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Yeomen'

of the Guard

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Society



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The Merryman and His Maid

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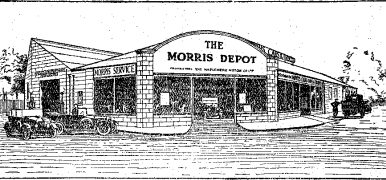
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Short Synopsis of the Story
OF
"The Yeomen of the Guard."

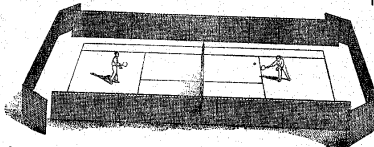
ACT I.

THE story opens at Tower Green, where Col. Fairfax, a gallant soldier, is to be beheaded, on a charge falsely preferred against him by his cousin, a Secretary of State, who would inherit the family estates if the Colonel died a bachelor. Phoebe, the pretty daughter of Sergeant Meryll, falls in love with the Colonel—quite secretly of course—and Wilfred Shadbolt, who is anything but handsome, and who loves Phoebe in vain, is filled with jealousy. With a desire to thwart the designs of his cousin, Col. Fairfax is anxious to marry, if only for an hour before he dies, and to that end Sir Richard Cholmondeley, an old friend of the Colonel, provides him with a wife in Elsie Maynard, a strolling singer, who, with Jack Point, her companion, arrives opportunely at the Tower. Elsie only agrees to the marriage conditionally on her becoming a widow in an hour, and at the same time Jack Point accepts the post of Jester in the household of the Lieutenant. Complications ensue by the unexpected arrival home of Leonard Meryll, Phoebe's brother, who, as a reward of valour, has been promoted to the Yeomen of the Guard. This presents a fine opening to Sergeant Meryll, who, disguising Fairfax as his son, introduces him to his brother Yeomen of the Guard, and they, never suspecting his real identity, greet him right heartily. Then the solemn sounding of the death knell announcing the hour of execution, and the crowd assemble on Tower Green. The Yeomen of the Guard take up their position, so does the Headsman—but the prisoner cannot be found, and there is great confusion in the search for him, and Wilfred Shadbolt is protestingly arrested. Elsie, overcome by the knowledge that she is still a wife, when she expected to be a widow, collapses in the arms of one of the Yeomen—none other, of course, than her own disguised husband.

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The Story (continued).

ACT II.

THE second act, which is set in the same scene, opens two days later, when the prisoner is still uncaptured, and Dame Carruthers does not hesitate to taunt the Yeomen with the knowledge. Jack Point and Wilfred are both correspondingly depressed, though through different causes, the former having lost his bride that was to be, and the latter finds that his occupation is gone. Wilfred believes he would make an excellent jester, so he and Point come to terms. They concoct their "idea" of a big joke, which is, that Wilfred shall discharge a gun from the wharf, and then take oath that in so doing he shot Fairfax as he was swimming to safety, and that the Colonel's body sank in the river. This will enable Jack Point to marry Elsie, thus widowed, and in return Wilfred is to be taught by him how to become a jester. Their calculations are rudely upset when the real son of Sergeant Meryll arrives with a reprieve for Col. Fairfax, and this gives Dame Carruthers, who has long displayed an ardent but unrequited love of Sergeant Meryll, a chance to demand her price of silence—his hand. Thus both Sergeant Meryll and his daughter are compelled to marry where their hearts are not, but Elsie is happy in the fact that she loves her husband to whom she has already been so strangely wed. And the fate of Jack Point. Ah! his is the pathetic portion. His gaiety is assumed as he tries to sing his song that a few brief hours before charmed them all, but the effort is too much for the noble jester, and the curtain falls with the refrain of his song in the ears and Jack Point insensible at the feet of Elsie Maynard.

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W. S. Gilbert—His Life and Letters.

"The Yeomen of the Guard" was produced at the Savoy on the 3rd October, 1888, and in the opinion of many there can be no question that with this Opera the achievement of the collaborators reached its highest point.

"I thought," said Gilbert, "'The Yeomen' was the best thing we had done"—and he was right: the best thing they had done or were ever to do, a perfect work of art.

Gilbert was once asked what gave him the idea of "The Yeomen," and he said that, while waiting for a train on a railway platform one day, he noticed a poster of a beefeater advertising the Tower Furnishing Company, and this set him thinking and devising, and the result was *The Merryman and His Maid*.

The evolution of the idea is indicated in two letters written to Sullivan:—

Dear S.,

I have got the plot of the new piece pretty well combed out, and I'm glad to hear you can dine with us on Wednesday, as we can go carefully into the matter after dinner. It is quite a consistent and effective story, without anachronisms or pathos of any kind, and I hope you will like it.

Yours very truly, W. S. Gilbert.

Dear Sullivan,

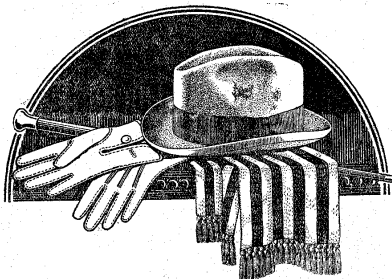
September 13, 1888.

The more I think of it, the more convinced I am that "The Beefeaters" is the name for the new piece. It is a good, sturdy, solid name, conjuring up picturesque associations and clearly telling its own tale at once. "The Tower" is nothing. No one knows but a few that beefeaters were called Tower Wardens. I put the two names before Hare without comment and asked him which he preferred, and he said "'The Beefeaters' by all means." This is for what it is worth.

Very truly yours, W. S. Gilbert.

There can be no sort of doubt that *The Yeomen of the Guard* is a far better title still.

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W. S. Gilbert—His Life and Letters

(continued).

Talking to Mr. William Archer of *The Yeomen of the Guard* Gilbert gave some interesting details of the method of his collaboration with Sir Arthur Sullivan:

The verse always preceded the music, or even any hint of it. Sometimes—very rarely—Sullivan would say of some song I had given him "My dear fellow, I can't make anything of this"—and then I would re-write it entirely, never tinker at it. But, of course, I don't mean to say that I "invented" all the rhythms and stanzas in the operas. Often a rhythm would be suggested by some old tune or other running in my head, and I would fit my words to it more or less exactly. When Sullivan knew I had done so, he would say, "Don't tell me what the tune is, or I shall be able to get it out of my head." But once, I remember, I did tell him. There is a duet in "The Yeomen of the Guard" beginning:

"I have a song to sing, O!
Sing me your song, O!"

It was suggested to me by an old chantey I used to hear the sailors on board my yacht singing in the "dog-watch" on Saturday evenings, beginning:

"Come, and I will sing to you—
What will you sing to me?
I will sing you one, O!
What is your one, O!"

And so on. Well, when I gave Sullivan the words of the duet, he found the utmost difficulty in setting it. He tried hard for a fortnight, but in vain. I offered to re-cast it in another mould, but he expressed himself so delighted with it in its then form that he was determined to work it out to a satisfactory issue. At last, he came to me and said: "You often have some old air in your mind which prompts the metre of your songs; if anything prompted you in this one, hum it to me—it may help me." Only a rash man ever asks me to hum, but the situation was desperate, and I did my best to convey to him the air of the chantey that had suggested the song to me. I was so far successful that before I had hummed a dozen bars he exclaimed "That will do—I've got it!" And in an hour he produced the charming air as it appears in the opera.

("W. S. Gilbert—His Life and Letters."
Sydney Dark and Rowland Grey.)

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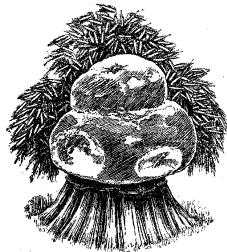
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—(With apologies to the late W. S. Gilbert.)

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Woking Amateur Operatic Society.

The Yeomen of the Guard

OR

The Merryman and His Maid.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ:

Sir Richard Cholmondeley (<i>Lieutenant of the Tower</i>)	...	N. G. MAITLAND
Colonel Fairfax (<i>under sentence of death</i>)	...	RICHARD HIGGS
Sergeant Meryll (<i>of the Yeomen of the Guard</i>)	...	OTIS MAITLAND
Leonard Meryll (<i>his Son</i>)	...	GUY WELLBY
Jack Point (<i>a Strolling Fester</i>)	...	FRANCIS NUTTER
Wilfred Shadbolt (<i>Head Tailor and Assistant Tormentor</i>)	...	C. H. P. HAY
The Headman	...	CHARLES DICK
First Yeoman	...	ERNEST BLACKHAM
Second Yeoman	...	MORRIS PRITCHETT
Third Yeoman	...	FRANK CONWAY
First Citizen	...	KENNETH FORD
Second Citizen	...	EDCUMBE HAY
Elsie Maynard (<i>a Strolling Singer</i>)	...	MAISIE KLEIN
Phoebe Meryll (<i>Sergt. Meryll's daughter</i>)	...	CECILY BENNETT
Dame Carruthers (<i>Houskeeper to the Tower</i>)	...	DOROTHY GILL
Kate (<i>her Niece</i>)	...	HILDA NEVE

Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard, Gentlemen and Citizens, etc.

Scene: TOWER GREEN. Date: 16th CENTURY.

Two days elapse between Act I. and Act II.

Musical Director: H. SCOTT-BAKER, A.R.A.M., L.R.A.M., A.R.C.O.
Producer: HOWARD CUNDELL.

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Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard, Gentlemen and Citizens, etc.

Miriam Alexander	Joy Higgs
Mary Atkin	Dorothy Hitchcock
Jocelyn Barton	Catherine Hoss
Barbara Bayly-Jones	Clodagh King
Ruth Blagden	Jessie Lawrie
Winifred Carr	Bvelyn Lomax
Eileen Coventry	Daphne Maude
Ethel Crapnell	Valerie Maude
Phyllis Deane	Clarice Mead
Gwladys Digby-Jones	Hilda Neve
Christabel Evans	Dorothy Ogilvie
Phoebe Farquhar	Bessie Peel
Hilda Fitch	Nancy Peel
Gwendolen Garrod	Bvelyn Rouse
Iris Gibb	Frances Scott
Peggy Gow	Barbara Wallby
Dorothy Heyhirst	Doris Whitburn

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E. Blenheim	E. Hay
G. Leslie Bone	A. J. Higgs
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Woking **Amateur Operatic Society.**

THE Society's production of "The Yeomen of the Guard" is in response to the vote taken during the performances of "The Mikado" in December, 1926, when from the selection of 28 Operas suggested for performance votes were recorded as follows:—

The Yeomen of the Guard	177
Iolanthe	124
Maid of the Mountains	112
The Geisha	95
Trial by Jury	95
Pirates of Penzance	95

The number of voting papers returned was far in excess of expectations and the Committee view with pleasure the general interest taken in the Society's work as shown by the increased number of Subscribers, many of whom reside in outlying districts.

From the list recorded above it will be seen that apart from Gilbert and Sullivan Operas, "The Maid of the Mountains" would be likely to prove a popular subject for the Society's next production. The rights of this musical comedy, however, have not been released for amateurs and the next on the list "The Geisha" is under consideration for production during the week commencing 17th December next.

Ladies and Gentlemen desiring to join the Society as Acting Members are invited to communicate with the Hon. Secretary, "Heighton," Danes Hill, Woking, from whom full particulars as to membership may be obtained.

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To all who have in any way assisted in the
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THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

at the Savoy Theatre, London,
on Wednesday, Oct. 3, 1888.

The Yeomen of the Guard

or
The Merryman and His Maid.

A NEW AND ORIGINAL OPERA IN TWO ACTS.

Written by W. S. Gilbert. Composed by Arthur Sullivan.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Richard Cholmondeley ...	Mr. Wallace Brownlow
Colonel Fairfax ...	Mr. Courtice Pounds
Sergeant Meryll ...	Mr. Richard Temple
Leonard Meryll ...	Mr. W. R. Shirley
Jack Point ...	Mr. George Grossmith
Wilfred Shadbolt ...	Mr. W. H. Denny
Elsie Maynard ...	Miss Geraldine Ulmar
Phoebe Meryll ...	Miss Jessie Bond
Dame Carruthers ...	Miss Rosina Brandram
Kate ...	Miss Rose Hervey

Scene: TOWER GREEN.

Date: SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

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RUPERT DOYLE CARLES

production of

The Yeomen of the Guard

or THE MERRYMAN AND HIS MAID.

Princes Theatre, London.

Monday, Nov. 29 to Saturday, Dec. 4, 1926.

Sir Richard Cholmondeley (Lieut. of the Tower) ...	JOSEPH GRIFFIN
Colonel Fairfax (under Sentence of Death) ...	CHARLES GOULDING
Sergeant Meryll (of the Yeomen of the Guard) ...	DARRELL FANCOURT
Leonard Meryll (his Son) ...	DAVID HUTCHISON
Jack Point (a Strolling Jester) ...	HENRY A. LYTTON
Wilfred Shadbolt (Head Jailer and Assistant Tormentor) ...	LEO SHEPFIELD
First Yeomen ...	LESLIE BOOTH
Second Yeomen ...	JOHN HUNTINGTON
First Citizen ...	CHARLES LESLIE
Second Citizen ...	T. PENNY-HUGHES
Elsie Maynard (a Strolling Player) ...	WINIFRED LAWSON
Phoebe Meryll (Sergt. Meryll's Daughter) ...	AILEEN DAVIES
Dame Carruthers (Housekeeper to the Tower) ...	BERTHA LEWIS
Kate (her Niece) ...	LOUISE WHITTOCK

Chorus of Yeomen of the Guard, Gentlemen and Citizens.

Conductor - HARRY NORRIS.

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MERRIE ENGLAND

which was presented by the Society on January 15 and 16, 1925,
at the PALACE THEATRE, WOKING.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Earl of Essex	ERIC WILMER
Sir Walter Raleigh	RICHARD HIGGS
Walter Wilkins (a player in Shakespeare's Company)	FRANCIS NUTTER
Silas Simpkins (another player)	EDWARD DEANE
Long Tom (Royal Forester)	HUGH MULLINS
Big Ben (Royal Forester)	PERCY LICKFOLD
The Queen's Pool	KENNETH FORD
A Butcher	PERCY WILLIAMS
A Baker	CLARA HILL
A Tinker	BILLIE STURT
A Tailor	GEORGE FOSTER
A Lord	JOHN PAGET
Bessie Throckmorton	EUNETA HUTCHINSON DRIVER
Queen Elizabeth	VIOLET SOUTHAM
Jill-All-Along	THEDA DEANE
The May Queen	WINIFRED GIBB
Marjory (a Dancer)	JESSIE LAWRIE
Kate	KATHLEEN RITCHIE
Folly Girl	EVYLYN PAGET
First Royal Page	BARBARA WHITE
Second Royal Page	MARGARET BOND
Lady-in-Waiting	CLARICE MEAD
A Soldier	TOM ALEXANDER

Chorus of Lords, Ladies, Townsfolk, Soldiers, etc.

Mesdames M. Alexander, G. Bright, H. Bright, V. Brunner, W. Carr, J. Chidell, P. Fearley, K. Frech, R. Hare-Winton, M. Jackman, J. Higgs, D. Hitchcock, M. Kay, L. Lee, B. Lomas, D. Ogilvie, A. Pim, B. Powell, C. Sharpe, K. Sharpe, M. Slater, M. Slocock, V. Southam, R. Thomas, M. Young, G. Wood.

Messrs. L. V. Alexander, J. Armstrong, P. Beal, J. Beckett, R. Bracher, A. Catchpole, D. Marsh, R. Gibb, Y. Kuiper, P. Rayson, R. Slatten, T. P. West.

FULL ORCHESTRA.

Musical Director: H. SCOTT-BAKER, A.R.A.M., L.R.A.M., A.R.C.O.
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THE GONDOLIERS

which was presented by the Society on January 12, 13 and 14, 1926,
at the PALACE THEATRE, WOKING.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Duke of Plaza-Toro (a Grandee of Spain)	FRANCIS NUTTER
Luiz (his attendant)	MORRIS PRITCHETT
Don Alhambra del Bolero (The Grand Inquisitor)	PERCY LICKFOLD
Marco Palmieri	RICHARD HIGGS
Guisepe Palmieri	REGINALD FRANCE
Antonio (Venetian)	GROFFREY HEALEY
Francesco (Gondoliers)	ERNEST BLACKHAM
Giorgio	L. V. ALEXANDER
Annibale	VINCENT PLUMMER
The Duchess of Plaza-Toro	VIOLET SOUTHAM
Casilda (her daughter)	GWYN WOOD
Gianetta	EDITH LISTER-JAMES
Tessa	CECILY BENNETT
Fiametta (Contadine)	GLADYS BRIGHT
Vittoria	VERA FIDGON
Giulia	DOROTHY OGILVIE
Inez (The King's Foster Mother)	THEDA DEANE
The Lord High Drummer Boy	VERONICA BRUNNER
Pages	PATRICIA & MONICA SMYTH

Chorus of Gondoliers & Contadine, Men-at-Arms, Herald, etc.

Mesdames M. Alexander, B. Andrews, C. Auber, R. Blagden, B. Candelin, W. Carr, P. Fearley, K. Frech, G. Garrod, R. Hare-Winton, C. Harper, D. Hayhurst, J. Higgs, D. Hitchcock, A. R. Johnson, M. R. Johnson, M. Kay, C. King, J. Lawrie, N. Leigh, E. Lomas, C. Mead, D. Nicholls, A. Pim, M. Tracey-Simpson, M. Wall, M. Young.

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FULL ORCHESTRA.

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