

## GILBERT &amp; SULLIVAN PAMPHLETS

Number 1

**From MARITANA to YEOMEN. An examination of Wallace, his bizarre life, and his opera which was the inspiration for *The Yeomen of the Guard*.**

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William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865) was a remarkably colourful character, whose life, although on the whole poorly documented in detail, was quite extraordinary. It seems incredible that a man who had such a bizarre and romantic life should today be almost totally forgotten. His father, William Wallace, was a native of Ballina, Co. Mayo, Ireland, where he was a music teacher and bandmaster to the 29th regiment. He is alleged to have been the first to arrange "The Girl I left behind me" for regimental band - this would have been in about 1795. Several sources insist that Wallace senior was Scottish, but this has now been shown to be a mistake. In 1811, while temporarily living in Waterford he fell in love with and married Elizabeth, a pretty girl of that city, and their first child, christened William, was born in a house on the corner of Colbeck Street and Lady Lane on 11 March 1812. In the same house, about a year before, the great actor Charles Kean was born. (The house was recently demolished). A few months after William's birth the family was moved back to Ballina, where the second son, Wellington (named after the Iron Duke) was born on 1 July 1813. The following year a girl, christened Eliza, was born, who later became the soprano Madame Bonchelle (or Bushelle, sources differ), and who died in Sydney in August 1878. All the children were musical, but young William showed a remarkable aptitude, and when extremely young his father taught him both the piano and the clarinet. In 1822 Wallace senior formally joined the 29th regiment and on 27 August 1823 was promoted Sergeant. In 1825 the regiment was moved back to Waterford and the Wallace family of course had to move as well. The Colonel, Sir John Buchan, took a great interest in young William's musical progress, but in April 1826 an event occurred which was to totally change the pattern of the family's life. The regiment was ordered to Mauritius, and so it was decided that Sergeant Wallace must leave his position as regimental bandmaster, and was discharged on a payment of 20 pounds. During this period young William had been taking lessons from John Ringwood, the organist of Waterford Cathedral, as well as from his father, and by the age of 15 he was proficient on the piano, organ, violin, guitar and clarinet. In spring 1827, the family moved to Dublin where Wallace senior and Wellington were engaged to play the bassoon and second flute respectively in the orchestra at the Adelphi Theatre (later the Queen's Theatre; it was in Great Brunswick Street). Young William became a second violin at the Theatre Royal, under the baton of James Barton, who had been the music instructor of Wallace's great contemporary, Michael Balfe. The lessee of the Theatre Royal at this time (i.e. 1827-1830) was one Alfred Bunn, and Wallace's contact with him was to prove useful later in his career.

In 1829 Wallace had played the violin in an important Dublin concert, and in 1830, at the age of 18, he became organist of Thurles Roman Catholic Cathedral, and professor of music at the Ursuline Convent in the same town. The Ursuline nuns were very kind to him and as a gesture of thanks he composed a Mass and some motets for them. Among the boarders at the convent school was Miss Isabella Kelly of Frascati, Blackrock. She became a music pupil of his, but it soon developed into something more. However, Miss Kelly's elder sister, Sister Vincent, was a nun at the convent, and since Wallace was a protestant she did her best to prevent any further entanglement. So Wallace became a Roman Catholic, and in gratitude to Sister Vincent he took her name and added it to his own, becoming William Vincent Wallace.

In 1831 the Dublin Festival engaged as its star attraction the great Italian violinist Paganini, and in August Wallace accepted an offer to become the sub-leader of the Dublin Theatre Royal Orchestra. So he resigned from Thurles and married Miss Kelly. The 1831 Festival was a great encouragement to Wallace's musical ambition, and hearing Paganini must have had a great influence on his own violin playing. So he undertook a lot of intensive musical study, and in May 1834 made his debut as a serious composer, playing a Violin concerto of his own. However, in August 1835 he decided that Dublin was now too small a pond for him, so he set sail for Australia. There are two conflicting accounts of what happened next, one by W.H. Grattan Flood, and one by E.W. White. Flood says that he set sail for Sydney taking with him his wife, his wife's sister and his own sister, and that on the long voyage he paid so much attention to his wife's sister that his wife became intolerably jealous, and on arrival in Sydney they parted, never met again, and Wallace remained in Sydney only three days, after which he headed straight out into the bush and set up a sheep farm. The other version (White) is soberer, and therefore more likely to be correct. According to this account, the party set sail for Hobart in Tasmania, and consisted of Wallace, his wife and baby son Vincent, his sister and his brother Wellington. On landing in Hobart they gave a concert, then went on to Sydney where they opened the first Australian music school in Bridge Street. During 1837 Wallace gave recitals in Sydney, Parramatta and Windsor, and in January 1838 he organised the first Australian Music Festival at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Flood's account of how he gave his first concert in Sydney states that on a chance visit there (from his sheep farm) he attended an evening party and *casually* took part in a Mozart quartette. The Governor, Sir John Burke, who was present, was so impressed with Wallace's playing that he persuaded him to give a concert, and paid for his own seats with 100 sheep !

Whatever really happened in Australia, Wallace did abandon his wife there and set off on his travels leaving behind debts of 2000 pounds. He was certainly in Tasmania at some stage, though whether this was before his sojourn in Australia, as one account claims, or after, is not entirely clear. A correspondent of mine, Roger Nicholls, who spent some time there, tells me that there is a plaque to Wallace, which states that he claimed that the inspiration for the music of *Maritana* came from the magnificent Tasmanian scenery. His next port of call was New Zealand where he narrowly escaped being murdered by the natives, and was saved, under very romantic circumstances, by the chief's beautiful daughter. He then set off on a whaling cruise in the South Pacific, on which voyage the Maori crew mutinied and killed all the Europeans on the ship except three, Wallace being one of the survivors. He then went to India where he was highly honoured by the Begum (or Queen) of Oudh, but here he had another narrow escape. He was on a tiger hunt when suddenly a tiger sprang at him and threw him off his horse, but he had the presence of mind to draw his pistol and shoot it through the head. He also visited Nepal and Kashmir. One day he received information that within 24 hours a ship was leaving for Chile, so he took it and landed in Valparaiso where he gave some concerts, and also in Santiago, for one concert in the latter city he is said to have been paid in chickens. He crossed the Andes on a mule to visit Buenos Aires, but this visit was very brief, because there was some sort of blockade there at the time. So he returned to Santiago, and while there gave a pledge to play a concert in Valparaiso, but forgot about it. When a friend reminded him, it was apparently too late for him to get there in time, but he determined to ride on horseback, a distance of 125 miles. He accomplished this in 11 hours, using up 13 horses in the process, and was in time for the concert. It is not recorded what his playing was like. From Chile he moved on to Peru, where at a

concert in Lima he was paid 1000 pounds. From Peru to Panama and thence to the West Indies where he gave concerts in Jamaica, Cuba and Havannah. Next, Mexico, where he performed at Vera Cruz, Tampico and Mexico City. In the last named he narrowly avoided perishing at the hands of the Inquisition. He wrote a "Grand Mass" for a musical fete in Mexico which was performed many times, but is now lost. From Mexico he went to New Orleans where he was stricken with a fever and invalided for 7 months. He went to Missouri to recuperate, and then returned to New Orleans where he gave a farewell concert in November 1841. After what is described as a "triumphal progress through various American musical centres", including Philadelphia Theatre (September 1842), he settled for a time in New York and was one of the founders of the New York Philharmonic Society. After a series of Farewell Concerts, he returned to Europe. He spent all of three days in London in May 1844, and then made a tour of Germany and Holland. He "wandered" back to London in March 1845, and made his debut as a pianist at Miss Marie Billington Hawes's Concert at the Hanover Square Rooms on May 3rd of that year. Shortly after this he was introduced to Edward Fitzball, who provided him with the libretto of *Maritana* which Alfred Bunn, who was now in London, agreed to produce at Drury Lane. It opened on 15th November 1845 and was a great success.

**Edward Fitzball** (1792-1873) was a dramatist whose real name was Ball (he added the "Fitz" later). He wrote a vast number of plays, mostly given at minor theatres and now totally (and deservedly) forgotten. He dramatised most of Sir Walter Scott's novels, and is generally considered to have developed the Nautical drama, which had as its hero the Jolly Jack Tar. *H.M.S. Pinafore* is a burlesque of this style. His play *Jonathan Bradford* (1833) was based on a real murder case, and was produced at the Surrey Theatre where it made a fortune for the managers, but not for Fitzball. He was a very mild little man in private life and never bothered about getting good terms for his plays because he wrote so easily, he could always earn more money with little effort. He had very little originality and wrote too quickly, but his style suited the taste of the time and he was able to supply what the public wanted. If he had been around today, he would almost certainly have been a scriptwriter for TV soap operas. In 1859 he wrote his memoirs, entitled *35 Years of a Dramatic Author's Life*. In this, he gives a most humorous example of an untitled opera which he cites as a "piece of contemporary rubbish".

Act I, scene 1.

A large oak tree, wound about with honeysuckles in the branches of which the lark is singing [Footnote by Fitzball: In Arcadian days there is no telling where the lark sang, but in our times, certainly not in the branches of a tree] and squirrels jumping. Celedina, with her shepherdess's crook in her hand, surrounded by a flock of lambkins, bleating and looking in her face. Arcado (her lover), playing the bagpipes.

Opening air - by Celedina

Bleat, bleat, bleat, ye pretty lambkins;

Listen to the *pibroch* sweet-

Skip, skip, skip, ye little lambkins,

Up and gamble round my feet.

The lambkins all rise, and begin to skip and gamble, in a circle round the tree.

In spite of his shortcomings, however, it should be noted that of Wallace's operas, only those two with librettos by Fitzball were resounding successes.

**Alfred Bunn** (1798-1860) was a very different kettle of fish. He was a theatre manager, best remembered for his vicious quarrels. Historians describe him as an adventurer and an impostor with little taste or talent, and he wrote a number of lyrics and verses, whose poverty of invention caused him to be nicknamed derisively "Poet Bunn". Another nickname was "Sanguine Bunny". J.C. Trewin in his book of theatrical anecdotes *The Night has been Unruly* (1957, p. 141) said of him "He has not made much impact on theatre history; his name falls with a doughy plop." Of his writings, almost the only things to survive into the 20th century were the libretto for Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* and two songs from *Maritana*. Bunn came at a time when London theatre was at a low ebb, and he debased it further by his methods and manners. Although I have no evidence, I feel sure that Alfred Bunn was the model for the character of Professor Bunn in *The Emerald Isle*.

After *Maritana*, Wallace went briefly to Dublin at the invitation of the Anacreontic Society, and *Maritana* was eventually given in that city. During 1845 and 1846 he was much in demand as a pianist and teacher. In the latter year, Bunn provided him with the libretto of *Matilda of Hungary*, which R.H. Legge described as "one of the worst librettos in existence". Wallace worked hard on it and it was produced at Drury Lane on 22 February 1847. It was quite well received (in spite of the libretto) but did not run long. Shortly after this Wallace took ill with an eye infection (which was to plague him again later) and in June he went to Vienna to arrange for the Austrian premiere of *Matilda of Hungary*, which was said to have been well received by the Austro-Hungarians. He returned to London in September 1847 to meet his sister who was returning after a concert tour of South America. She had remained in Australia when Wallace left there in 1838 and had married the bass John Bushelle, but he died young. The Wallaces almost immediately set out back to Vienna where Wallace composed a Violin concerto. His greatest triumph in Vienna, however, was the production of *Maritana* at the Theatre an der Wien on 8 January 1848, which was a tremendous success, and Wallace was presented with a valuable diamond ring by the King of the Belgians to whom he had dedicated the score of *Matilda of Hungary*. He and his sister then returned to London. He was writing music prolifically and finished the score of his next opera *Lurline* in July 1848, but Bunn had gone bankrupt and so production was shelved. He continued composing and conducting, but he overworked himself and strain brought on a recurrence of his eye trouble, indeed he very nearly went blind and was forced to abandon a commission for the Paris Opera and to take a vacation to recover. He spent his convalescence in Jersey, but got bored and felt the wanderlust get hold of him again, so he decided to go on a concert tour to the Americas. (Meanwhile his sister was making her operatic debut at Covent Garden in *Maritana*). Wallace's American tour of 1848-1851 was adventurous, and he was very nearly blown up on a steamboat. These concerts were financially very successful, and he invested a lot of money in piano and tobacco factories in America, but they all went bankrupt. In October 1850 he became enamoured of the distinguished pianist Hlne Stoepel (who was then 23) and he went through a form of marriage with her. It was argued that his marriage to Isabella had been invalid as he was under 21 at the time.

In 1853 he returned to London, settled down as a fashionable teacher of piano and wrote an enormous amount of music for that instrument. It was not until 1859 that he returned to Opera, in that year he revised *Lurline* (which was his other opera to a Fitzball libretto) and it was produced at Covent Garden on 23 February 1860. It was as great a success as *Maritana*. The story of *Lurline* was a popular one, there are at least 5 other plays/burlesques in English with this name. Incredibly, Wallace gave away the performing rights for ten shillings to the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company. Louisa Pyne and William Harrison are said to have made 50,000 pounds out of it, and Wallace gave the ten shillings to the needy widow of a stage carpenter at Covent Garden Theatre. In the same year he started work on *The Amber Witch*, which was produced at Her Majesty's Theatre on 28 February 1861. It was a libretto by H.F.Chorley and was probably based on a play of the same name produced in 1851 by either H.S.Faucit, J.S.Faucit or Henry Saville (Allardyce Nicoll, whose research was pretty comprehensive,

was unable to sort out the correct author). Wallace regarded *The Amber Witch* as his best opera, but it was only a moderate success. He started work at once on *Love's Triumph* to a libretto by J.L.Planch, which opened at Covent Garden on 3 November 1862. It also had a short run. Less than a year later he finished *The Desert Flower*, but this too was not a success. The libretto was by Augustus Harris and T.J.Williams, and it was produced at Covent Garden on 12 October 1863. Nothing daunted he started work in 1864 on another opera. According to W.H.Grattan Flood this was called *Estrelle* but William Spark called it *The Maid of Zurich*. At all events it was never finished as Wallace's health now broke down completely and he was ordered to winter in the South of France. He stayed for a time in Paris where he was attended by a French doctor in the suburbs. Rossini was staying nearby and they enjoyed each other's company nearly every day. In September 1865 he moved to the Pyrenees where he took up residence at the Chateau de Haget (not Chateau de Bagan, as stated in the Dictionary of National Biography). He died there on 12 October; his remains were brought home and he was buried at Kensal Green on 23 October. Hlne Stoepel went back to New York with her two sons where she died in 1885 aged 58. The 2 sons committed suicide. Isabella taught music in Dublin for many years and died on 25 July 1900. His son Vincent died a poor brother of the Charterhouse on 31 December 1909. I do not know what became of Wellington. Sir Robert Stewart said "There was sufficient melody in *Maritana* to vamp out half a dozen grand operas". Wallace was a good pianist and a fine linguist. His compositions fill nearly 100 pages of the British Library catalogue. He is supposed to have written two German operas, *Gulnare* and *Olga* but these have never been found, and may never have been finished.

#### THE PLAY

*Maritana* was based on a play entitled *Don Caesar de Bazan* by Dunmanoir and Dennery which was first produced in Paris on 30 July 1844. It must have been a tremendous success, for within 3 months 4 different English translations were playing at 4 different London theatres. The first of these was by Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett and Mark Lemon, which opened at the Princess Theatre on 8 October 1844 [1]. About a week later, on 14 October, a rival production translated by Dion Boucicault and Ben Webster opened at the Adelphi [2]. It is of interest to note that both these translations were filed at the Lord Chamberlain's office on the same day - 7th October. On the day the second version opened (14th), a third translation by C.Z. Barnett was filed [3], and this opened at the Surrey Theatre on 21st October. In the meantime on 18th, a fourth version by Thomas Archer was filed [4], and this opened at the Queens' on 28th. So London theatre goers had a choice of 4 versions of this play to see. More was to follow. In 1848, a translation by one Mrs. F.A. Davidson was published [5]. This was reprinted in 1880 [6], the reprinting seems to be identical except that the lady's name was omitted from the title page! In 1853 [7] the A'Beckett and Lemon translation was published, and a further edition in 1886 [8]. Finally in 1899 there was a translation by H.A. Saintsbury [9], and there may well be others that I have overlooked. The play did not have to wait long to be set to music. As we have seen, *Maritana* appeared in 1845, only a year after the original play. The opera follows the story line of the play fairly closely, though the play is a lot more powerful dramatically than the opera, particularly in the case of the denouement which is rather perfunctory in Fitzball's hands. There are several other details that differ between the play and the opera.

#### THE STORY OF THE OPERA

*Maritana*, a beautiful Gitana (a sort of itinerant entertainer) is singing to a crowd of people in the square at Madrid when she attracts the admiration of the King. Don José de Santarém, an unscrupulous courtier, sees this, and hatches a nefarious plot. He himself is in love with the Queen (who never actually appears, although the plot hinges around her) and decides to satisfy the King's whim and then betray him to the Queen, and in this way gain her admiration, and hopefully accede to the throne. The King (disguised in the crowd) throws *Maritana* a gold piece. Don José then engages her in conversation, and she confesses that she has dreams of great wealth.

In the play, but not in the opera, the King is identified as Charles II of Spain and Don José as his Prime Minister. This is what William C. Atkinson in "A History of Spain and Portugal" 1960, pp. 190-1, has to say about this monarch:-

It had been better for Spain had Philip [the Fourth] left no heir. The Habsburgh line was played out, physically, intellectually and morally, and though it might have seemed that there were no lower depths to plumb, Charles II (1665-1700) plumbed them. Four years old on his father's death, he was the final catastrophic fruit of generations of intermarriage with cousins and nieces, a cretin so malformed and under-developed that he never learned to speak or to eat normally ... and whose mental age and tastes in manhood remained those of the nursery.

Curiously enough, while this abortion was sitting on the throne of Spain, another Charles II was sitting, with slightly more dignity, on the throne of England. The King in the opera has a lot more in common with the English than with the Spanish Charles, but nevertheless there are parallels that we can note. Charles of Spain's mother (who acted as Regent for much of his reign) and his second Queen (his first wife died young) were both called Mariana, which is only one letter different from *Maritana*. There was a pretender to Charles's throne, one Don John (not so different from Don José, or Don Josey or Don Juan as it would probably have been pronounced in nineteenth century England). He was Philip IV's son by a Madrid actress - the only one of approximately 30 illegitimate children to be recognised. Although he never attempted to actually dethrone Charles, he did seize control of the country, and was the effective ruler for about 4 years, until he died, in mysterious circumstances. All this suggests that the original play may indeed have been founded very loosely on events in the reign of Charles II of Spain.

Don Caesar, Count de Bazan, now appears. He is a penniless gallant, who in order to protect from being beaten, a poor boy called Lazarillo (an apprentice who has run away from his cruel master) challenges and kills the Captain of the Guard in a duel, for which offence he is arrested and sentenced to be hanged. The King has forbidden duels, and has decreed that they shall be punished by shooting, except during Holy Week (which this is) when it shall be by hanging ! In the play duels have been banned only during Holy Week, which is actually a lot more logical !

Act 2 opens in the prison cell, where Don Caesar is sleeping, while Lazarillo is keeping watch. In gratitude, the boy has attached himself to his hero, and is determined to try to save him. Don José comes to Don Caesar with a proposition. He will have the sentence of death by hanging commuted to one of shooting (a much more *honourable* death) on condition that Don Caesar goes through a marriage ceremony with an unknown veiled lady. Inevitably, Don Caesar agrees. The lady is of course *Maritana*. Don José's plot is that if *Maritana* can acquire a title (and even better be a widow as well) she could easily be presented at Court, and as the Countess de Bazan she would be a fitting mistress for the King, a thing unthinkable for a mere strolling minstrel.

The scene now changes to the palace of the Marquis of Montefiore. The Marquis and Marchioness are a curious pair. He is a nervous, excitable little man, and his wife is an elderly ugly bat. They are in fact perfect prototypes for the Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro. At the palace, a ball is in progress, and during it a volley of gunshot is heard, announcing that the execution has taken place. It causes barely a

ripple in the festivities. The King enters, and Maritana is presented to him. He claims to be the man she has just married. She doesn't believe him. At this moment who should reappear but Don Caesar. Unbeknown to anyone else, Lazarillo has had plans of his own. He has contrived to get the firing squad drunk, and while they are sleeping it off, has removed the bullets from their muskets and replaced them with blanks. Don Caesar is eagerly seeking his wife, but now receives a very nasty shock when Don José presents her to him. This supposed wife is, however, the Marchioness. He immediately repudiates her, and Don José promises that if he will put this in writing and agree to leave Madrid at once and for ever, he can have an annual allowance of five thousand piastres. Don Caesar agrees, but just as he is about to sign the document, Maritana is heard singing a florid cadenza in the next room. This episode is an invention of Fitzball's, but it actually fits the conventions of opera better than the device used in the play, where Don Caesar merely overhears a servant address Maritana as the Countess de Bazan. Don Caesar immediately recognises the voice, but has no opportunity to do anything about it, for Don José at once has him arrested to prevent him searching for his wife.

When the curtain rises on Act 3, Maritana is alone. She has now learned that wealth does not necessarily bring happiness, and she muses on this theme in the song, "Scenes that are brightest". In the meantime, it is revealed that the King has already pardoned Don Caesar, but the pardon has been foully and maliciously held back by Don José who has designed that it shall arrive *after* Don Caesar's death. The King makes another attempt to woo Maritana, but she will not listen, insisting that he is not her husband. Incomprehensibly, she is the only person who fails to actually recognise him, even though, as another character has already pointed out, his features are stamped on every coin in the realm! After Don Caesar has learned of his pardon as a result of a rather humorous confrontation with the King, he finally meets Maritana, they recognise each other and (inevitably) sing a duet. But Don José still holds the proof of their marriage, and is still plotting. Lazarillo rushes in to warn his master, and Don Caesar rushes out to beg help from the Queen, while Maritana and Lazarillo pray for his safety. Don Caesar finds Don José in the garden pressing his unwelcome attentions on the Queen. He kills Don José, and receives the grateful thanks of the King who makes him Governor of Valencia.

#### THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD

Gilbert's indebtedness to *Maritana* was noted by several of the press who attended the first night of *The Yeomen*, and it is clear from what they say that both the opera and the play were well known at the time *Yeomen* was first produced. The *Saturday Review* said:-

In *The Yeomen of the Guard* ... is found a plot differing in no great degree from the straightforward books of other specially competent playwrights, and indeed having something distinctly in common with one very well-known operatic story - the late Vincent Wallace's *Maritana*, a setting of Dennery's *Don César de Basan*.

While the *Stage* remarked:-

Mr. Gilbert in conceiving his plot doubtless had in mind the central motive with which *Don César de Basan* and Wallace's *Maritana* have familiarised us.

*Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* seems to have considered *Yeomen* rather too frivolous a treatment of the subject, and implied that Gilbert's version was a retrograde step, for it said from the end of its long pointed nose:-

With the excision of a few sentences here and there, it might indeed be easily converted into as serious an opera as *Maritana*.

On the other hand, the *Era*, admitting that the resemblance was quite obvious, felt that Gilbert had improved on Fitzball, even though the theme was already played out:-

The resemblance of the main plot to *Maritana* will be at once recognised, but Mr. Gilbert has supplied other characters and scenes which give freshness to the plot, although it must be confessed that there is little novelty in the subject.

The other source for *Yeomen* does not seem to have been noticed by the press at the time, and indeed I can recall no mention of it in print until David Eden in his book *Gilbert and Sullivan, the creative conflict*, drew attention to it. This is Harrison Ainsworth's novel *The Tower of London*, set in the time of Mary Tudor, and first published in 1840. Although I have only had time to glance at this book, not read it thoroughly, it is clear from even a cursory glance that although Eden is not always correct in the points he makes, he is quite right in this particular instance. The whole atmosphere of *The Yeomen of the Guard* agrees very closely with that of Ainsworth's novel. There is one Cuthbert Cholmondeley, a sombre jailer called Nightgall, who was in love with a fair maid who repulsed him. Nightgall's keys are stolen twice, and on two occasions a prisoner makes his escape across the moat while being shot at from the walls. And so on... One point not mentioned by Eden is the question of why Tower Green was used by Gilbert as the setting for the execution when only Royalty and aristocracy were executed there. In the novel, Tower Green is the setting, and one Edward Underhill was burned there.

In transforming *Maritana* into *Yeomen*, some of the characters transferred easily, others did not. Don Caesar, under sentence of death, becomes Colonel Fairfax, and the itinerant entertainer to whom he is married just before his impending execution, becomes Elsie Maynard. Don José, the villain, would seem to have no counterpart in *Yeomen*, but as I have already hinted, he has. Although we never see him, he performs the identical function of holding back the reprieve - he becomes Sir Clarence Poltwhistle.

Although Jack Point seems to be an original creation of Gilbert's, he does bear a slight resemblance to another character from *Maritana* who seems to disappear - ie. the King. Both the King and Point are unsuccessful wooers of the soprano, and thus rivals of the tenor. However, the really remarkable piece of transformation is that of Lazarillo. Gilbert could not possibly have presented a trouser role on the Savoy stage in view of his expressed intention that no man should play a woman's part, and no woman a man's. So he had to become a woman; and because as a woman she could not possibly be the faithful companion of Fairfax, she had to be in love with him, and she had to not get him. So Phoebe Meryll was born.

#### THE PLOTS OF WALLACE'S OTHER OPERAS

##### THE DESERT FLOWER

###### Original Cast:

Captain .....	William Harrison
Major Hector van Pumpernickle.....	Henry Corri
Sgt. Peterman .....	Aynsley Cook
Casgan (an Indian Chief).....	W.H. Weiss
Oanita, the Indian Queen.....	Louisa Pyne
Eva, a Creole .....	Susan Pyne

The opera is set in Surinam in the year 1772. One of the absurdities of the story is that apparently both lions and tigers occur in Surinam!

Act 1: The garden of a house in Surinam.

Maurice, Hector and Eva discuss the danger from Indians. Casgan disguised as a trapper brings in Oanita a prisoner. She escapes and hides, and later she and Casgan plot to destroy the "palefaces" who are threatening their territory. Oanita is very beautiful and all men are attracted to her. Hector is a coward, but everyone thinks he is very brave. Oanita discovers his cowardice when she pretends to seduce him and tells him he will be offered as a sacrifice to the gods. Hector flees in terror. Peterman and the colonists enter planning a raid on Indian territory. Oanita fears that she is genuinely falling in love with Maurice.

Act 2: In the forest.

Casgan and the Indians sing of the menace of the foreigners. Hector, in attempting to run away has got lost in the forest, after accidentally shooting Zanga, the ferocious Indian set by Oanita to murder the white men. He is of course acclaimed as a hero when Peterman, Maurice and the others arrive. Casgan enters and announces that he has brought Oanita with him as it was not safe to leave her at the plantation. Maurice attempts to woo Oanita, who is impressed, but rejects him. Later, she falls under his spell, but Casgan, who has also pressed his suit and been rejected, brings the Indians who surround the pair. Casgan tells Oanita that if she admits that she had betrayed Maurice he will spare the latter's life, and Oanita of course agrees. Maurice curses her as the act ends.

Act 3, scene 1: The interior of an Indian hut.

Maurice is a prisoner, Casgan guarding him. Oanita enters, dismisses Casgan, and declares her love for Maurice, offering herself as his bride. (Forward little hussy!) The ceremony commences, but Casgan insists that if Maurice is to be King he must renounce his friends and lead the Indians in attack on the whites. In fury Maurice draws on Casgan, and Oanita laments that she can do nothing further to save him. Left alone, Maurice reminisces of home and contemplates his fate. Oanita enters with plans for escape.

Scene 2: The Indian encampment.

Oanita is about to be burned as a traitor for helping Maurice to escape, when he enters, shoots Casgan dead and he and Oanita are united.

#### LURLINE

An opera by Edward Fitzball, with music by Wallace. Libretto British Library 11781.d.23(3).

#### Original Cast:

Count Rudolph .....	William Harrison
Wilhelm .....	Mr. Lyall
Rhineberg (The Rhine King) .....	Charles Santley
Baron Truenfels .....	G. Honey
Zeluck, a gnome .....	H. Corrie
Conrad .....	Mr. Friend
Adolphe .....	Mr. Mengis
Lurline .....	Louisa Pyne
Ghiva .....	Miss Pilling
Liba, a nymph .....	Fanny Cruise

Act 1: Count Rudolph, an extravagant German, has dissipated his father's fortune, and proposes marriage to Ghiva, daughter of the neighbouring baron, in the hope of getting some money. The Baron is nearly as poor as he, and hopes that the marriage will bring *him* money. He breaks off the engagement when he discovers the truth. Lurline, a rhinenymph, who by her enchanted harp and song lures vessels to destruction in the whirlpool, has seen Rudolph and fallen in love with him. She presents herself to the Count at a banquet, surrounds him with spells, places a magic ring on his finger and vanishes. The Count falls in love with her and embarks on the Rhine in a skiff which sinks, his people all thinking him drowned.

Act 2: In the coral (!) caves under the Rhine, Lurline makes love to Rudolph who has survived because of the magic ring. When he hears his followers singing a lament from a boat, he is so moved that he asks to return to them for a short while. Lurline consents to his departure for 3 days, and agrees to await his return on the summit of the Lurlei-Berg at the rising of the moon on the third evening. She persuades her father, the Rhine King, to grant him a cargo of wealth with which he departs, leaving Lurline in the dread of non-fulfillment of his promise.

Act 3: Rudolph discloses to his companions the secret of his wealth, which produces a great change in the disposition of the Baron towards him, and Ghiva contrives to steal the ring and throw it into the Rhine. In the meantime Lurline, inconsolable in the absence of her Count, sings her lament on the top of the Lurlei-Berg, where a gnome in her father's service brings her the ring, in token of her lover's infidelity. Heartbroken, Lurline resolves to upbraid him for his perfidy, and visit him with vengeance. The scene changes to the Count's castle, where all is the scene of great frivolity. The Count's heart is with Lurline but he does not dare go to her without the ring. Lurline appears to him reproachfully and denounces the treachery of the companions in whom he now confides. They, grown jealous of his wealth, plot to murder him and plunder the castle. Their plot is overheard by the Baron and Ghiva who counsel him to flee. But Rudolph prefers death at the feet of Lurline. As the assassins approach her love returns, she seizes her harp and by the magic of music destroys them. She and Rudolph are reunited.

#### MATILDA OF HUNGARY

Libretto in British Library at 906.i.6 (3). Another copy filed in the Lord Chamberlain's collection on 13 February 1847.

Act 1, scene 1: An inn on the banks of the Moldau.

The King of Bohemia has been overwhelmed by his enemies, but all his subjects believe he is still alive somewhere. Count Magnus, the Prime Minister (disguised), has set up Mathias in his inn, and now brings an anonymous lady to be cared for. This is Matilda, Queen of Bohemia, to whom he now proposes marriage. In rage, the Queen throws open the back door and lets the people enter. They kneel at her feet, and she goes out with them. Magnus is furious, but now meets George Podiebrad, a friend of Mathias. Podiebrad appears to be a nomad and to be in love with the Queen.

Scene 2: The valley of Thabor in Moravia, by night.

Podiebrad is the king's look-alike, Magnus proclaims him king, and they all set out for the capital.

Act 2, scene 1: Queen Matilda's oratory in the King's palace at Prague.

The Queen awaits the arrival of the King. Podiebrad enters (in a cloak) craving an audience in which he intends to confess the deception, but is interrupted by Magnus who tells him that to impersonate the King is the only way to save the country.

Scene 2: The Great Square in Prague.

The people (with Mathias) are making merry. Magnus enters and announces the "King" who appears with the Queen.

Scene 3: Hall in the Palace.

Podiebrad thanks the lords for their reception. Magnus tries to make him sign a document making himself (Magnus) his successor, but Podiebrad refuses angrily. Magnus determines to "use" Mathias whom he thinks he has "bought". The Queen has now realised that Podiebrad is not her husband, and is angry. He protests that it was the only way to save her life. There is now a commotion, the city is on fire, soldiers rush about and Mathias runs in carrying a crossbow which he aims at Podiebrad.

Act 3: Audience chamber in the Palace.

3 months have passed. The Queen, and Lillia her lady in attendance are awaiting the return of Podiebrad who has gone to the war. He now returns in triumph, and tells the Queen that he will resign when she is safely in command of the country. She is much moved. Mathias now enters, he and Podiebrad recognise each other, and in horror Mathias denounces Magnus as the one who ordered him to kill the "King". Podiebrad orders Magnus's arrest and Mathias is allowed to depart. The Queen enters. Podiebrad tells her that all he has done to save the country he has done for love of her. Magnus has escaped but is recaptured, and is condemned to death by the Queen but not before he has denounced Podiebrad as an impostor. The Queen admits the plot, admits that Podiebrad is an impostor but one who has saved his country, and declares that she will make him the new King.

## THE AMBER WITCH

By Henry F. Chorley, based on the novel "Amber Witch" by Dr. Meinhold, written in imitation of the styles of ancient chronicles. Libretto British Library 11781 b43(9).

Set in the small town of Coserow, Pomerania, in the 15th century.

### Original Cast:

Mary .....	Mme Lemmens-Sherrington
Elsie .....	Miss Huddart
Count Rudiger .....	Sims Reeves
The Commandant .....	Charles Santley
The Pastor .....	Mr. Patey
Claus, a half-witted postman .....	Mr. Terrott
The King .....	Mr. Bartleman

Act 1, scene 1: The pastor's house, evening.

The inhabitants of the town are suffering from famine caused by the ravages of war. They are relieved by Mary, the pastor's daughter, who has derived her wealth from a source she will not disclose, having discovered a vein of amber on the Streckelberg, a hill outside the town. Elsie, a malicious woman, servant to the district Commandant, mingles with the crowd, spitefully commenting on this strange bounty. She brings Mary a message from her master who wants to engage her as a servant. Mary repulses her in surprise. The villagers retire, and the Pastor comes home from the fair where he has been to sell the amber, accompanied by the young Count Rudiger disguised as a peasant, who has rescued the old pastor from robbers on his way home. The pastor insists that they must have been witches but the youth laughs and, without disclosing his rank, asks for a night's lodging. He says that he has come to Coserow to see the entry of the Monarch, which is to occur the next day.

Scene 2: In the house of the Commandant.

Claus the postman brings letters, including a reproof from the King for the disorders permitted in the neighbourhood. Elsie returns and acquaints her master with the ill success of her mission, and informs him of the mysterious wealth which has flowed into the pastor's house. The people, she says, have begun to talk of witchcraft, and, to get Mary into the Commandant's power, Elsie will accuse her of sorcery. The two are overheard by Claus.

Scene 3: The market place next morning.

Count Rudiger enters, already in love with Mary, but lamenting the tyranny of his father, who will never agree to the marriage. Then Mary and her father enter, Mary having been chosen to speak the welcome to the King. The townspeople assemble, the King enters, Mary delivers the address, and the King invests her with a golden chain to the increased envy of the people. The King then recognises Count Rudiger, to the consternation of Mary and her father. The Commandant becomes yet more malicious. The Royal Procession moves on, but not before the Count has persuaded Mary to allow him to join her on the Streckelberg when she next goes for amber.

Act 2: The Streckelberg. Night.

Elsie and her wicked companions arrive to plot mischief towards Mary. They hide when Mary and the Count arrive, and there is a love scene in which he reveals the necessity for secrecy about this affair. A storm rises, Elsie and her troop creep out from their hiding place and follow the lovers.

Act 3. Scene 1: The parsonage. Morning.

Mary's companions arrive, surprised to find no one. Claus enters, and tells them that she has been taken to prison that morning on accusation of witchcraft. The Commandant arrives, and professes to console the pastor, pledging himself for Mary's safety, if she will follow the directions in a sealed letter which the Pastor is to deliver to her. The old man, ignorant of the content, agrees.

Scene 2: The Prison vault.

Mary is discovered by the pastor and the Commandant. The old man gives the letter to his daughter, and they find that it is a shameful proposal. She furiously repulses the Commandant who bids her look for the worst. She is brought into the Hall of Trial where before the Judges she is accused of having gold she cannot account for, and of having met the Evil One on the Streckelberg. She cannot clear herself, for the storm has destroyed all traces of the amber vein, and when she appeals to Count Rudiger is told that he is lying on a sick bed, and on being questioned by his father had denied all knowledge of her. She is ordered to be tortured, but she confesses and is ordered to be burned. Claus, realising her innocence, steals away to seek help.

Act 4, Scene 1: A dungeon in the Castle of Ravenstein.

Count Rudiger is imprisoned by his tyrant father at the insistence of the Commandant. Claus and some soldiers enter, telling him he is free, as his father has fallen from his horse and is dead. Claus warns him of Mary's peril. The Count rushes off to save her.

Scene 2: The Streckelberg.

Elsie and the villagers are rioting round a stake where Mary will be burned. Elsie complains of a strange heaviness and lethargy, and when the Commandant appears she claims her reward. He promises that she shall be paid before sundown. The death procession enters, and Mary is tied to the stake. The Commandant whispers in her ear that she can still be saved as his soldiers are within call to bear her to his house. But Elsie in malice has given the soldiers false orders, and sent them away, so that when the Commandant calls, Count Rudiger and his men arrive, and with them the King. The Commandant is stripped of his rank, and all call for Elsie the false accuser to be tried as a witch, but they discover she is already dead - the Commandant's "payment". The opera closes with the joy of Mary, delivered from so frightful a fate.

- [1] L.C. 7/10/44, no. 15; Dicks 800; Lacy vol xii.
- [2] L.C. 7/10/44, no 17; Acting Nat. Drama vol x.
- [3] L.C. 14/10/44, no. 24.
- [4] L.C. 18/10/44, no. 25.
- [5] B.L. 11737 a 41 (1).
- [6] B.L. 642 a 25.
- [7] B.L. 2304 d 16.
- [8] B.L. 11770 bbb.
- [9] B.L. Add MS 42978.

#### SOURCES:

Dictionary of National Biography (which contains a number of errors).  
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