The Sorcerer" is produced at the Prince's Theatre This delightful comic opera is the joint production of Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan, the one contributing the whimsical plot and libretto and the other the sparkling music, and never was the labour of playwright and composer wedded with more successful result. The opera is based upon an ingenious fancy worked out in the form of a story by Mr. Gilbert in a Christmas number eighteen months ago, wherein the central incident was the employment of the elixir of love, and the comedy was supplied by the results that followed. Here the incident is the same, under altered conditions; and, simple as the idea may appear, it is the source from which Mr. Gilbert's prolific imagination obtains an infinite variety of most grotesque situations and an unceasing flow of drollery. Without music the play would be found immensely entertaining; but when its attractions are heightened by the Lydian airs and jocund melodies of Mr. Sullivan it is made additionally delightful. The sweets, too, are none the less sweet because of the faint sub-acid flavour which one seems to perceive in the caricature now and again indulged in at the expense of the classical opera. We do not know whether the fun which is made of the love philtre is suggested by a desire to travesty Donizetti's "L'Elisir d'Amore;" but we cannot fail to recognise in many passages a burlesque of the operatic style and orthodox staginess generally. The cast was an exceedingly good one, and all the drolleries and extravagances of the opera were brought out with excellent effect. Miss Douglas Gordon was Aline; Mr. George Bentham, Alexis; Mr. J. H. Ryley, vivacious and voluble in the role of the Sorcerer; Mr. Arthur Rousbey, Sir Marmaduke; and Miss R. Brandram Lady Sangazure; while Dr. Daly found an efficient representative, in acting as in vocal talent, in Mr. Furneaux Cook, and the parts of Mrs. Partlet and her daughter were sustained by Miss Coveney and Miss Theresa Cummings respectively. We must also add that the sprightly parody of the forms of law employed in hearing cases of breach of promise, which Mr. Gilbert ironically entitles "Trial by Jury," has lost none of its charms by frequent repetition, and that it is being played by a strong company, who bring out, to the infinite amusement of the audience, the grotesque business of the piece and the sparkling music of Mr. Sullivan with equal success. [*Manchester Times* (Manchester, England), Saturday, June 1, 1878; Issue 1068.]

PRINCE'S THEATRE. – Manager Mr. Alfred Thompson. – Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's highly successful comic opera *The Sorcerer* has at length found its way to Manchester, and on Monday evening it attracted a crowded house to this Theatre. It is hard to say which to admire most, the music or the libretto. Both are very captivating, the former being in Mr. Sullivan's happiest vein, and the latter being one of the sprightliest books that Mr. Gilbert has ever turned out. The work is presented to the Manchester public with nearly every advantage in its favour. The principal parts are strongly supported, and the chorus is particularly strong; whilst the increased orchestra is under the experienced baton of Mr. Hamilton Clarke, musical director of *The Sorcerer* company. The tuneful music and sparkling absurdities of the piece were fully appreciated on Monday evening, and the visit of *The Sorcerer* is likely to be an exceedingly profitable one. The company includes Miss Douglas Gordon as Alicia (sic), Miss R. Brandram as Lady Sangazure, Mr. J. H. Ryley as the Sorcerer, Mr. George Bentham as Alexis, Mr. Arthur Rousbey as Sir Marmaduke, and Mr. Furneaux Cook as Dr. Daly. The cast, indeed, is as nearly as possible equivalent with

the original cast of the piece at the Opera Comique. Mr. Ryley was exceedingly droll as the Sorcerer, and the other artists were all proportionately happy in their respective roles. *Trial by Jury* has supplemented the principal piece. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, June 2, 1878; Issue 2071.]

PRINCE'S THEATRE. – Manager Mr. Alfred Thompson. – *The Sorcerer* has met with the most gratifying success during its fortnight's run, and Mr. J. H. Ryley's performance of the principal character is one of the most amusing things seen here for a very long time. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, June 9, 1878; Issue 2072.]

### 10th – 22 June 1878: Birmingham

#### PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE.

Those happily-mated partners in mirth and music, Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan, have seldom, if ever, united their talents to better purpose than in the so-called "comic opera" – really a musical extravaganza – "The Sorcerer," which was introduced to the Birmingham public for the first time by Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte's company last night. "The Trial by Jury" long since afforded a glimpse of the lyric possibilities of such a combination, in which each contributor is so well able to supply what the other lacks; but in "The Sorcerer" the union of cynical humour with musical colour and geniality is carried much farther, and the motives of a musical farce are expanded to the proportions of a regular comic opera, with a host of *dramatis personæ* all distinctly individualised, and elaborate concerted pieces and choruses. Whether something of effect is not sacrificed by this expansion is a question which everyone must answer for himself, but we can vouch for it that, on the fall of the curtain last night, the feeling of the audience was not that the entertainment was too long, but that there was not enough of it.

The libretto of "The Sorcerer" differs from most of Mr. Gilbert's achievements in this line, in so far as the main idea upon which the plot hangs is not a new one. The love potion or philtre is an operatic motive which has certainly done good service in its day, as witness more particularly "Le Philtre" of Auber, "L'Elisir d'Amore" of Donizetti, and Wagner's "Tristan and Iseult;" but Mr. Gilbert's treatment of the subject is so entirely his own that except the motive it has nothing in common with any of the other works referred to. In all of these the magic potion is a more or less serious reality; in Mr. Gilbert's libretto, and the story on which he built it, the author does not disguise his mockery of the superstition even in surrounding it with elements of *diablerie* which are dispensed with in the other dramas referred to. But a brief outline of the piece will best allow how the humour works. The operetta is in two acts, the scene of which is laid in and about the village of Ploverleigh. In the first act, which takes place in the grounds of *Sir Marmaduke Point Dextre (sic)*, an elderly baronet of the old-fashioned, ceremonious school, the tenantry are assembled to celebrate the betrothal of the baronet's son *Alexis*, a stalwart young Guardsman, to the beautiful *Aline*, daughter of *Lady Sangazure*. Now, *Alexis* is a strong believer in the virtues of matrimony as a panacea for all human ills, and he would like to break down "the artificial barrier of rank, wealth, education, age, beauty, habits, taste, and temper," in order to promote the more general adoption of his specific. He has read somewhere an advertisement of a "patent oxy hydrogen love at first sight philtre," advertised by *Mr. John Wellington Wells*, of the firm of Wells and Co., family sorcerers of St. Mary Axe, and from philanthropic motives he resolves to try it upon the villagers who do not pair so fast as he would like. Accordingly, he summons to his aid *Mr. Wells*, a sleek, dapper, obsequious tradesman, who produces the desired philtre from his waistcoat pocket, and after an amusing incantation scene with a



teapot, burlesquing the famous situation in the *Freischutz*, brews the potion which the vicar innocently dispenses to the company and villagers. Half an hour is supposed to be the interval required for the working of the potion, under the influence of which the characters are evidently falling when the curtain descends upon act the first. In the second act the full effects of the potion are apparent in the fact that the villagers have come up to the vicar in a body, imploring him, couple after couple, to join them in bonds of matrimony, though, as *Aline* naively remarks there is "not a match among them that the hollow world would consider well advised." *Sir Marmaduke*, the courtly, has proposed to, and been accepted by *Dame Partlett* (*sic*), a respectable pew opener; her daughter, *Constance*, previously in love with the *Vicar*, has transferred her affections to the deaf and venerable notary, and the stately *Lady Sangazure* makes a dead set at *Mr. Wells*, the sorcerer. Presently *Aline*, who has reluctantly consented to drink some of the philtre, at the urgent request of *Alexis*, who wishes in this way to rivet her affections on himself, unluckily encounters the vicar, *Dr. Daly*, of whom she becomes straightway enamoured, and he being also under the influence of the philtre, reciprocates her sudden attachment with equal ardour. The horror and indignation of *Alexis* may be imagined, but *Aline* and the *Vicar* tell him that he has only himself to blame for compelling them to try the philtre. In this emergency *Alexis* appeals to *Mr. Wells* to undo the spell, but though the family sorcerer is as anxious as the Guardsman to end the embroglio, if only to escape the persecuting adoration of *Lady Sangazure*, he sees no way out of the difficulty unless one or other of them will sacrifice his life to Ahrimanes. Neither of them is particularly anxious to make the sacrifice, so it is ultimately put to the vote of the company to decide who shall die. The choice falling upon *Mr. Wells* as the source of all the mischief, the family sorcerer draws a poison phial from his pocket and descends amid a blaze of red fire to the nether regions, scattering the handbills of his firm and carefully brushing his hat as he descends. The ill-chosen unions are then instantly dissolved, toad the *dramatis personæ* return to their first attachments, to celebrate which happy event another wedding feast is improvised by the hospitable baronet, and all goes merry as a marriage-bell till the fall of the curtain.

By a little compression and the elimination of one or two superfluous characters, such as the pew-opener's daughter, the piece might be much improved; but even as it is it is exceedingly diverting, the plot we have roughly sketched affording no real idea of the drollery of the situations and the raciness of the dialogue. The music is more full and elaborate than in any other of Mr. Sullivan's lyric works, and though somewhat unequal in melodic interest, it is full of picturesqueness and colour, and contains some of the happiest things he has written. We may mention especially the introductory patter song of the Sorcerer, "My name is John Wellington Wells;" *Aline's* aria, "Oh, happy young heart;" the ballads of *Alexis*, "For love alone," and "It is not love;" "The Vicar's song;" the choruses, "Ring forth ye bells" and "Oh joy, oh joy;" the minuet duet for the baronet and *Lady Sangazure*, and the instrumentation of the incantation scene. The choruses and concerted pieces generally are among the happiest numbers in the work, and the instrumental writing throughout is full of colour, spirit, and novel and ingenious effects. The performance altogether was a remarkably effective one. The mock stately duet before referred to was encored last night, as were also the patter song of the sorcerer and a quintet in the second act, "I rejoice that it's decided," in which the principal personages express their feelings over the betrothal of *Sir Marmaduke* to the pew-opener. Mr. J. H. Riley (*sic*), as the family sorcerer, was the life and soul of the piece; Miss Harriet Coveney, as the demure pew opener; Miss Douglas Gordon, as her daughter *Constance*; and Miss Rosina Brandram,

as *Lady Sangazure*, were excellent in their respective parts; but the intonation of the representative of *Aline* was occasionally faulty. Mr. Bentham's vocalisation also disappointed us in the music of *Alexis*, though his acting was fairly good. Mr. Furneaux Cook was admirable as the vicar, *Dr. Daly*. The dresses and *mise en scene* were all that could be desired; and the accompaniments rendered by a powerful orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Hamilton Clarke, formerly of this town, added greatly to the effect of the performance. [*Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham, England), Tuesday, June 11, 1878; Issue 6216.]

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. – Mr. James Rodgers, Proprietor. – The modern comic opera *The Sorcerer*, by the well-known authors Mr. W. S. Gilbert and Mr. Arthur Sullivan, was produced in Birmingham for the first time on Monday evening, and up to the time of writing has been highly successful in every sense. The audiences have been large, and at frequent intervals the whole house has been in raptures with the amusing dialogue, the comical situations, and the charming music, both vocal and instrumental. To the amusement of the audience, Mr. J. H. Ryley contributed in a large degree, his impersonation of Mr. Wells, one of the firm of sorcerers, being almost unique, and his singing being accompanied by all the gestures and other necessary little details that make up a perfect part. His successful vocal efforts were well deserving of the repeated calls that brought him several times to the front. Mr. Furneaux Cook enacted the bachelor vicar, Doctor Daly, in the most finished style; and, indeed, the entire performance was highly creditable to the whole company, individually and collectively, and their first visit to Birmingham with *The Sorcerer* cannot fail to be a success during the whole of the fortnight's stay. Mr. George Bentham as Alexis, Mr. Richard Cummings as Counsel, Mr. A. Rousbey as Sir Marmaduke, Miss Douglas Gordon as Aline, Miss Harriet Coveney as Mrs Partlet, Miss Theresa Cummings as Constance, and Master George Bewley as Hercules, contributed to the thorough enjoyment of the audience. The operetta *Breaking the Spell* followed, and in this Miss Clara Jecks, as Jenny Wood was unquestionably the life and soul of the piece, her sprightly, lively, and winning manner, with the most happy bits of coquetry, fairly captivating the audience in every part of the house. Mr. Furneaux Cook, as Old Matthew, and Mr. W. Esmond were excellent impersonations. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, June 16, 1878; Issue 2073.]#

#### 24th – 29th June 1878: Leeds

THEATRE ROYAL. – Proprietor, Mr. J. Hobson. – Mr. D'Oyly Carte's *Sorcerer* company have appeared here during the past week, and artistically have achieved a complete and most triumphant success. But, perhaps owing to the heat of the weather, the attendance, considering the merits of the performance, has not been what it should have been. Mr. Sullivan's bright and pretty music, and Mr. W. S. Gilbert's caustic and witty libretto, have been thoroughly enjoyed, while for the now well-known principals constituting this most admirable company we have nothing but the very highest praise. They were compelled to re-appear after every act, encores were frequent, and, what is very unusual at this Theatre, the chorus received the honour of an encore for the bridesmaids' chorus. We may add that Mr. Hamilton Clark, the conductor, had his admirable band and chorus well in hand, and the whole passed off with the greatest *éclat*. Offenbach's operetta *Breaking the Spell*, supported by Mr. Furneaux Cook, Mr. W. Esmond, and Miss Clara Jecks, has, up to the time of writing, concluded the entertainments. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, June 30, 1878; Issue 2075.]

## 1st – 13th July: Dublin

### GAIETY THEATRE

Although naughtiness and nastiness have lately had more than their due of public favour, and although Mr. Arthur Sullivan's comic opera, *The Sorcerer*, which was produced for the first time before a brimming house last night, has no spice of either the one or the other to recommend it, we believe it will have along and prosperous life at the Gaiety. There are portions of it too good, and portions of it too lachrymose for a comic opera. We do not think it will raise Mr. Sullivan's reputation for music, nor Mr. Gilbert's reputation for wit. Whoever compared it with *Trial by Jury* to its credit had courage; for it has hardly a shadow of the bright, natural, compact, rollicking spontaneity of humour that makes that immortal little bit of buffoonery one unbroken laughing chorus. For all that, *The Sorcerer* is sprinkled with the tender little snatches of melody which come as naturally from Mr. Sullivan's pen as the morning carol from the throat of the lark; it is fortified with gay and rattling choruses; its grotesque side, although it is sometimes successfully disguised, is at other times supremely laughable; and it is sung and acted considerably better than it is written. The idea of the opera is that of a moonstruck military lover, who, in a moment of enthusiasm for equality in love, has recourse to a sorcerer, who administers his patent love potion far and wide among the villagers and of course plunges them head and ears in love with the wrong people – the old marquis with the venerable pew-opener, the stately Lady Sangazure with the patent philtre man, and, finally, the military enthusiast's own young betrothed with the absurd old vicar. The incidents thus produced could not be quite new, but might easily have been more comical. A character for dullness would, in fact, inevitably attach to the business were it not for the outrageous humours of Mr. Wells (Mr. J. H. Ryley), the smart young Cockney sorcerer, whose burlesque of the weird incantations of the melodrama was one of the most laughable things an audience ever roared over. Mr. Ryley's singing is not his strong point, but very little vocal power would suffice to install his droll charter-song, "I am John Wellington Wells," (*sic*) in the popularity so long and worthily enjoyed by the late "Mo-ri-ar-i-ty." The delightfully funny duet between him and the love-lorn Lady Sangazure (Miss R. Brandram) was, on both their parts, one of the best bits of burlesque in the opera, although its music sounded strangely familiar in our ears. Nothing could have been better in its way than the parody of the ceremonious absurdity of the Louis Quatorze school of politeness in the love passages between this *grande dame* and the pompous Sir Marmaduke (Mr. Arthur Rousbey), who acted his part in word and deed quite faultlessly. Mr. Furneaux Cook also made a respectable vicar; and the other parts were capably if not remarkably filled. The chorus was a strong one, the band proved a famous auxiliary; and, if we can only call to mind one sentence of genuine wit in the dialogue, everyone will remember twenty passages of unmistakable beauty in the music. [*Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), Tuesday, July 2, 1878; Issue N/A.]

GAIETY THEATRE. – Proprietors, Messrs J. and M. Gunn. – Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *The Sorcerer* has been the chief item in the programme at this Theatre during the past fortnight. Mindful of the success achieved by the same gentlemen's *Trial by Jury*, very large audiences have assembled to witness the performance of the new piece, and there can be no doubt that at the close of the entertainment each evening the audience has departed hugely delighted with the entertainment provided. The principal credit must be assigned to Mr. J. H. Ryley, who, as Mr. J. Wellington Wells, succeeds in carrying off the honours of the evening.

Mr. Furneaux Cook as Dr. Daly, Mr. Arthur Rousbey as Sir Marmaduke, and Mr. Bentham as Alexis, are excellent in their respective parts. Miss Duglas Gordon is a charming Aline. Miss R. Brandram is an excellent Lady Sangazure; and Miss Teresa Cummings appears with effect as Constance. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, July 14, 1878; Issue 2077.]

### 15th – 27th July 1878: Liverpool

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. – Lessee and Manager, Mr. F. Emery; Acting Manager, Mr. G. Redmond. – Other and previous arrangements made by the Lessee of this Theatre formerly stopped the continuance of the great success which attended the first engagement of *The Sorcerer* company, and, therefore, the return to the "Prince" on Monday of the musical combination which so effectively represented the Sullivan-Gilbert production was looked forward to with an unusual amount of interest. Notwithstanding the summer sultry weather, so detrimental to theatrical interests, there was a very large audience on Monday to give a cordial welcome to the talented artists who have so successfully piloted the opera during its Provincial voyage, and each of the principals in the cast received their reward in the shape of frequent and hearty applause. As the performance of the company has been so recently noticed in these columns, it is now only necessary to say that the same efficiency and completeness of musical detail marked the representation on this as on the previous occasion. Mr. Ryley's Sorcerer was again a conspicuously excellent portraiture, and former effectiveness was displayed by Miss Duglas Gordon, Aline; Miss Brandram, Lady Sangazure; Mr. Bentham, Alexis; and Mr. Arthur Rousbey, Sir Marmaduke. The scenery, furnished by Mr. C. D. Leigh, deserves a special line of recognition, as it was both artistic and in exquisite taste. A merry finish was given to the highly enjoyable programme by a capital performance of *Trial by Jury*, in which Mr. Ryley was the Judge – "and a good Judge too." The entire Strand company is next on the cards at this "little house." [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, July 21, 1878; Issue 2078.]

PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE. – Lessee and Manager, Mr. F. Emery. – Even with the tropical weather and substantial rival attractions *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury* have again proved sufficient to crowd the "little house" every night during the week. It would be difficult to find more competent exponents of the various characters in the attractive Gilbert-Sullivan opera and the cantata than the combination which has held the stage of this Theatre for the past fortnight, and special mention is again merited by Miss Duglas Gordon, Miss Rosina Brandram, Miss Harriet Coveney, Miss Theresa Cummings, Mr. F. Cook, Mr. J. H. Ryley, Mr. A Rousbey, Mr. G. Bentham, and Mr. Cummings. The entire Strand company, under the management of Mrs Swanborough, will be the "persons in possession" next week, the promised programme comprising *Our Club* and *The Red Rover*. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, July 28, 1878; Issue 2079.]

### 29th July – 3rd August 1878: Hull.

"THE SORCERER" AND "TRIAL BY JURY" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

We think if lovers of honest, satirical fun and good music knew what excellent fare has been provided this week at the theatre they would have attended in larger numbers.

"The Sorcerer" is just such a piece as is required for summer entertainment. The music is not so solid as to make any strain on the mind, and the fun is not so

boisterous as to provoke perspiratory laughter. Both music and libretto are just of the character qualified to excite a lively interest and induce gentle merriment; and a pleasanter or more efficient performance has not been witnessed in Hull for a long time. The dialogue of "*The Sorcerer*" is not remarkably witty, and the story is somewhat fragmentary and inconsequent, but it suffices to enable Mr. Sullivan to set some bright, melodious music. On the whole the music seems more suggestive of sentiment than comicality, but occasionally, as, for example, in the glee "She will tend him, nurse him, mend him," it is impossible to conceive anything more grotesquely quaint and droll. That item was deservedly encored, and what may be called the "Nosegay Chorus" received a similar compliment. The operetta abounds in beautiful airs, sung chiefly by Miss Douglas Gordon as *Aline*, and Miss T. Cummings as *Constance*. One song, "Young hearts never to part," sung by Miss Gordon, is a charming melody, and was beautifully rendered. The "Sorcerer" suggests remembrances of "Der Freichutz" and "The Palace of Truth," the latter being, we need not say, the work of the same writer as the author of the text of "The Sorcerer." The plot turns upon the simple incident that a philanthropic soldier having got in his mind the notion that the world would be happier if the rich married the poor and the old the young, consults a Sorcerer, who possesses a charm which will bring that desirable result to pass. The charm is a liquor which causes all who partake of it to fall frantically in love with their opposites. The charm is put into practice in a certain village at which all the people are invited to a marriage festival, and are regaled with the magic liquor. Thereupon boys begin to woo old damsels, and young maidens are smitten by old men, causing no end of grotesque and laughable situations. The trifle, for it professes to be little more than an absurd conceit – does not, of course, approach the completeness of conception and detail exhibited in "The Palace of Truth." It however suffices, as we have said, for its purpose.

The piece is capitally mounted. The dresses were rich and picturesque, and the chorus were much above the stamp of ordinary operatic companies. Their voices were fresh, tuneful, and well trained, and they acted with spirit and grouped themselves with most unusual effectiveness. We have never heard a better band, always excepting the Italian opera band, at the theatre, and Mr. H. Clark, the conductor, deserves special mention. The acting and singing of the principal parts could hardly have been better, several characters being specially clever. Perhaps the most finished impersonation was that of *Dr. Daly*, by Mr. F. Cook, who had a difficult rôle, and whose make-up and acting were simply perfect. Miss H. Coveney matched Mr. Cook's excellence in her performance of *The Pew Opener*, while Mr. Ryley could scarcely have been surpassed as *Mr. Wells* (the Sorcerer), whose singing of "My name's John Wellington Wells," was immensely attractive. We ought to mention, also, Mr. Esmond as *Alexis*, and Mr. Rousbey as *Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre*, who both sang and acted admirably. The same may be said of Miss Brandram as *Lady Sanagazure*. "Trial by Jury," which concluded the performances, is rather more farcical in character, but was quite as clever, and equally well performed – in fact, it would be considered by many, perhaps, as the more original and happiest conceit of the two. [*The Hull Packet and East Riding Times* (Hull, England), Friday, August 2, 1878; Issue 4850.]

THEATRE ROYAL. – Lessee, Mr. Wilson Barrett. – The Gilbert-Sullivan comic opera *The Sorcerer* and the cantata *Trial by Jury* have been performed during the week to large audiences with unbounded success. The company is a large and talented one, and special mention is merited by Miss Douglas Gordon, Miss Rosina Brandram, Miss Harriet Coveney, Miss Theresa Cummings, Mr. F. Cook, Mr. J. H. Ryley, Mr. A

Rousbey, Mr. G. Bentham, and Mr. Cummings. The present is the last week of the season. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, August 4, 1878; Issue 2080.]

### 5th – 10th August 1878: Sheffield

#### "THE SORCERER" AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.

The Gilbert-Sullivan combination is now one of the recognized institutions of the theatre, and the joint productions of these gentlemen create as much anticipatory conjecture, and are received with as much enthusiasm, as falls to the lot of most of the popular works. The name of Mr. Gilbert at once calls up fairy fancies of the most exquisite cunning and charm. His "Pygmalion and Galatea" revealed a mind crowded with metaphor and possessed with an irresistible humour, and a pen capable of conveying the riches of the mind clothed in graceful and pungent language. His later works have tended always to increase his reputation. Mr. Arthur Sullivan, too, in his sphere wields a sway as potent as that of Mr. Gilbert. His cantatas exhibit a novel originality, which is worked up with elaborateness and yet with freedom and ease. At times his concerted music reaches the height of an oratorio, and anon it flies off at a tangent in a light rippling melody which is almost Offenbachian in its gaiety and *abandon*. Thus it may be well understood, that when it was known that Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan were associated in the production of what was subsequently launched upon the world as a "musical cantata," (*sic*) London theatre-goers were on the tip-toe of expectation. "Trial by Jury" was at once accepted as a happy augury of future enjoyment, and it became the rage. Scarcely a theatre in the united kingdom has failed to echo with laughter at the "judge's song" and at the chorus of jurymen, and to ring with hearty applause after some of the delightful concerted music contained in that little piece. The only wonder was that the second crop from such rich soil was so long delayed, but eventually the "Sorcerer" appeared, and London flocked to see it, and now the Opera Comique is nightly crowded by the third result of the association, "H.M.S. Pinafore; or, the Lass that Loved a Sailor."

Upon Mr. R. D'Oyly Carte devolved the pleasant and lucrative task of bringing the "Sorcerer" into the provinces, and this week the company winds up the tour at the Theatre Royal. Mr. Younge is to be congratulated upon having made the engagement, which cannot fail to give satisfaction to his patrons and to add to his already established character as a liberal and enterprising caterer for the public. Last evening saw its first representation in Sheffield, and a large house assembled to witness the production. To say that the "Sorcerer" was received with enthusiasm but feebly describes the delight and demonstrativeness of the audience; and a good week's business, despite the dulness of the season, may be confidently anticipated. The plot is simple, and makes but small demands upon the patience of the audience, and the genuine and at times wild fun with which it abounds sets weariness at defiance. The opening scene is laid in the garden of *Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre's* Elizabethan mansion, and a chorus of peasantry at once inform the audience that that day sees the betrothal of *Alexis*, the son of *Sir Marmaduke*, to *Aline*, the daughter of the aristocratic *Lady Sangazure*. *Alexis* is a firm believer in matrimony as a panacea for every ill, and to the end that the whole village may share in the blessings, he has engaged *Mr. John Wellington Wells*, of the firm of J. W. Wells and Co., sorcerers, of St. Mary Axe, to dispense a love potion to the villagers. The philtre is administered, and the most surprising results follow. Each person who tastes the potion falls in love with the first person of the opposite sex whom he meets. The courtly *Sir Marmaduke*, a polished gentleman of the last generation, who is attached to *Lady Sangazure*, meets with *Mrs. Partlet*, a pew opener, and they pair off. *Constance*, a pupil teacher, who is

in love with *Dr. Daly*, the rector, is mated to a deaf old barrister. *Lady Sangazure* throws herself at the feet of the *Sorcerer*, the villagers pair off in a most incongruous manner, and *Dr. Daly*, who is himself under the spell, regrets that "No one's left to marry me." However, *Alexis*, anxious to secure the lasting love of his fiancée, insists that she, too, shall drink the potion. She obeys, and first casting eyes upon the rector, transfers her affections to him. The *Sorcerer*, a highly respectable tradesman, is horrified at the results which have been caused through his instrumentality, and to break the charm dies, and goes down a trap amidst red fire, as the couples mate in a manner consistent with poetic justice. The libretto is quaintly and strikingly humorous and the amusing situations which the plot affords are brought out with dramatic force. The music is skilfully wedded to the words, and is in turns weird and flowing, light and ambitious, stately and reckless. It is ever graceful and attractive, and, though mostly easy, catching melody, it now and then rises to a grandeur which would be accepted in a work having a more ambitious designation than a comic opera.

The prominent object is, of course, the *Sorcerer*, who is most capably represented by Mr. J. H. Ryley. Dressed in the every-day costume of a comparatively affluent tradesman, he puts forward his spells merely as commercial articles, and his incantation is thus rendered doubly humorous and grotesque. That scene is indeed remarkable. His invocation of the spirits as he apostrophises a teapot, is bloodthirsty in the extreme, and when he trots round the vessel in a manner which puzzles imitation, the audience are fain to yell with laughter, which it is impossible to suppress. Again when, after combating the advances of *Lady Sangazure*, he waves his hands over the train of her dress, and condemns her to the "family vault," he is immensely funny, and the audience last night entered heartily into the burlesque. His sacrifice, too, is another fine scene, and the theatre again rung with yells of laughter and applause as he wound up his watch, smoothed the nap of his hat, and carefully put on his gloves before he went "it matters not with whom — or where!" His song, "My name is John Wellington Wells," and the incantation were given with spirit and ability, and the former, which is an immense tax on the powers of pronunciation, was repeated in answer to a general *encore*. His performance is indeed a most clever and novel one, and fairly merits the enthusiasm with which it is invariably received. Next in importance come perhaps the *Sir Marmaduke* of Mr Arthur Rousbey, and the *Lady Sangazure* of Miss Rosina Brandram. A duet between them, in which the refined and polished gallantry of lovers of the last generation are admirably indicated, was one of the successes of the evening. Both exhibited that courtly grace and punctilious propriety which our grandfathers and grandmothers practised so successfully, and the obeisances and curtsies were pictures of elegance. Their acting, too, was in the true spirit of the piece, and the fine bass of one and the rich deep contralto of the other were effectively heard in the concerted music. The *Dr. Daly* of Mr. Furneaux Cook was another fine performance. He looked a clergyman to the life, and bore about him an air of dignity which admirably suited the character. His first song, "I was a fair young curate then," was given with splendid effect, and called forth the first *encore* of the evening, and his second effort "Oh, my voice is sad and low," was not less successful. His lines were spoken with careful emphasis, and the whole result was an artistic triumph. The *Aline* was Miss Douglas Gordon, a lady possessing a charming voice, admirably trained and perfectly under command. Her enunciation was distinctness itself, and her action spirited and graceful. She was in every way equal to the character which she assumed, and made a very favourable impression upon the audience. Her first aria, "Oh happy young heart," gained a deserved *encore*; and her share of the quintette, "She will tend him, nurse him, mend him, and the other

concerted music was admirably rendered. Her performance, indeed, was of a high order, and contributed in no small degree to the success of the entertainment. In the tenor the company last night laboured under some disadvantage. At the commencement of the performance Mr. Austin, the acting manager, came before the curtain and asked the consideration of the audience for Mr. Gerard Coventry, who had assumed the character at only four hours' notice. Mr. Esmond, the regular tenor, was seized with a violent cold yesterday morning, and Mr. Coventry had to study the score in the train on his way from town in the afternoon. However, the forbearance of the audience was very little taxed, and by tonight, in all probability, he will be word and music perfect. His songs were given with spirit and taste, and the merit of his voice was at once recognized. Miss Harriet Coveney was most amusing as *Mrs. Partlet*, the pew opener, and Mr. Richard Cummings and Miss Theresa Cummings were satisfactory representatives of the *Counsel* and *Constance*. The chorus is particularly strong, and does not, as is the case with many comic opera companies, consist of wrinkled old women. The ladies are young, mostly pretty, and their figures are beyond reproach. The orchestra is considerably reinforced and under the conductorship of Mr. Hamilton Clarke, the instrumental portion of the piece was admirably rendered.

An excellent performance of "Trial by Jury," with Miss Gordon as the *Plaintiff* and Mr. Riley as the *Judge*, concluded one of the most successful and agreeable evenings we have enjoyed at the Royal for some time. The tour, as we have already stated, terminates with this engagement, and the company then give their minds to the rehearsal of "H.M.S. Pinafore," which Mr. Carte also takes round the provinces. May the good ship soon harbour in our expectant port. [*The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* (Sheffield, England), Tuesday, August 6, 1878; pg. 7; Issue 7449.]

THEATRE ROYAL. – The Girards, after a fairly successful week, have given way to Mr. D'Oyly Carte's company, who bring *The Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury*. Both Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan have taken a strong hold upon the Sheffield public. The fairy comedies of the author received in no town heartier and more genuine appreciation than in Sheffield, and the musical portion of the public long ago appreciated the merit of Mr. Sullivan as a composer of originality and popularity. Thus it may be easily understood that the association of these gentlemen was recorded to decided approval, and the first fruit, *Trial by Jury*, took a prominent hold upon the public. *The Sorcerer* has been long anticipated, and the house on Monday was large and appreciative. Pit and gallery were filled, boxes well patronised, and circle showed good business, and, considering the season, the house was a remarkable one. The orchestra was efficient, and, under the conductorship of Mr. Hamilton Clarke, gave the instrumental portion of the piece with spirit and excellent effect. The chorus was numerous and attractive, and sang with vigour and point which were ever readily acknowledged, and in one instance the greeting of Aline gained a deserved encore. The characters were in admirable hands, and the house witnessed one of the best performances of the season at this Theatre. They roared at the mysterious and yet essentially commercial *Sorcerer* and the grotesque effects produced by his philtre; they applauded heartily the courtly and polished grace of Sir Marmaduke and Lady Sangazure in their charming duet; they encored the sweetly pretty song of the refined and winning Aline; and keenly enjoyed the fun caused by the dignified but amatory Dr. Daly, the love-sick Constance, the "clean and tidy widdy" and the deaf counsel. At the commencement of the performance Mr Austin, the Acting Manager, asked the consideration of the audience for Mr. Gerard Coventry, who had, at a few hours' notice, taken the place of Mr. Esmond, the tenor, indisposed. The audience readily



consented, but their forbearance was not much tasked, and Mr. Coventry went very creditably through the part. A capable performance of *Trial by Jury* followed. [*The Era* (London, England), Sunday, August 11, 1878; Issue 2081.]