"RUDDIGORE" OFFENDS

"SAVOYARD" writes: About the title of Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera, "Ruddigore," is clustered a group of anecdotes finding a common centre in a Gilbertian retort which has become a classic in club and other circles

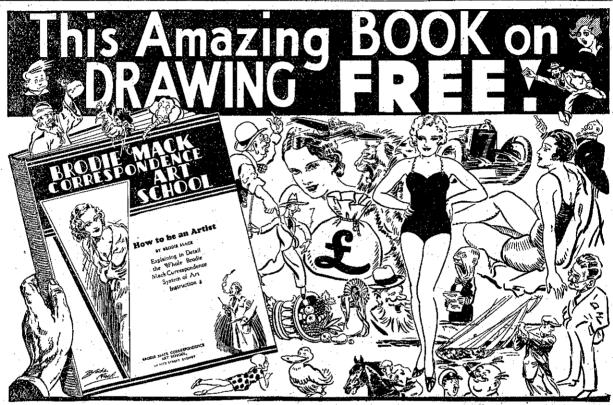
it • When was brought Gilbert's attention that the ruddy of his title was but a thin disguise for an adjective not heard in the best of society, he turned upon a certain

bishop who was among those who protested. "My lord," he is said to have tested. "My lord," he is said to have Teplied, "you are quite wrong. Ruddy does not mean bloody. For example, when I say 'I like your ruddy cheek,' I do not refer to your bloody cheek!"

"The Graphic," reporting the opera premiere, complained of the "not very happily selected title . . . The sterner and less mealy-mouthed sex," it philosophised, "safe in the club smoking room, might pass such a name with a smile. But it is different in the case of ladies, to whom Savoy operas large-

ly appeal." This annoyed Gilbert, so a week after the opening he proposed as another title, "Kensington Gore; or, Not So Good as The Mikado;" later "Kensington Gore; or, Robin and Richard Were Two Pretty Men."

There is little Gilbert felt bitterly the spread aversion to the title and the insinuations of vulgarity. All this is now a matter of history, and though the ways of 1887 are not the ways of 1935, the opera wears well and gave a great thrill to radio listeners.



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