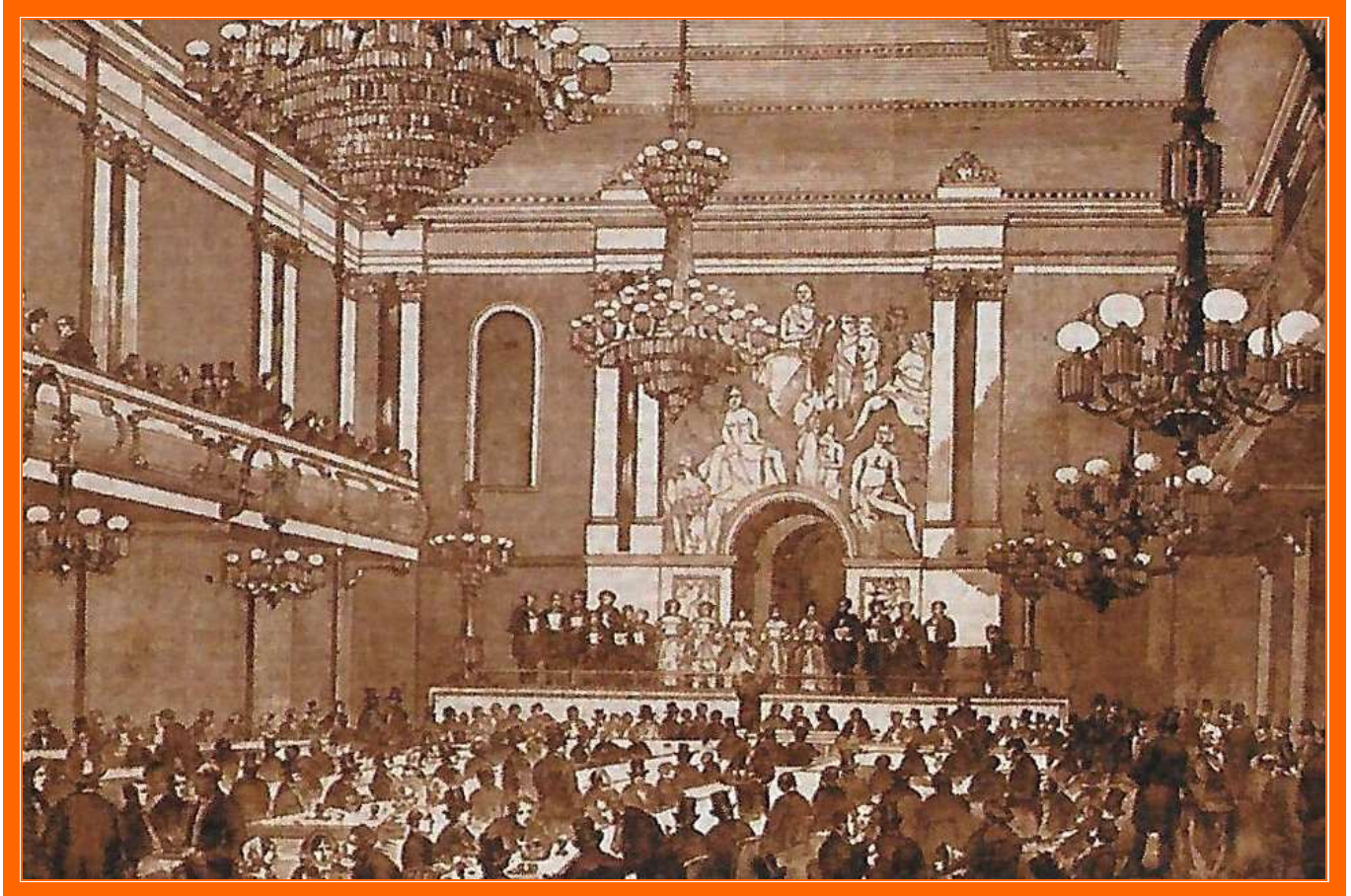


# VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS LONDON 1837-1901



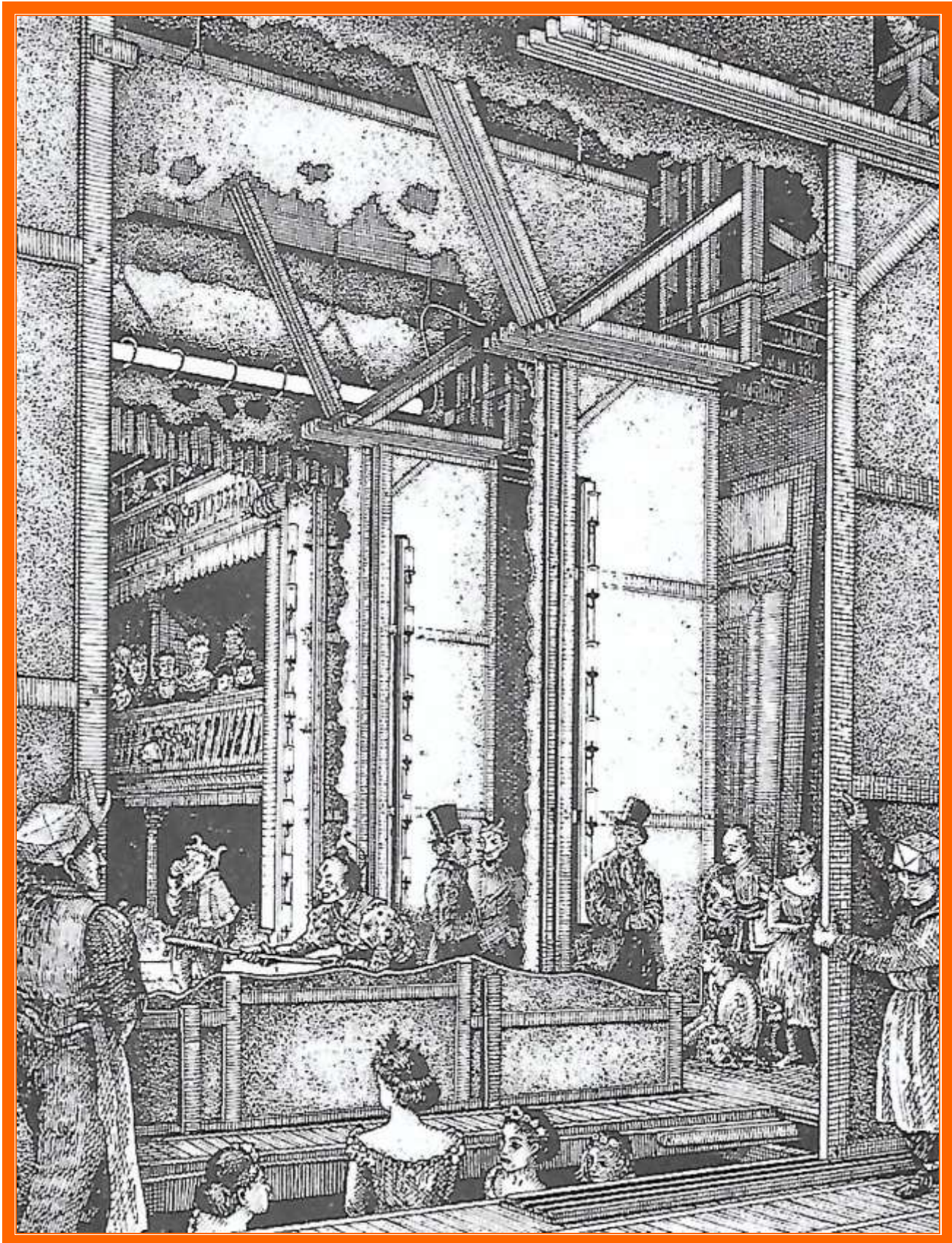
The second Canterbury Hall and giant Supper Room in Lambeth which opened in 1854; later a variety theatre, demolished after bombing (from Earl).

## **GAS LIGHTING**

**From contemporary illustrations**

**BRIAN ROBERTS**

# **GAS LIGHTING IN THEATRES**



Gas lighting backstage at the Theatre Royal, Leicester 1836.  
(The Development of the English Playhouse).

# VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS LONDON 1837-1901

## CONTENTS

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**This listing is indicative only.** Names of theatres and music halls often changed. Buildings were often reconstructed and the interior redesigned by a different architect (listed in brackets). The dates shown are those attributed to the illustrations.

### PART ONE: 1840s & 1850s

Adelphi Theatre, Strand: 1858  
Astleys' Amphitheatre, near Westminster Bridge: 1841, 1854  
Canterbury Music Hall, Lambeth: 1854, 1855  
Covent Garden Theatre, (Sir Edward Barry): 1846, 1858  
Evans Music & Supper Rooms, Covent Garden: 1856  
Grapes Tavern, Southwark: 1846  
Her Majesty's Theatre, (C J Phipps): 1843, 1863  
Lyceum Theatre: 1847  
Olympic Theatre, (C J Phipps): 1849  
Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street (T Marsh Nelson): 1841  
Queen's Theatre, Long Acre (C J Phipps): 1850

### PART TWO: 1860s & 1870s

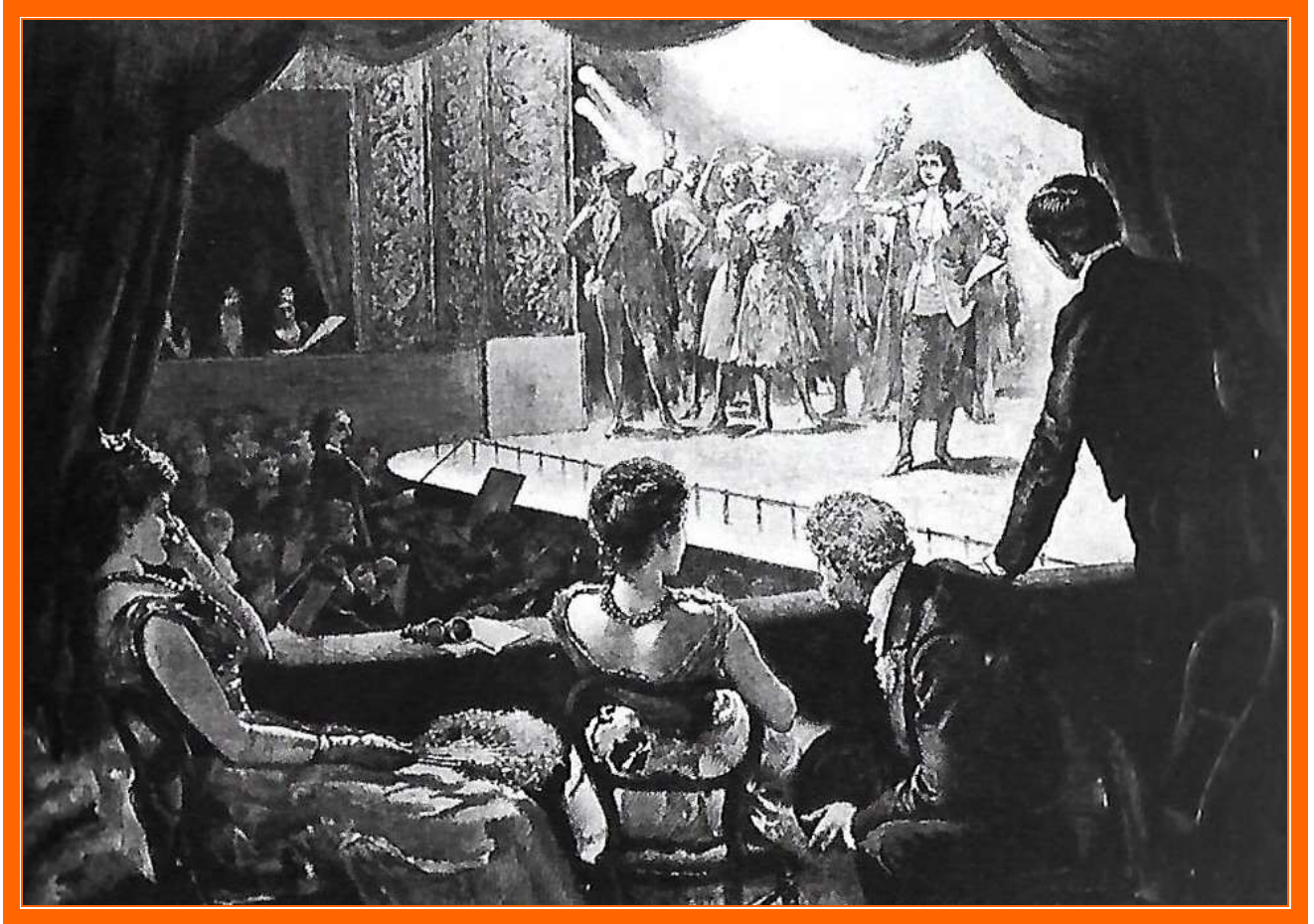
Alhambra Music Hall, Leicester Square (T Hayter Lewis): 1861  
Globe Theatre, Newcastle Street, Strand (Sefton Parry): 1868, 1869  
Her Majesty's Theatre, (C J Phipps): 1843, 1863  
Holborn Theatre Royal, High Holborn (Finch, Hill & Paraire): 1866  
Old Vic, Waterloo Road, (Jethro T Robinson): 1871  
Oxford Music Hall: 1871  
Royal Pavilion, Whitechapel Road (G H Simmonds): 1866  
Royal Victoria Hall & Coffee Tavern: 1867  
St James's, King Street (Thomas Verity): 1878  
Royal Amphitheatre, Holborn: 1867

### PART THREE: 1880s & 1890s

Apollo, Shaftesbury Avenue (Lewen Sharp): 1901  
Criterion Theatre, Piccadilly Circus (Thomas Verity): 1880  
Empire Theatre, Leicester Square (Thomas Verity): 1884, 1894  
Globe Theatre, Newcastle Street, Strand: 1901  
Royalty, Dean Street, Soho (Thomas Verity): 1882  
Terry's Theatre, Strand (Walter Emden): 1887  
Tivoli Theatre and Restaurant, Strand: (Walter Emden): 1888  
Toole's Theatre, Charing Cross (J J Thompson): 1882

### PART FOUR: POSTERS & PICTURES, BIBLIOGRAPHY

# VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS LONDON 1837-1901

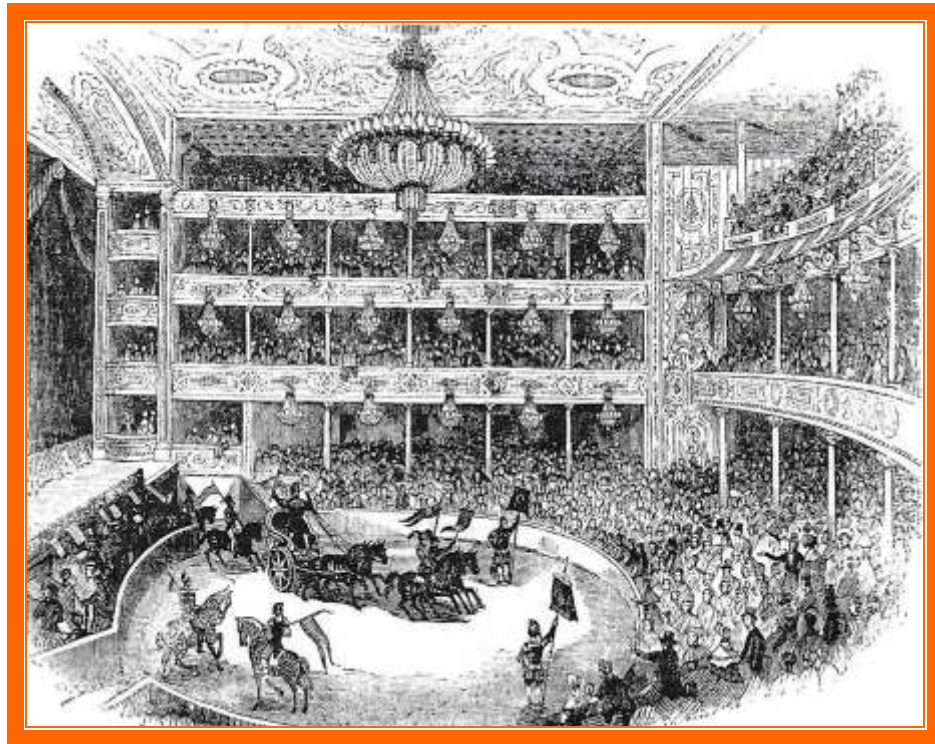


Victorian family in a box at the pantomime, undated (Earl).

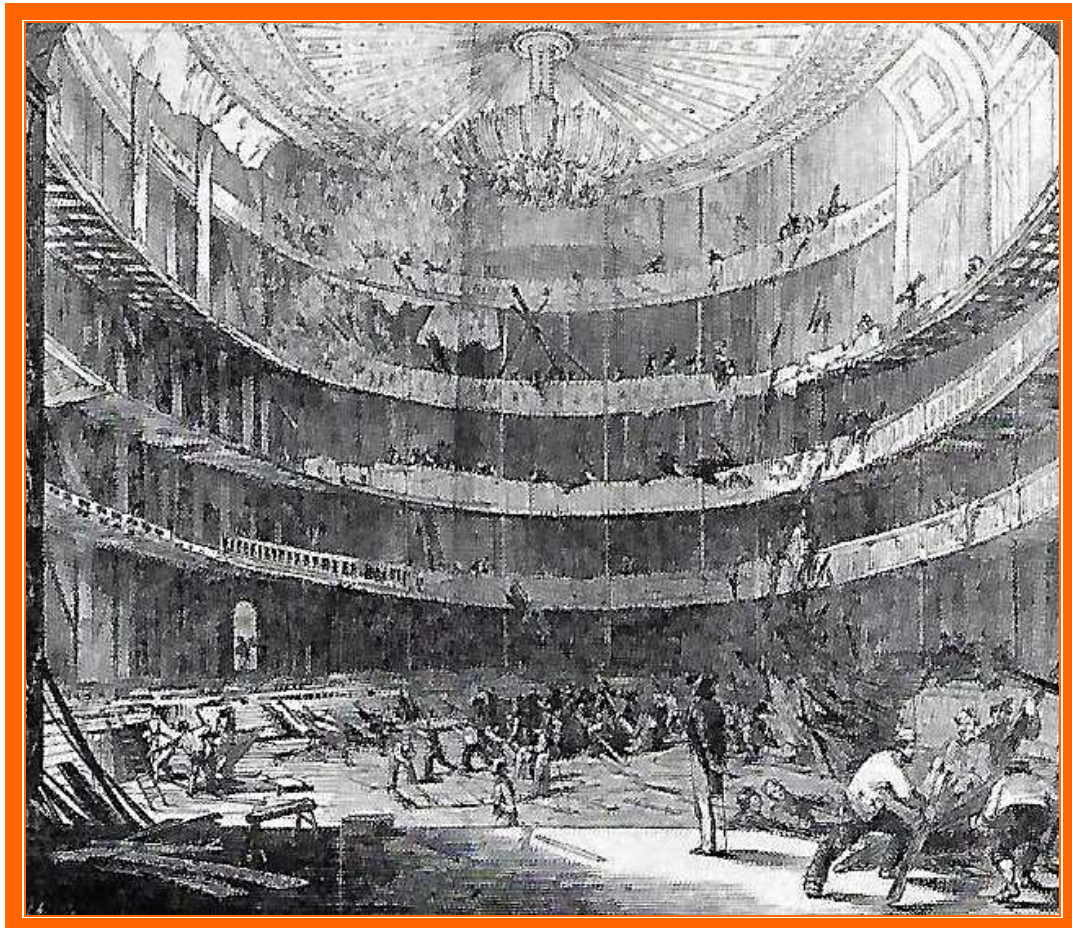
## **GAS LIGHTING**

**The EIGHTEEN FORTIES & FIFTIES**

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

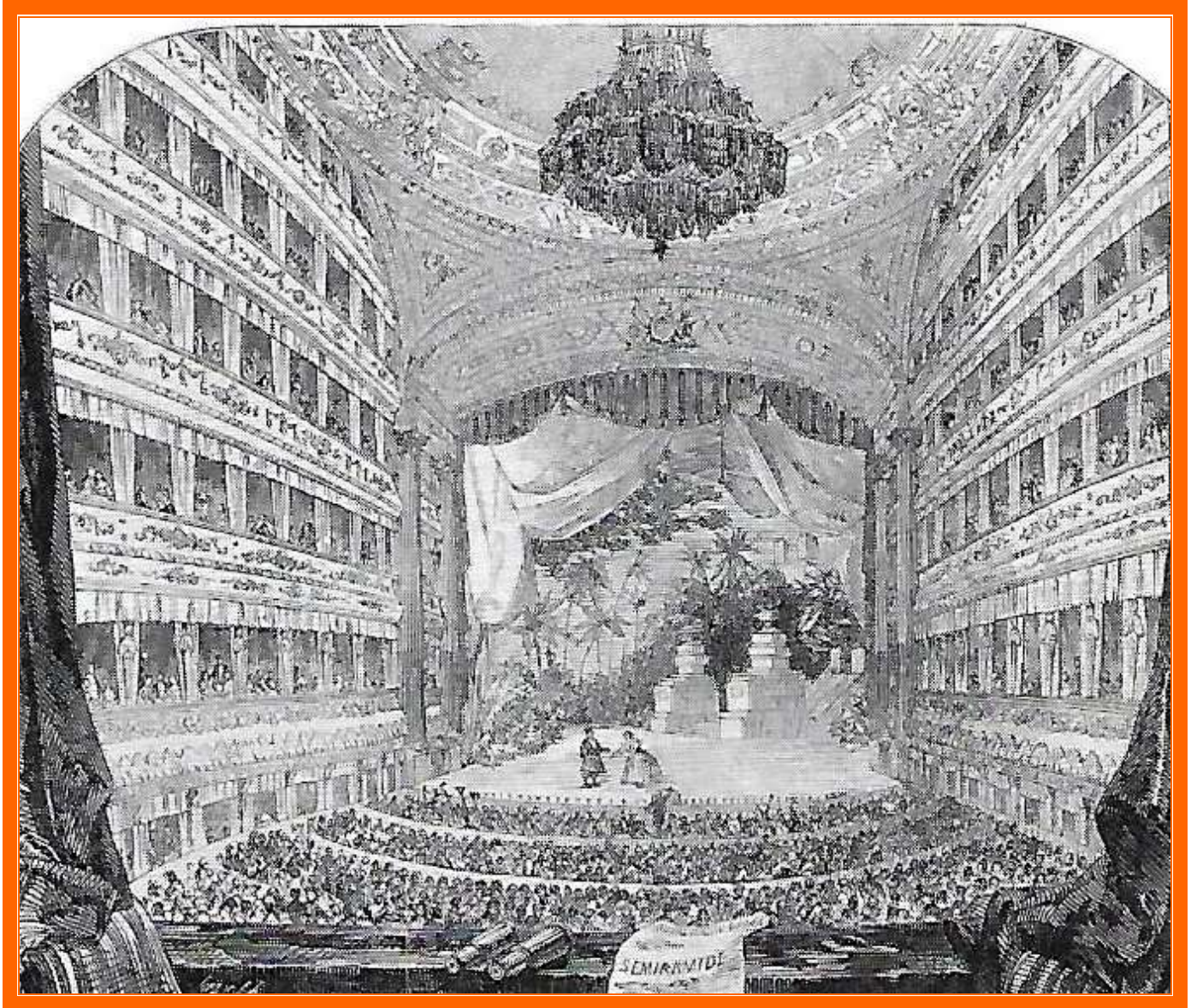


Astley's Amphitheatre in 1843 (From Victorian Entertainment by Alan Delgado).



Revamping the Covent Garden auditorium in 1846.  
(From Victorian & Edwardian Theatres by Victor Glasstone).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

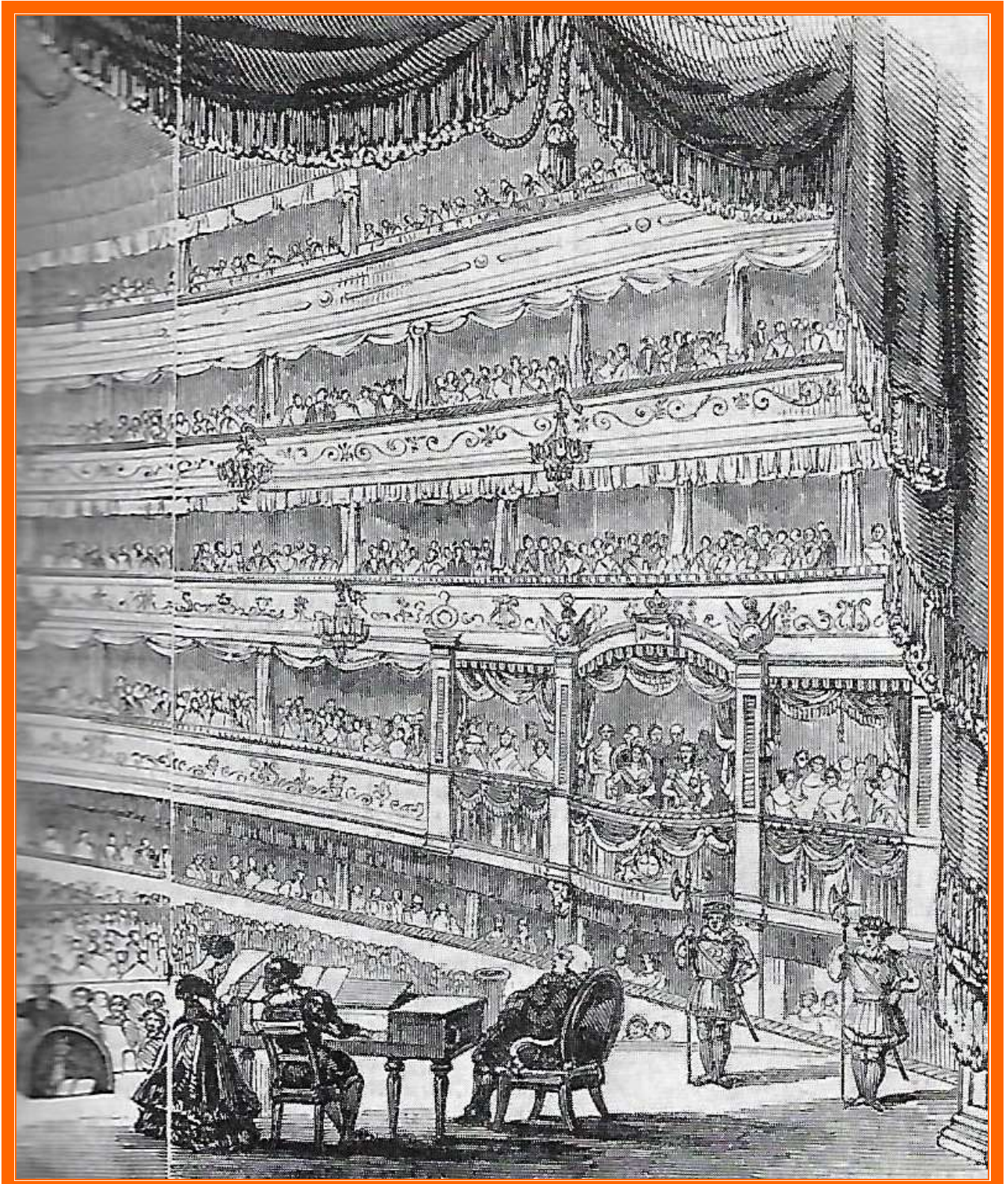


The Covent Garden reopening in 1847 after the rebuilt interior "which seated over 3000 people" (Glasstone).

"Enthusiasm after the opening night, *The Illustrated London News* wished that we could add the effect of colour, as presented on the grand chandelier being lighted up suddenly before the overture, an effect so electrical\* that it was followed by an immense burst of cheering from all parts of the house....."

\*A strange description of gas light, some thirty-five years before the first complete theatre electric lighting was in London's Savoy in 1881.

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

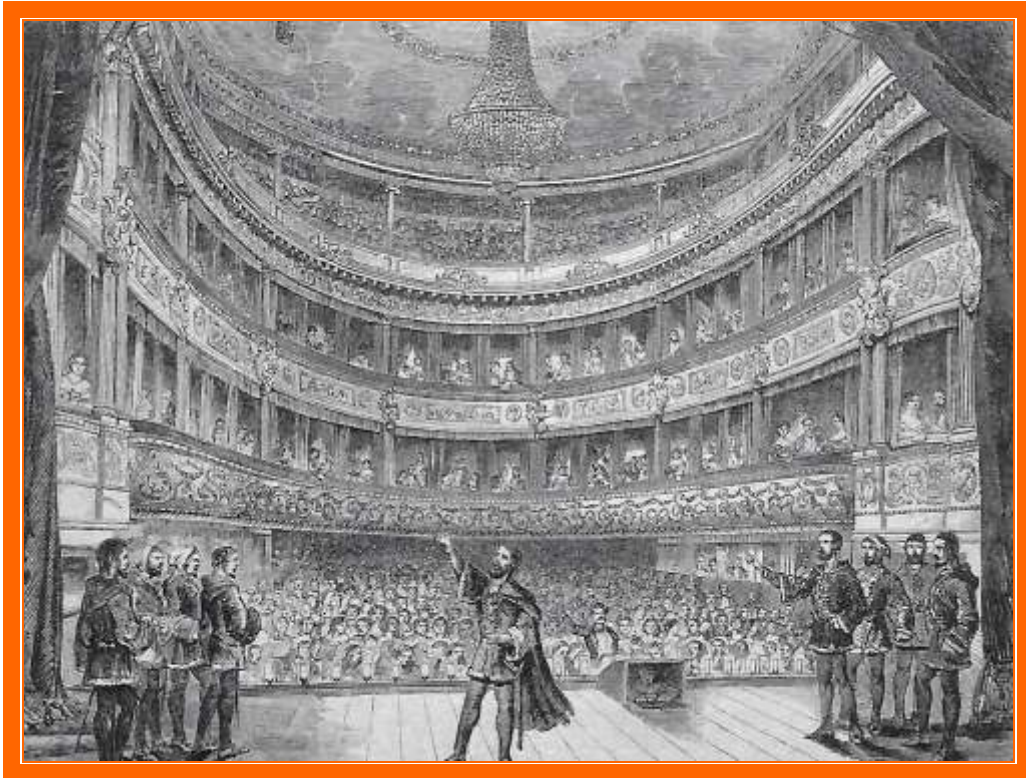


Her Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket in 1843 (Glasstone).

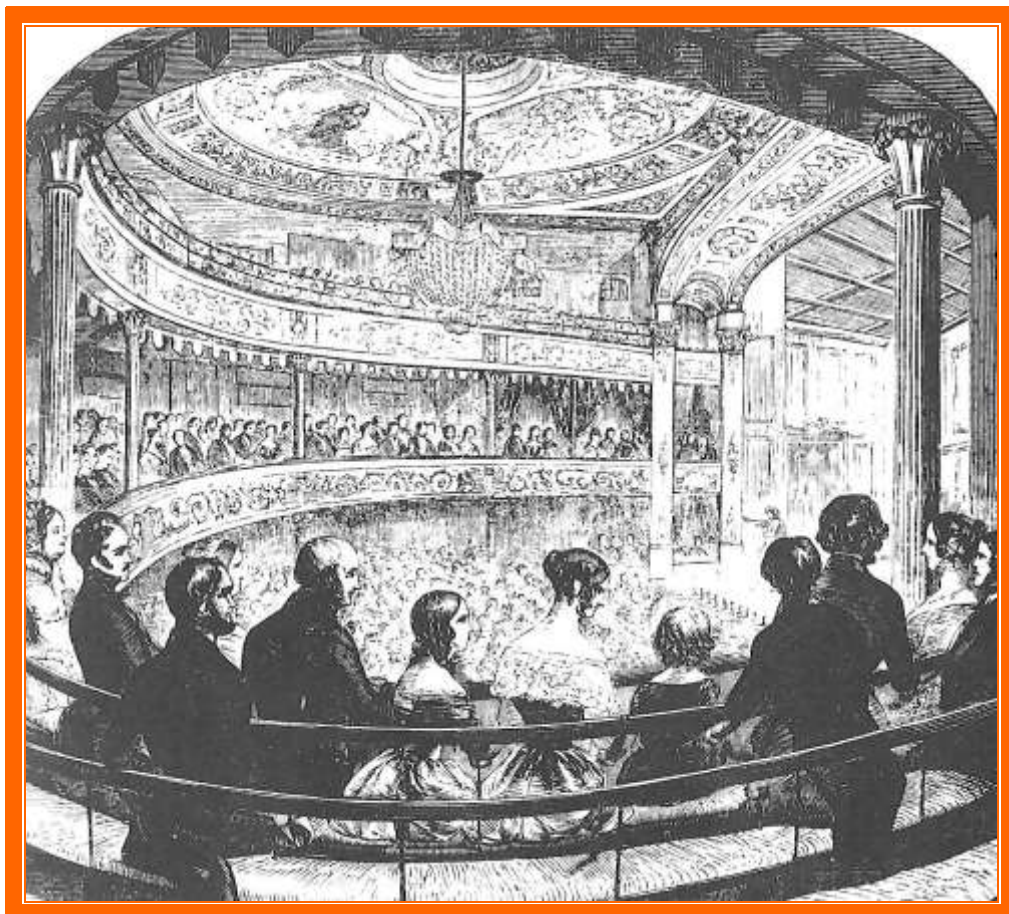
"Gaslighting was introduced in 1818, a year after Drury Lane and Covent Garden but it was found that *the gas imparted a deadly hue to the ladies complexions*, and in 1821 the scones on the tier fronts were again filled with wax candles, though the central gas chandelier remained".

"The lighting of the house is to be mainly from the large central chandelier, assisted by branches in front of the grand tier only. This will be effective and economical".

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



Lyceum Theatre, Wellington Street in 1847 before removal of the gas chandeliers from the balcony fronts after complaints of noxious fumes (Glasstone).



Olympic Theatre, Newcastle Street rebuilt after being burned down in 1847 (Glasstone). The former theatre had gas lighting installed by a new owner after 1826.



# VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

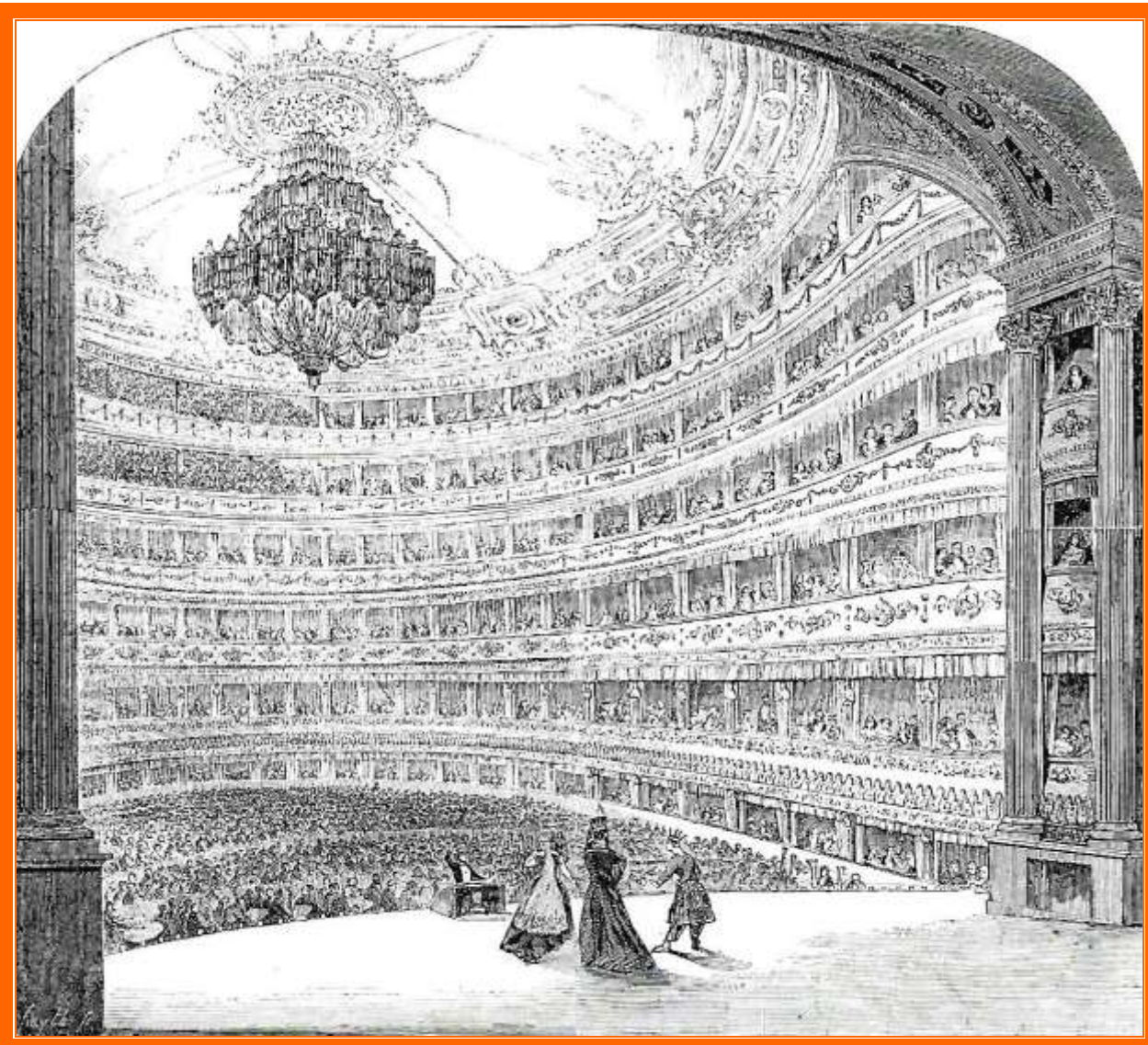


The Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street 1841.  
(from *Lost Theatres of London* by Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

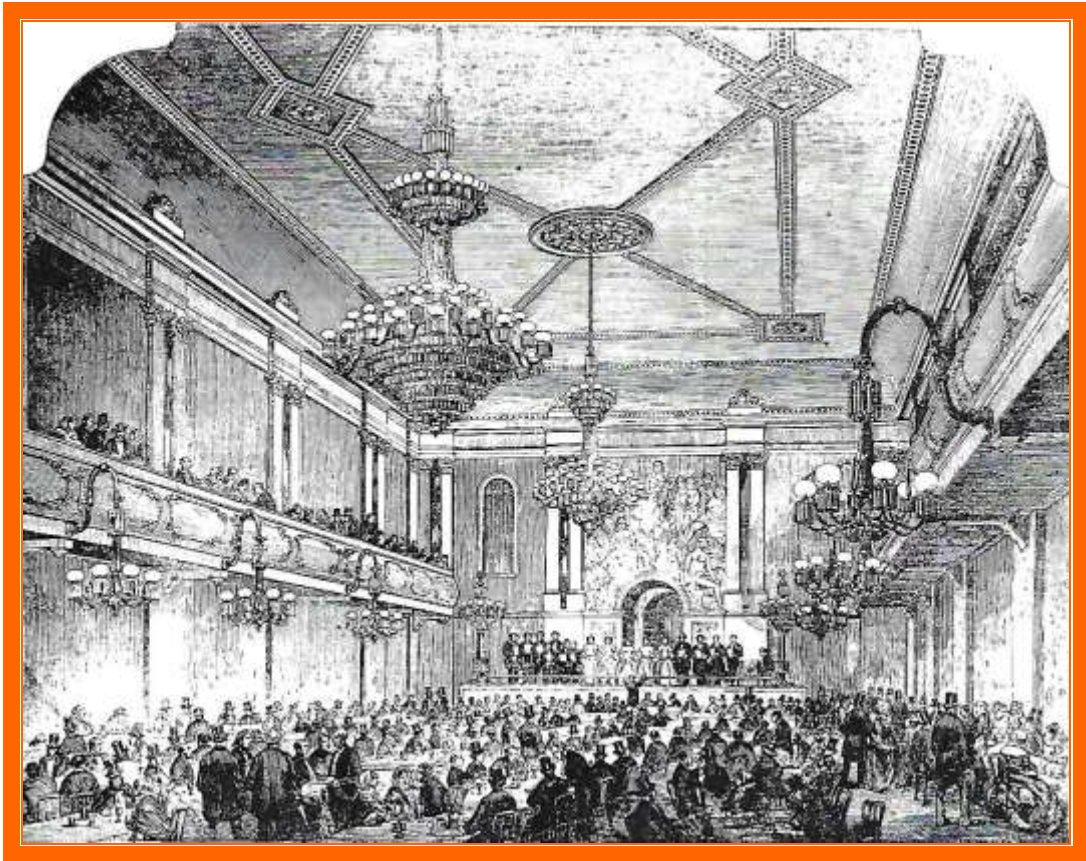


The Great Foyer at Covent Garden with "brilliant gas chandeliers" (Southern).



Covent Garden's "immense new auditorium with its six tiers of boxes" 1847 (Southern).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

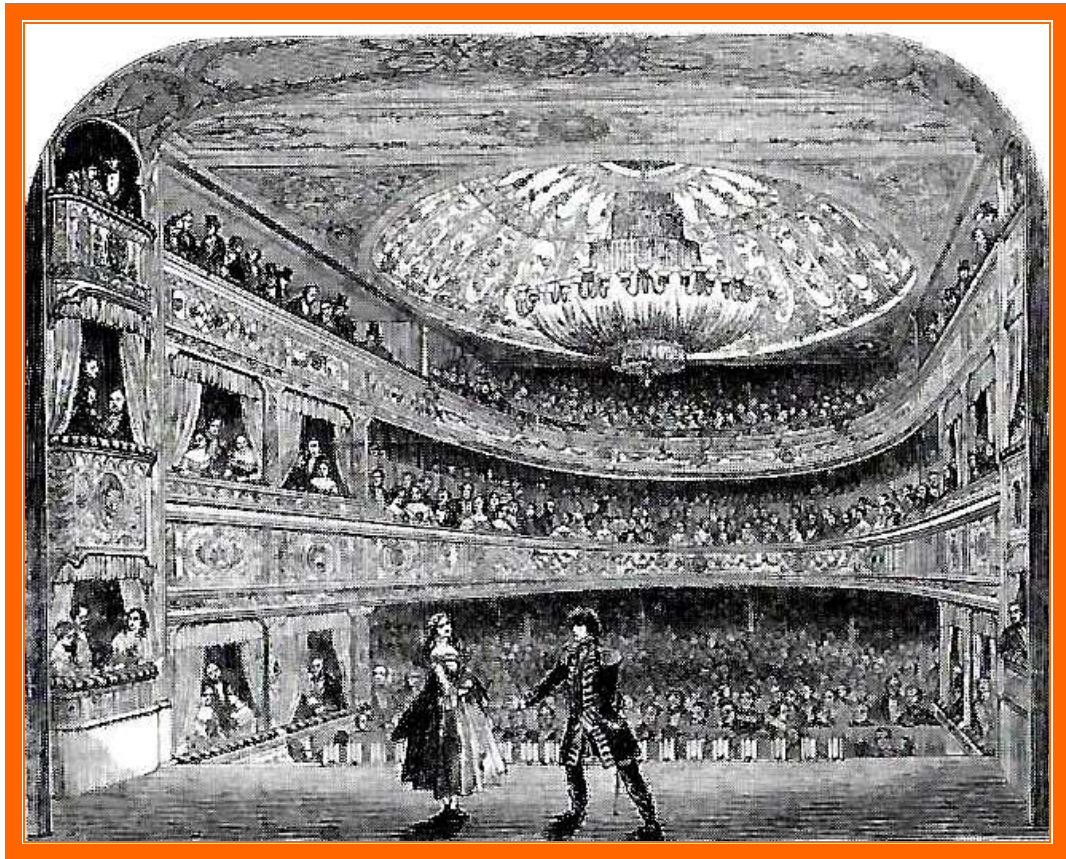


The Canterbury at Lambeth in 1856, the Hall capable of holding 1000 people an evening (Delgado).

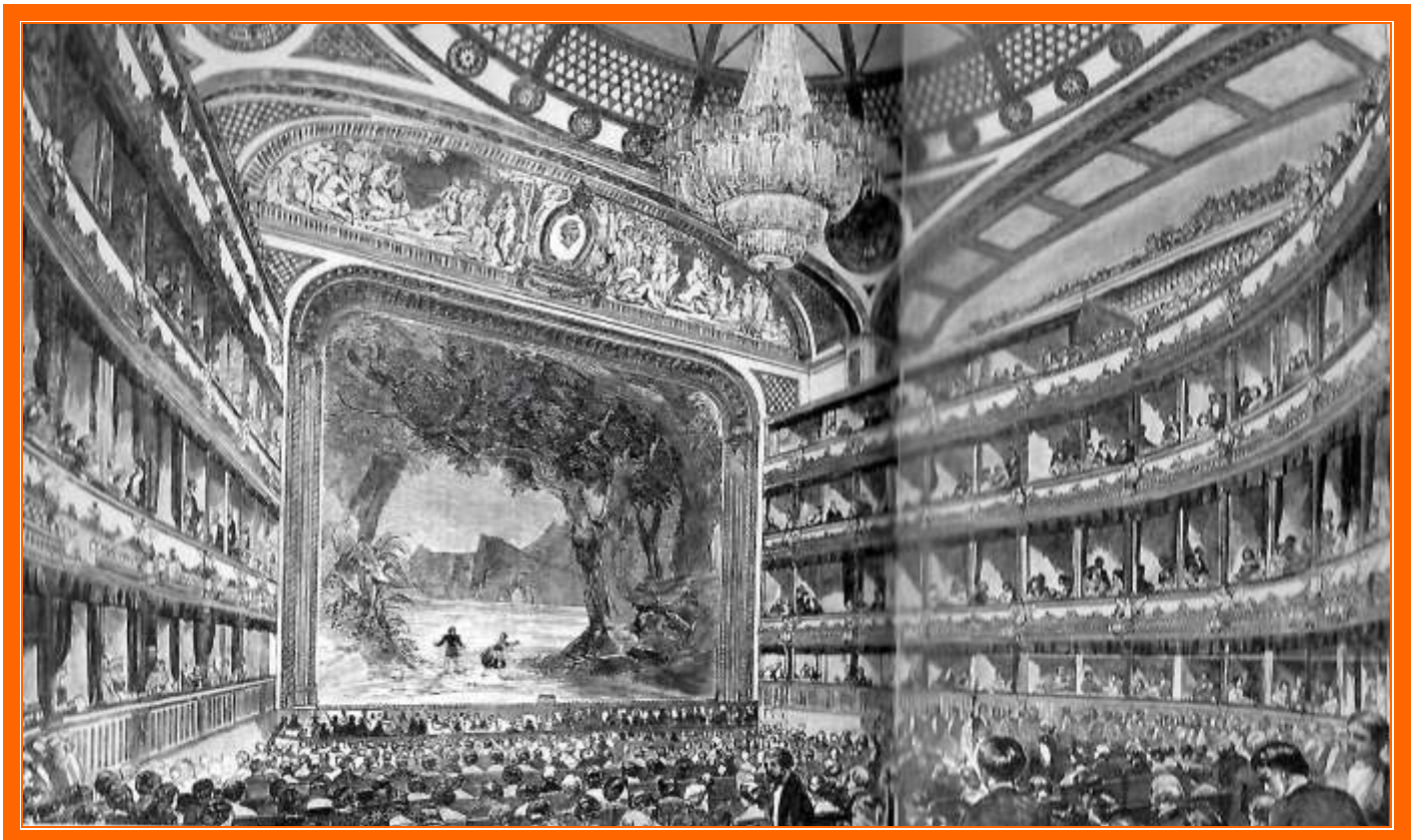


After the building was destroyed by fire:  
"The New Opera House (Covent Garden) which followed in 1857.... and which-- with some modifications-- remains as the building we know today" (Southern).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The new "far grander and more spacious" Adelphi in 1858 (Glasstone).

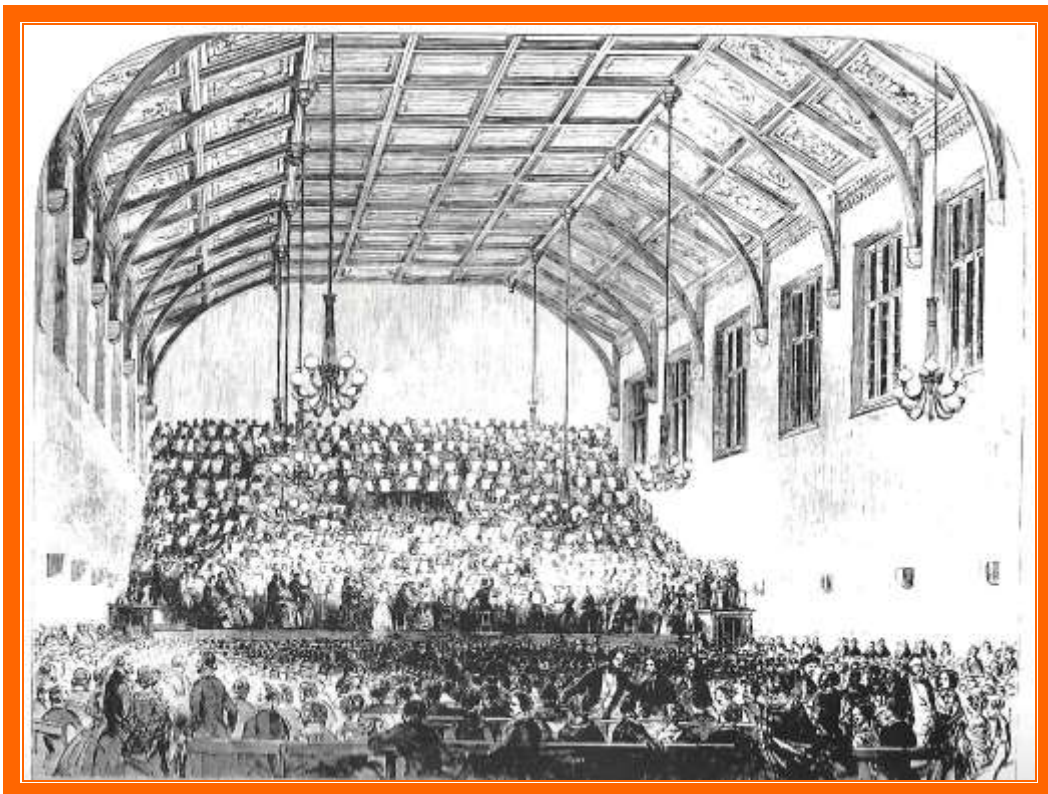


The rebuilt Covent Garden opened in 1858 with a giant gas chandelier in the auditorium (Glasstone).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



Astley's Amphitheatre in 1854 "a terrific spectacle doubtless slightly exaggerated by the artist, but one hopes not." (Delgado).



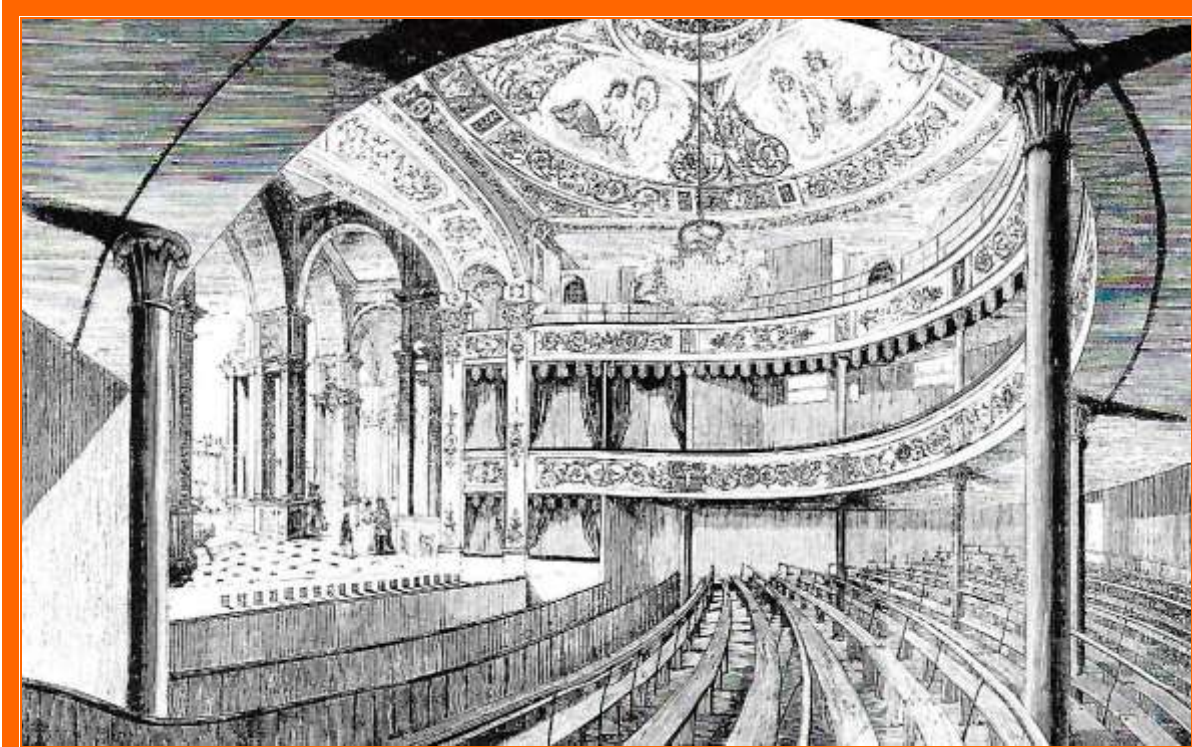
The opening of St Martin's Hall, The Queen's Theatre in Long Acre, 1850.  
(*The Illustrated London News* and *Lost Theatres*).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

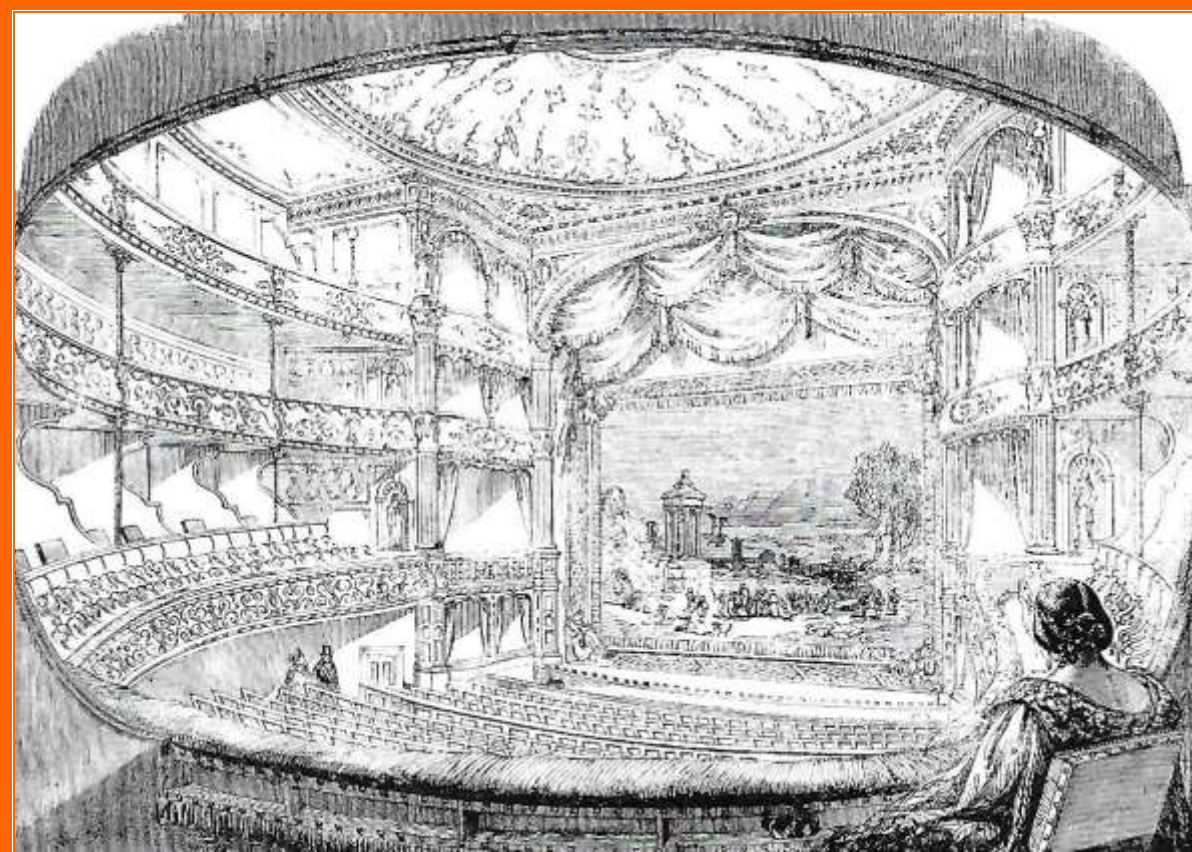


Evan's in Covent Garden. "A brilliant scene in 1856 when it was reconstructed in part. The Lighting was gas." (Delgado).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The Olympic Theatre, Wych Street 1850 (Southern).



The New Adelphi Theatre in the Strand 1858 (Southern).

# **VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS LONDON 1837-1901**



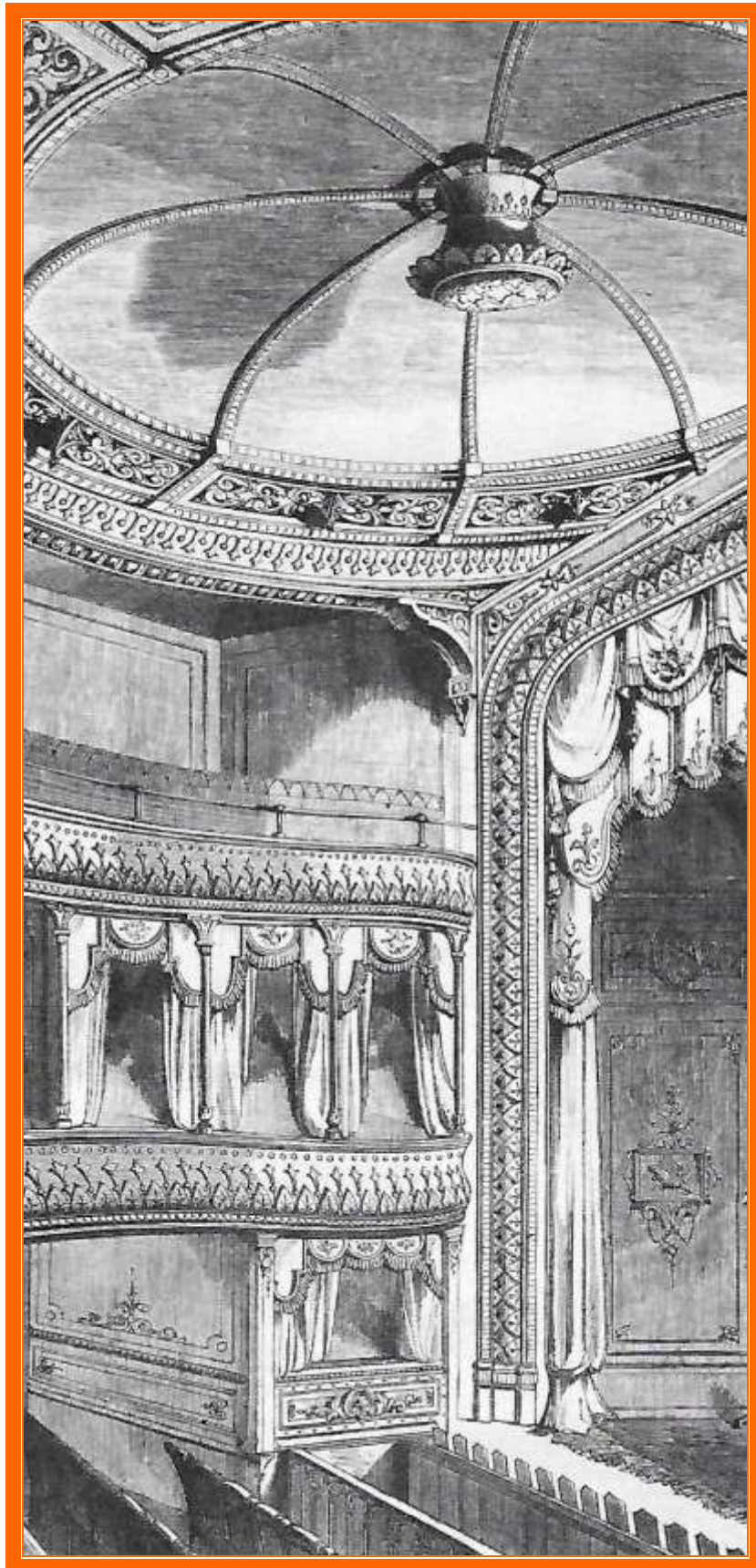
Backstage at the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton (Weightman).

## **GAS LIGHTING**

**The EIGHTEEN SIXTIES & SEVENTIES**



## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

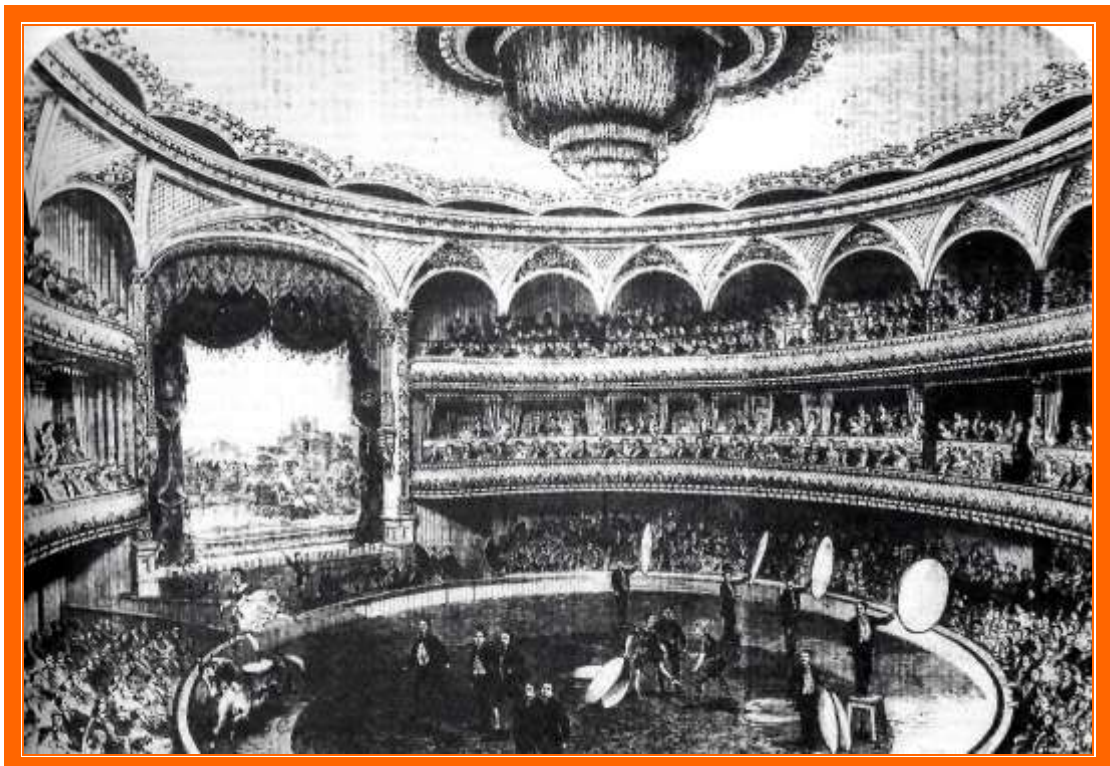


The Globe 1868 with ceiling sunburner (Glasstone).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

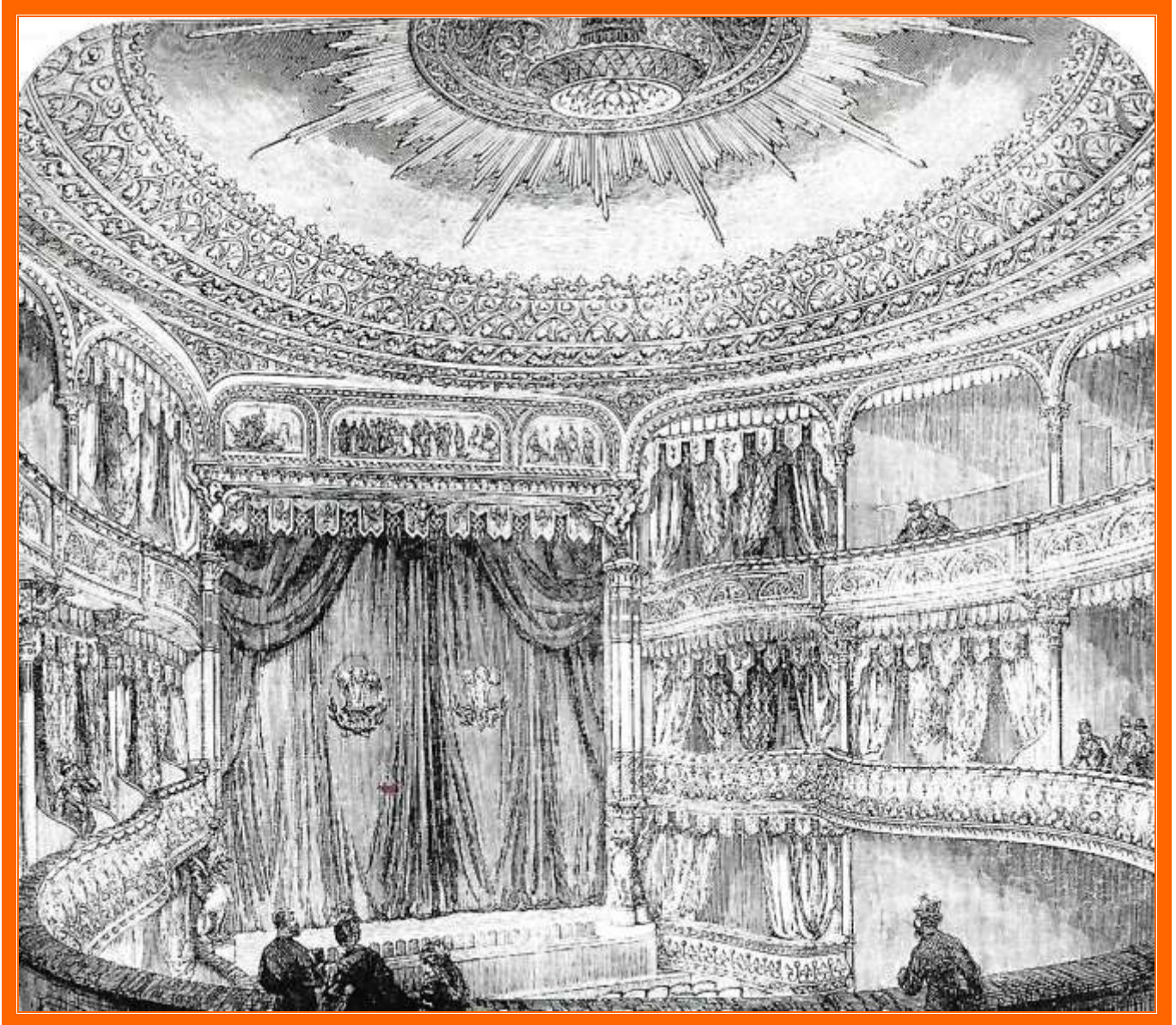


The Globe 1869 (Lost Theatres).



The Royal Amphitheatre Holborn 1867 (Lost Theatres).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square 1871 (Southern).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

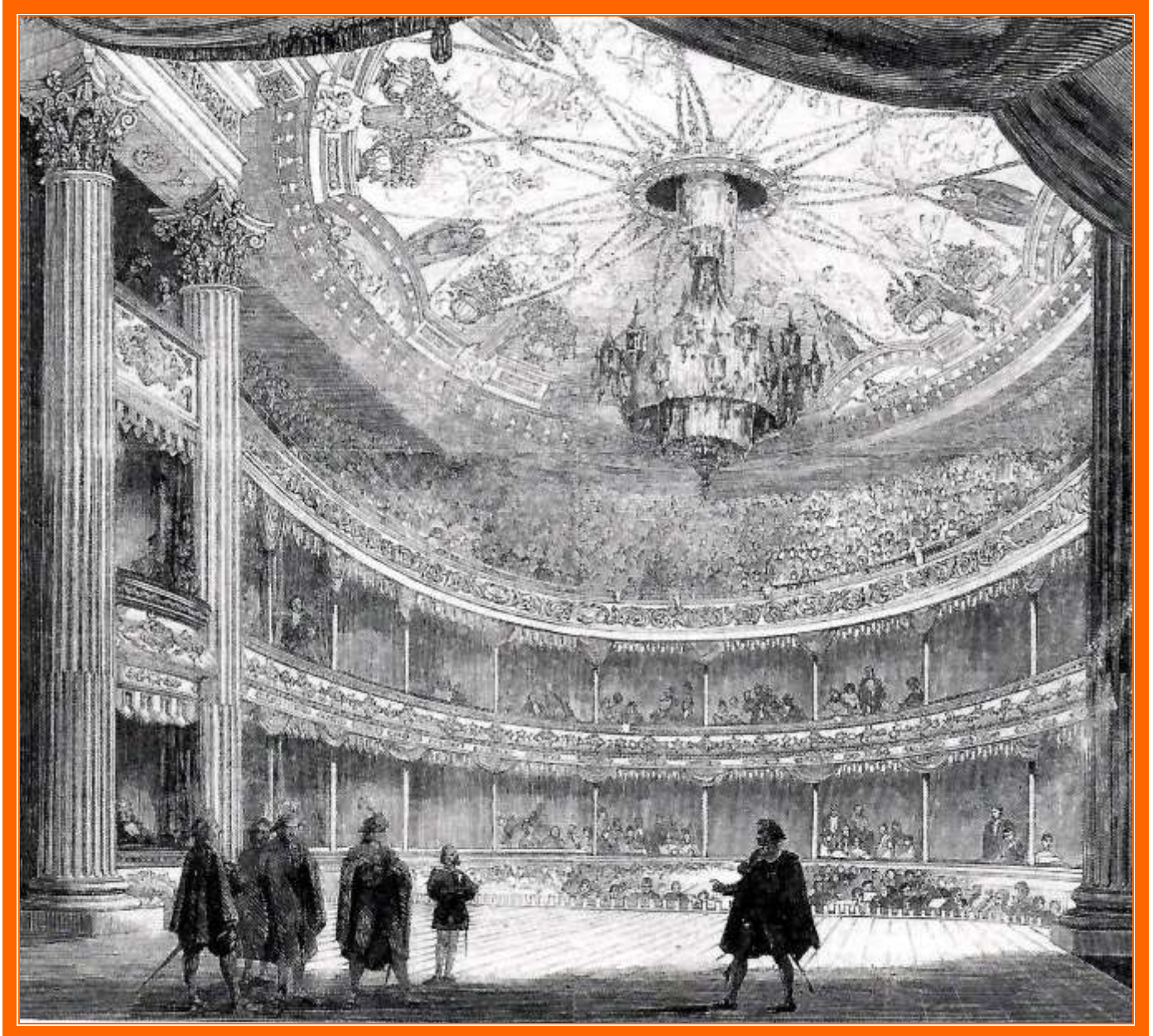


The Holborn Theatre designed in 1860.

"By the mid-1860s, open balconies projecting well over the pit had become usual practice, and the forestage had completely disappeared. Ventilation was improved, with openings in *the most convenient positions to avoid draughts, while the heated atmosphere is allowed to escape into the roof by perforations in the ceiling.*" (Glasstone)

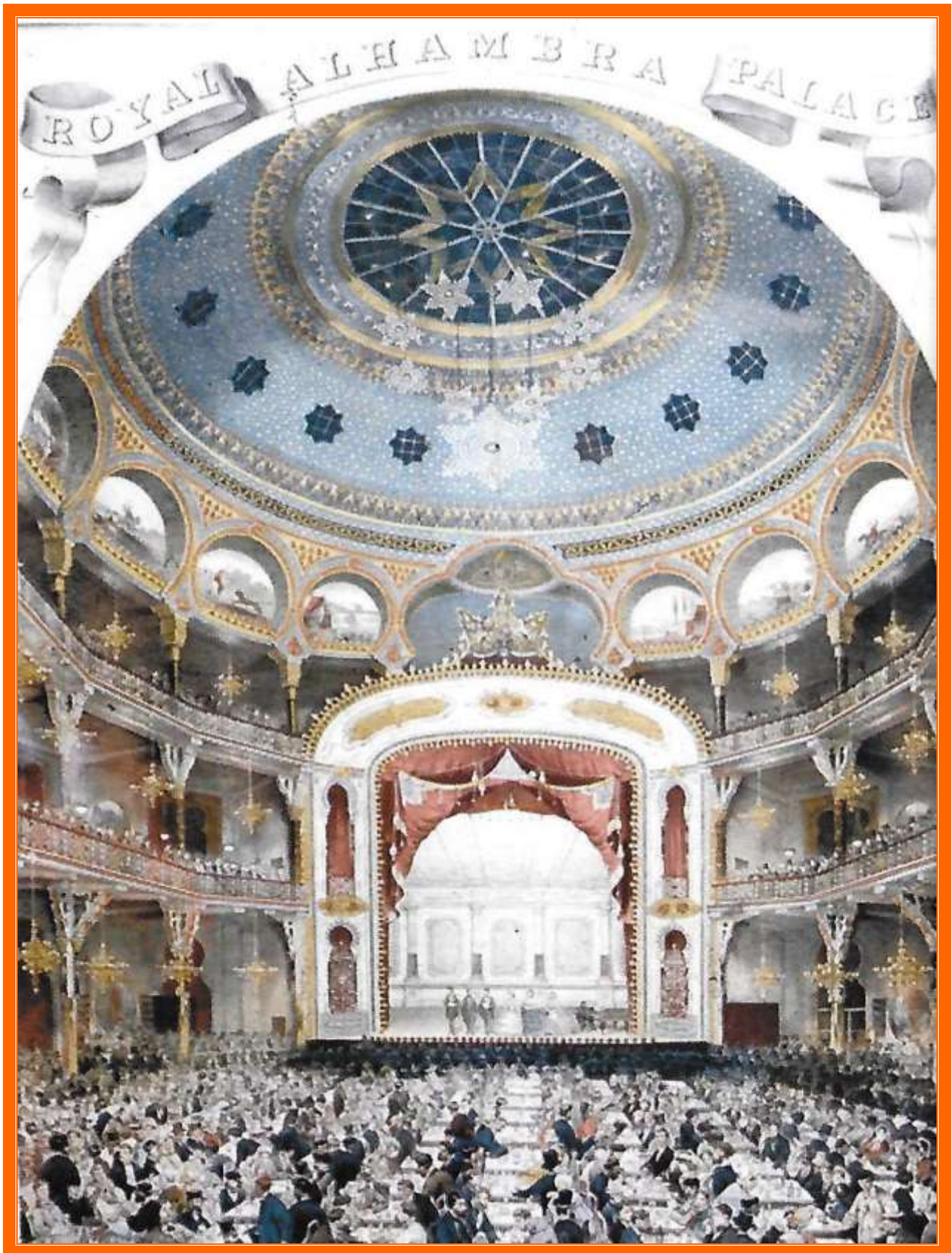
"Ventilation is promoted by an immense air-shaft, which runs through the entire structure, and the lighting has been entrusted to Messrs. Dumfries and Co. A crystal sunlight, 9ft in diameter, and containing 900 burners, will illuminate the whole of the auditorium."

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



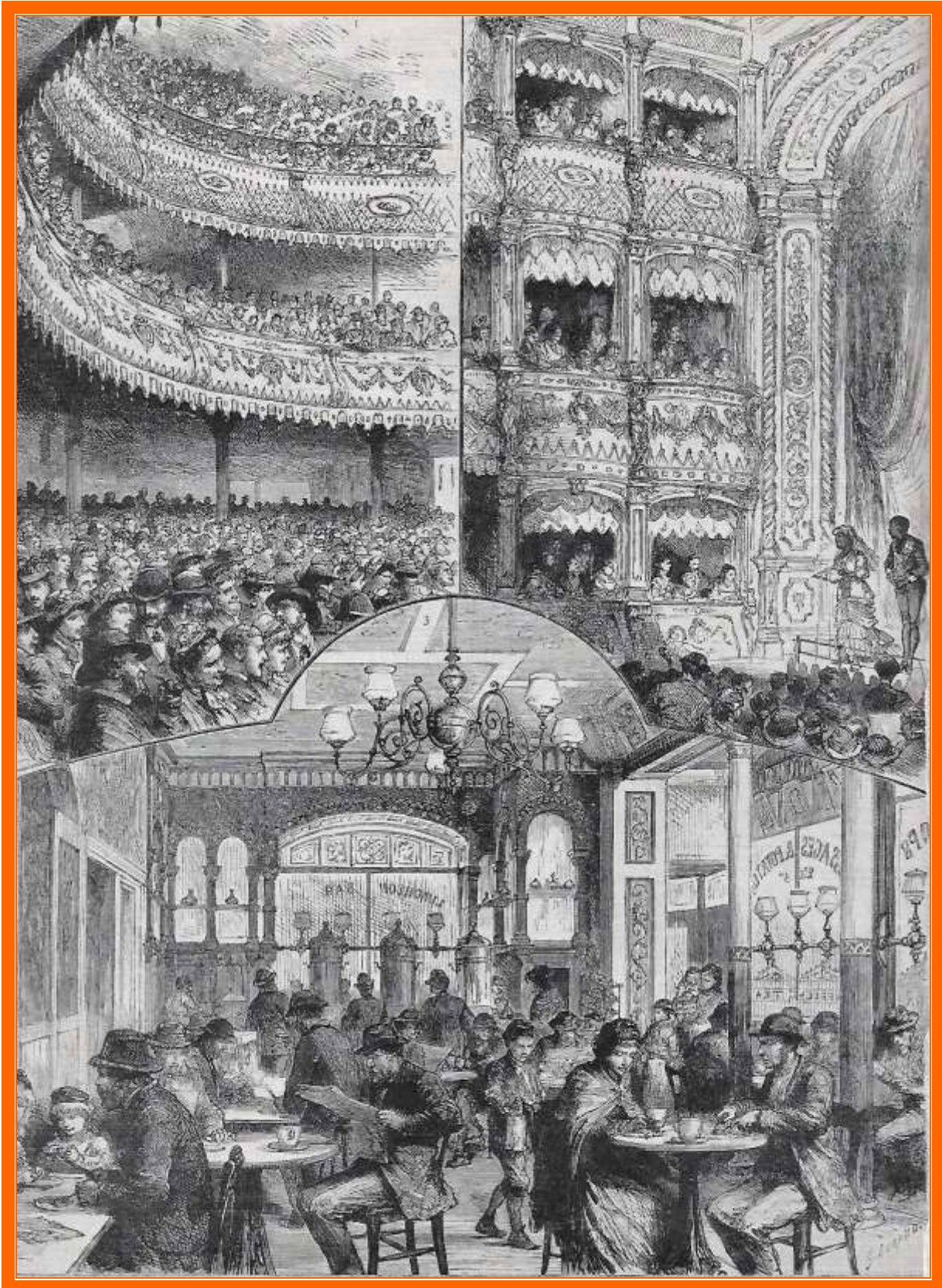
The Royal Pavilion Theatre in the Whitechapel Road "1850s into 1860" (Glasstone).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The Alhambra Music Hall and Supper Club, Leicester Square converted from the Panopticon, shown in the mid 1860s: demolished in 1937 and replaced by the Odeon Cinema. (from *British Theatres and Music Hall* by John Earl). Elaborate gas lighting clearly visible.

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The famous Old Vic in 1871 (top) taken over by Emma Cross having become a "sink of iniquity."  
Becoming the gaslit renamed Royal Victoria Hall and Coffee Tavern (Glasstone).

"There is no central chandelier, the principal lighting being effected by means of a row of gaslights of thirty-four feet diameter, external measurement, let into a channel lined with white enamelled iron.

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



St James's with external gas lamps on the facade 1878 (Lost Theatres).

"The chandelier is a most striking object. It is formed of gilt copper and is elaborately carved. It is for splendour of appearance, and curious elegance of design, the handsomest thing.....

It throws forth an immense flood of light, and, aided by the girandoles which are placed round the dress circle, creates a mimic day".



## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



Poster showing audience emergency exits at Morton's Theatre in Greenwich, undated (Earl).

# **VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS LONDON 1837-1901**

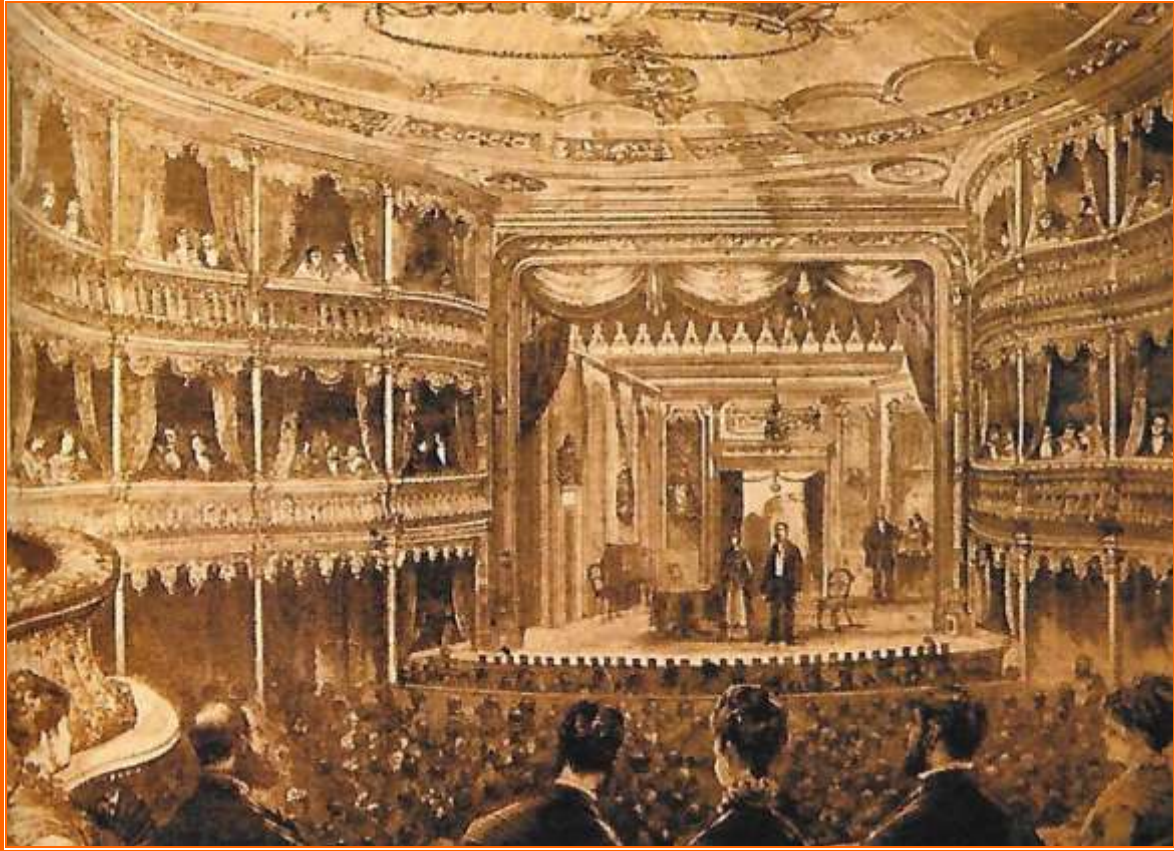


Queuing for the cheap unreserved pit benches in 1897 (Earl).

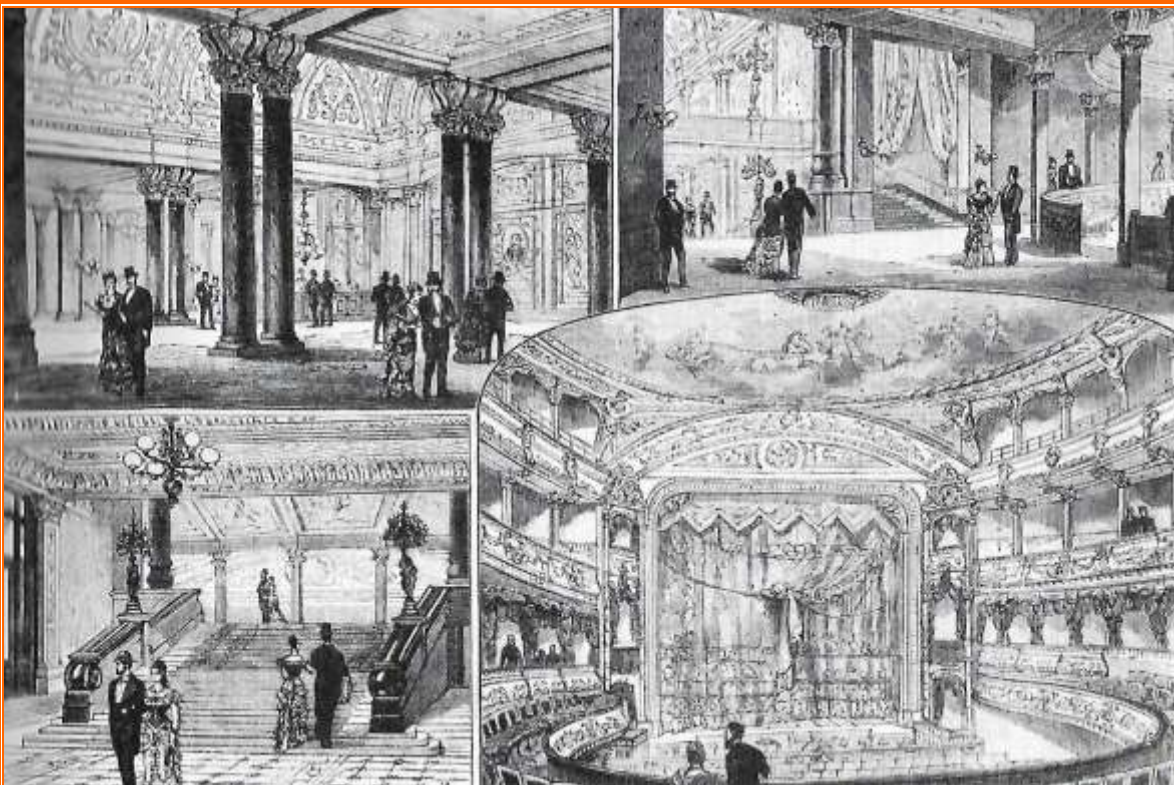
## **GAS LIGHTING**

**The EIGHTEEN EIGHTIES & NINETIES**  
and the start of the Twentieth Century

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

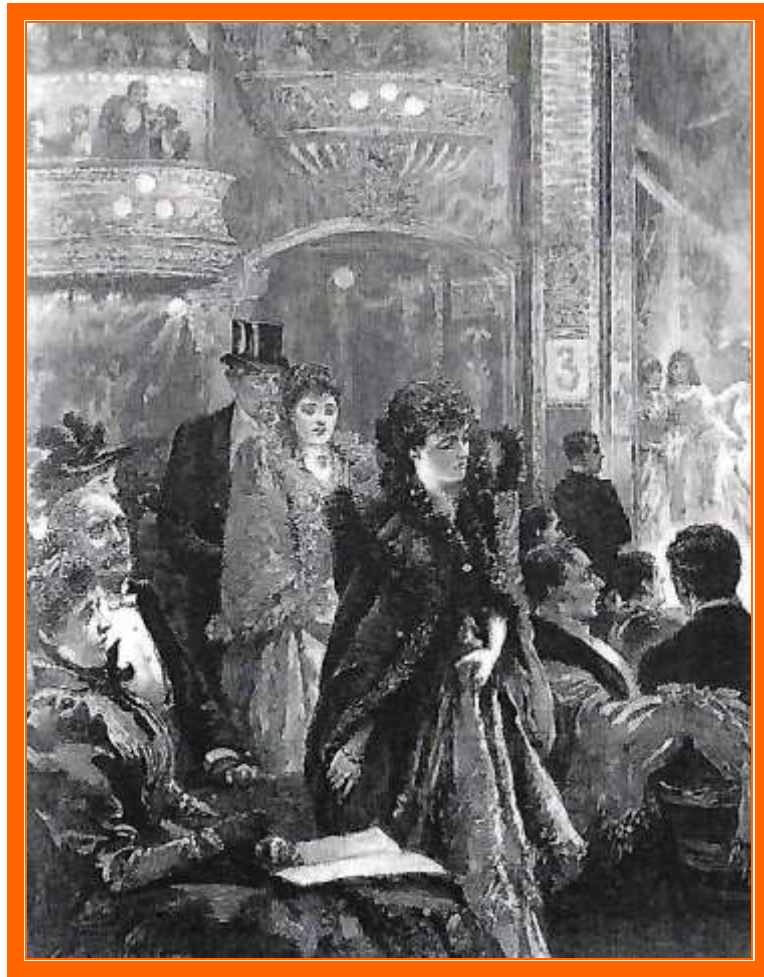


The Criterion Theatre 1894 (Earl).



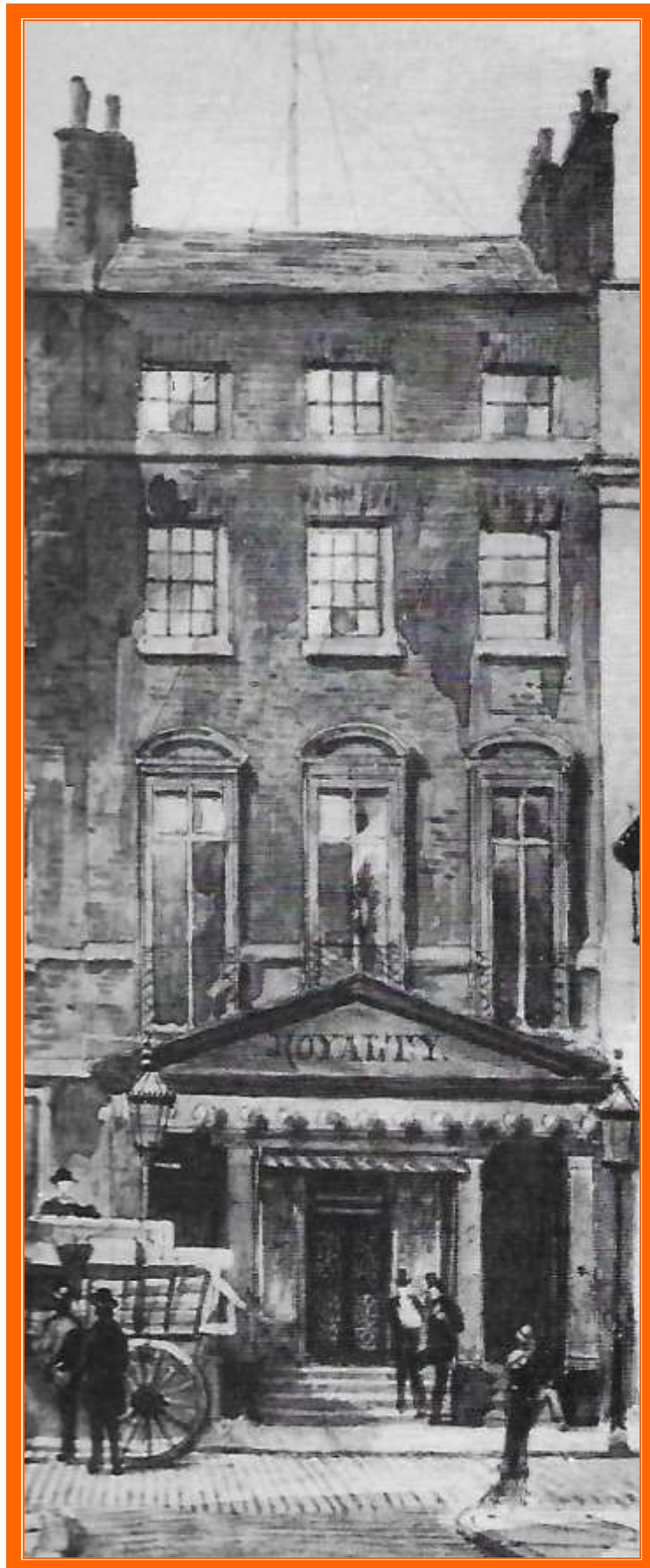
The Empire Theatre, Leicester Square 1884 (Glasstone).  
An unusual feature was the very large "Continental style" foyer.

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



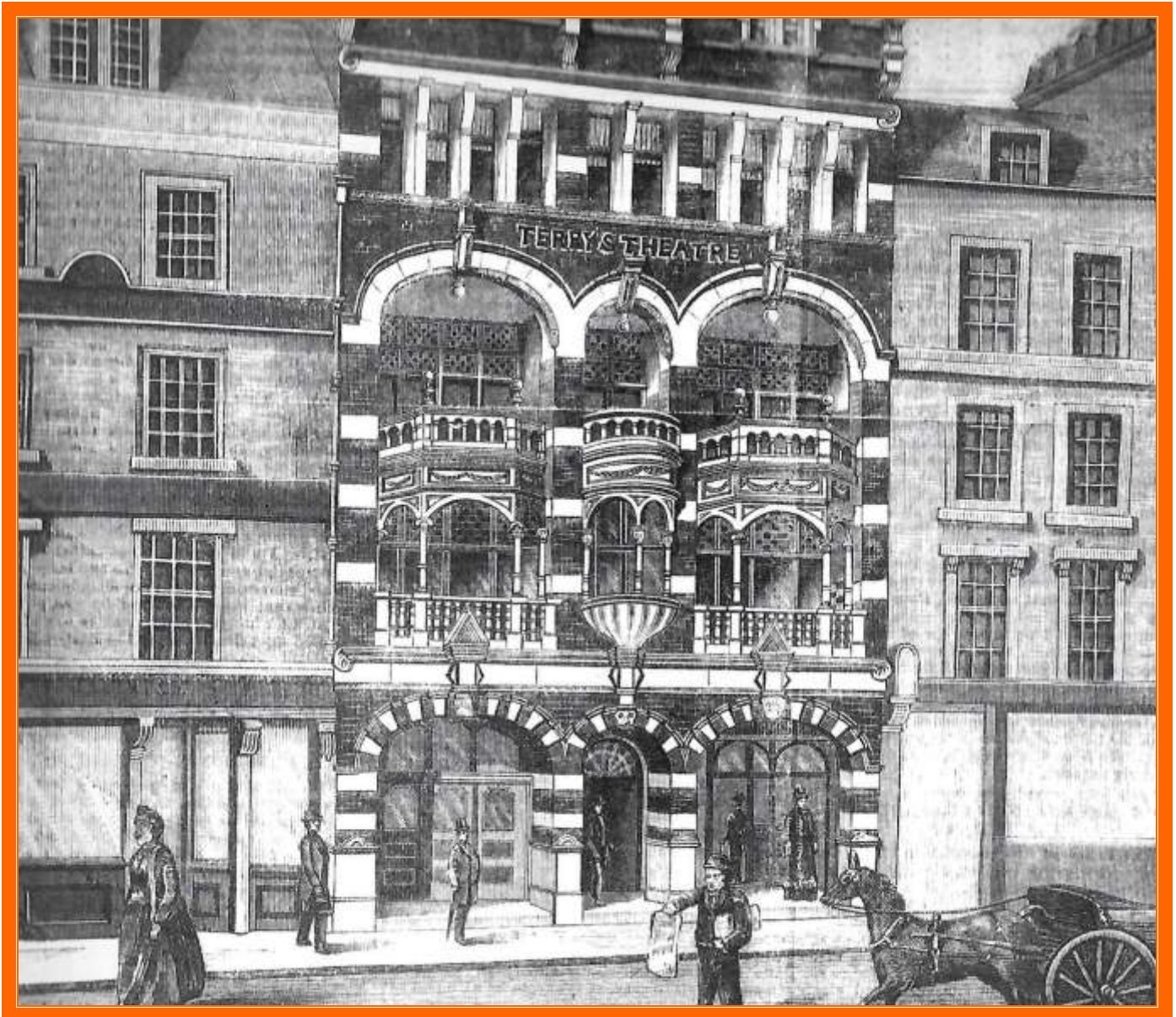
The audience at the Empire (Weightman).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The Royalty with gas street lamps either side of the entrance 1882 (Lost Theatres).

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



Terry's Theatre 1887 (V&A Museum from Lost Theatres).

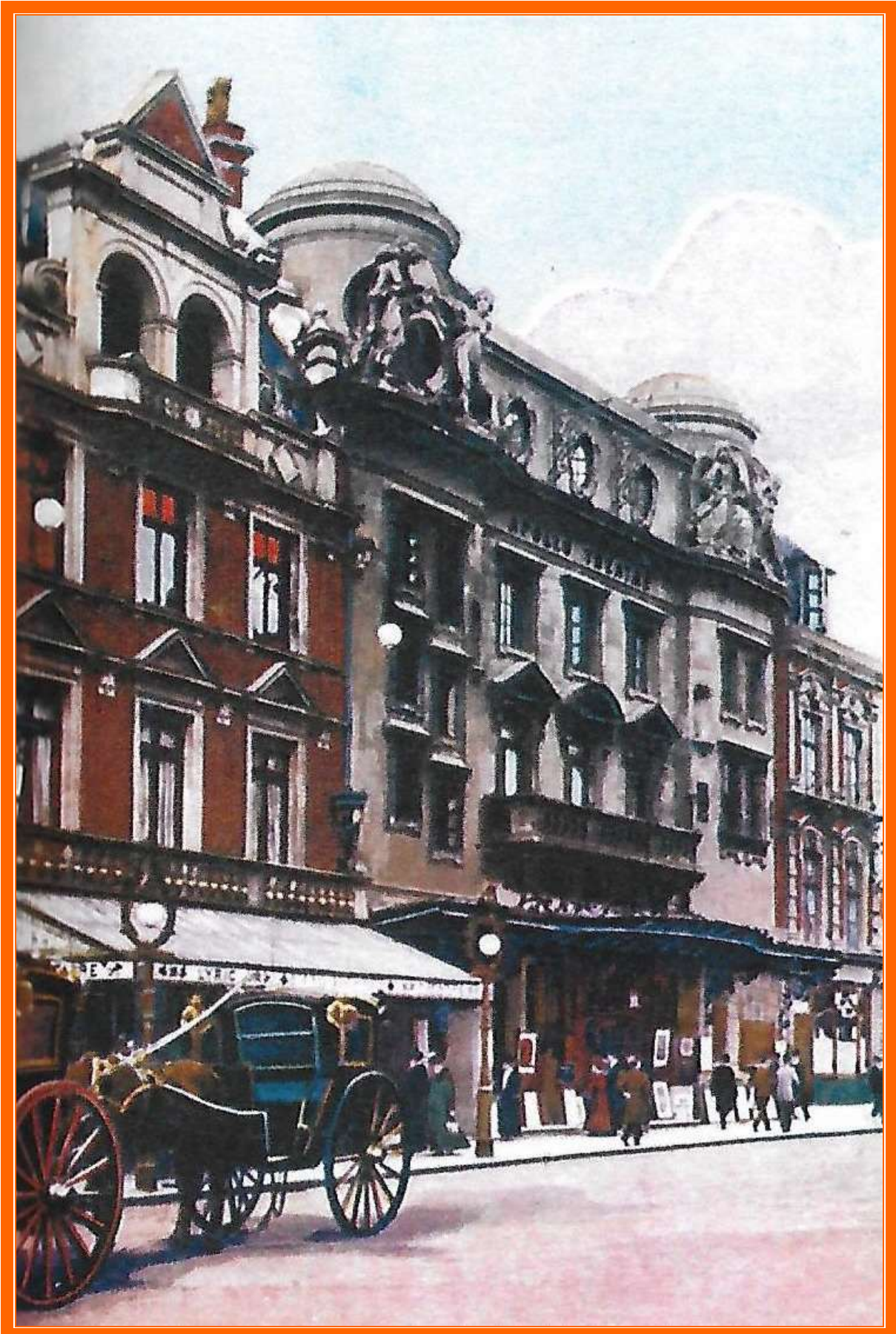
"All the gas and electric fittings for the theatre have been supplied by Messrs. Vaughan and Brown".

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The Tivoli Theatre and Restaurant in the Strand 1890 (Glasstone).  
The Strand elevation is of the Restaurant; the Theatre is hidden behind (see inset plans).  
The theatre went on to become one of London's most famous Music Halls.

## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The Apollo in 1901 (Earl).



## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



The Globe Theatre, Newcastle Street, Strand opened 1868. Photograph taken shortly before demolition in 1903, showing the gas lighting over the entrance canopy (Glasstone).

# **VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS LONDON 1837-1901**

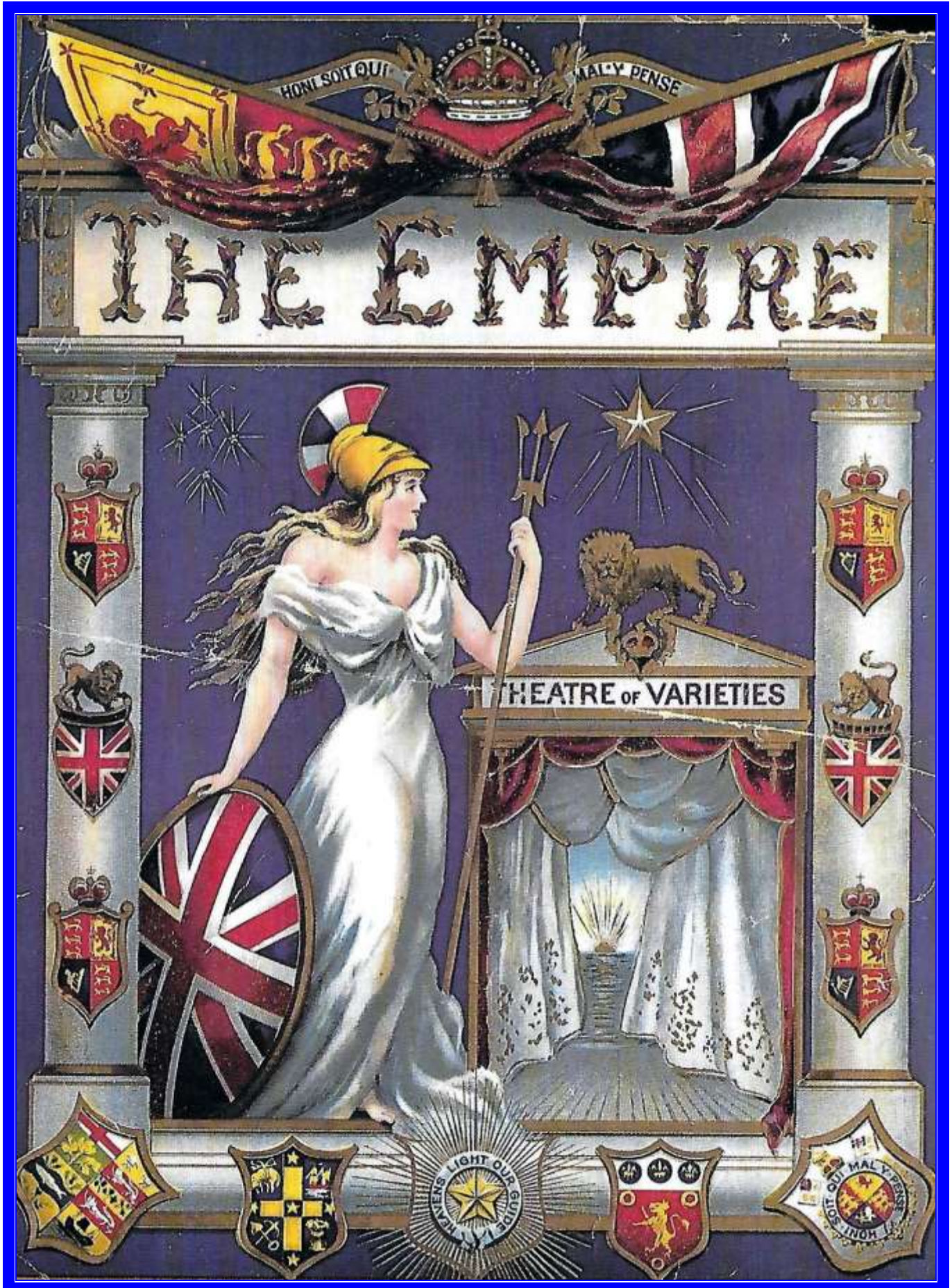


At the pantomime: a comfortably-off Victorian family in a box, undated (Earl).

## **GAS LIGHTING**

### **POSTERS & PICTURES, BIBLIOGRAPHY**

# VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

# NOTICE!

---

WHEREAS, ACCIDENTS BY FIRE, of an alarming nature, having lately occurred at several of the London Theatres, owing to the indiscretion and want of proper precaution on the part of its different Members, particularly as regards THE BALLET; Mr. CAVE begs to call the attention of the Members of his Company to the following Rules and Regulations, which he desires may be implicitly observed, as under no pretence whatever will they be deviated from.

1. Any Lady going beyond the proscenium wing in Dancing, &c.—First offence 1s. Second offence, Instant Dismissal.

2. Any Lady Crossing the Stage to get to her situation, after the Gas is Lighted—first offence. 1s. Second offence, Instant Dismissal.

3. Any Lady, after the Scene is over, attempting to make an exit at a Wing until the Men holding the Coloured Fires have entirely cleared away—Instant Dismissal.

4. Any Lady having Garlands or other Properties to carry on the Stage, catching them on Fire, (the Gas having been placed above their heads,)—Instant Dismissal.

5. No Fires allowed in the Dressing Rooms of the Ballet Ladies. Any Lady attempting to light one—Instant Dismissal.

6. Any Ballet Lady not obeying the Carpenters or any other person employed on the Stage, in reference as to danger by Fire—Instant Dismissal.

7. Any Lady or Gentleman seeing the above Rules infringed, will oblige Mr. CAVE, by giving immediate information to the Stage Manager or Prompter.

# VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

## REGULATIONS

FOR THE BETTER

### Protection against Accidents by Fire at Theatres,

*Licensed by the Lord Chamberlain.*

#### I.

All fixed and ordinary GAS BURNERS to be furnished with efficient Guards. Moveable and occasional Lights to be, when possible, protected in the same manner, or put under charge of persons responsible for lighting, watching, and extinguishing them.

#### II.

The FLOATS to be protected by a Wire Guard. The first Ground-Line to be always without Gas, and unconnected with Gas, whether at the Wings or elsewhere. Sufficient space to be left between each Ground-Line, so as to lessen risk from accident to all persons standing or moving among such lines.

#### III.

The rows or lines of GAS BURNERS at Wings to commence Four Feet at least from the level of the Stage.

#### IV.

WET BLANKETS or RUGS, with BUCKETS or WATER-POTS to be always kept in the Wings; and attention to be directed to them by PLACARDS legibly printed or painted, and fixed immediately above them. As in Rule I, some person to be responsible for keeping the Blankets, Buckets, &c., ready for immediate use.

#### V.

These REGULATIONS to be always posted in some conspicuous place, so that all persons belonging to the Theatre may be acquainted with their contents; every Breach or Neglect of them, or any act of carelessness as regards Fire, to be punished by Fines or Dismissal by the Managers.

**SYDNEY,**

Lord Chamberlain.

Lord Chamberlain's Office,  
St. James's Palace,

February 5, 1864.

# VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

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Dumfries.  
Eastbourne.

Edinburgh Theatre Royal.  
Gaiety, London.  
Gaiety, Dublin.  
Glasgow.  
Grafton, Dublin.  
Haymarket.  
Her Majesty's.  
Leamington.  
Londonderry.  
Lyceum, London.  
Lyceum, Edinboro'.  
Northampton.

Nottingham.  
Novelty.  
Opera House, Florence.  
Opera House, Leicester.  
Portsmouth.  
Princess's.  
Prince of Wales', London.  
Prince's, Manchester.  
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## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS

The "Stott-Thorp" Reflex Light.

PATENT THEATRE SUNBURNER.



7. The Stott-Thorp Sunburner.

[From: J.Stott & Co. Trade  
Catalogue, 1907]

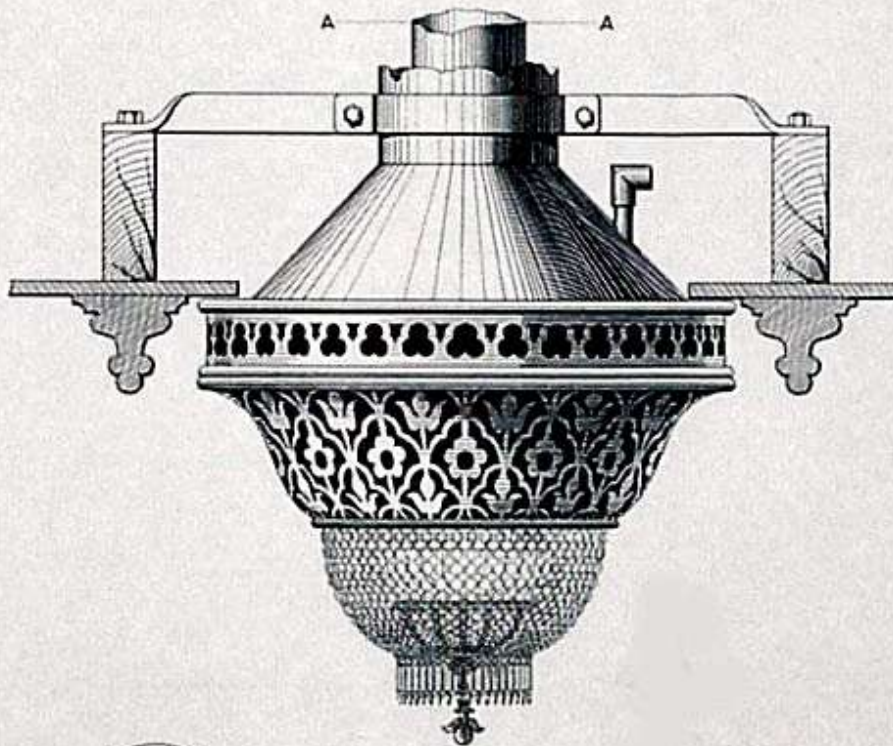
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*As used in the GRAND COMMITTEE ROOMS of the HOUSE OF COMMONS*



SCALE,  $1\text{in} = \text{One Foot.}$

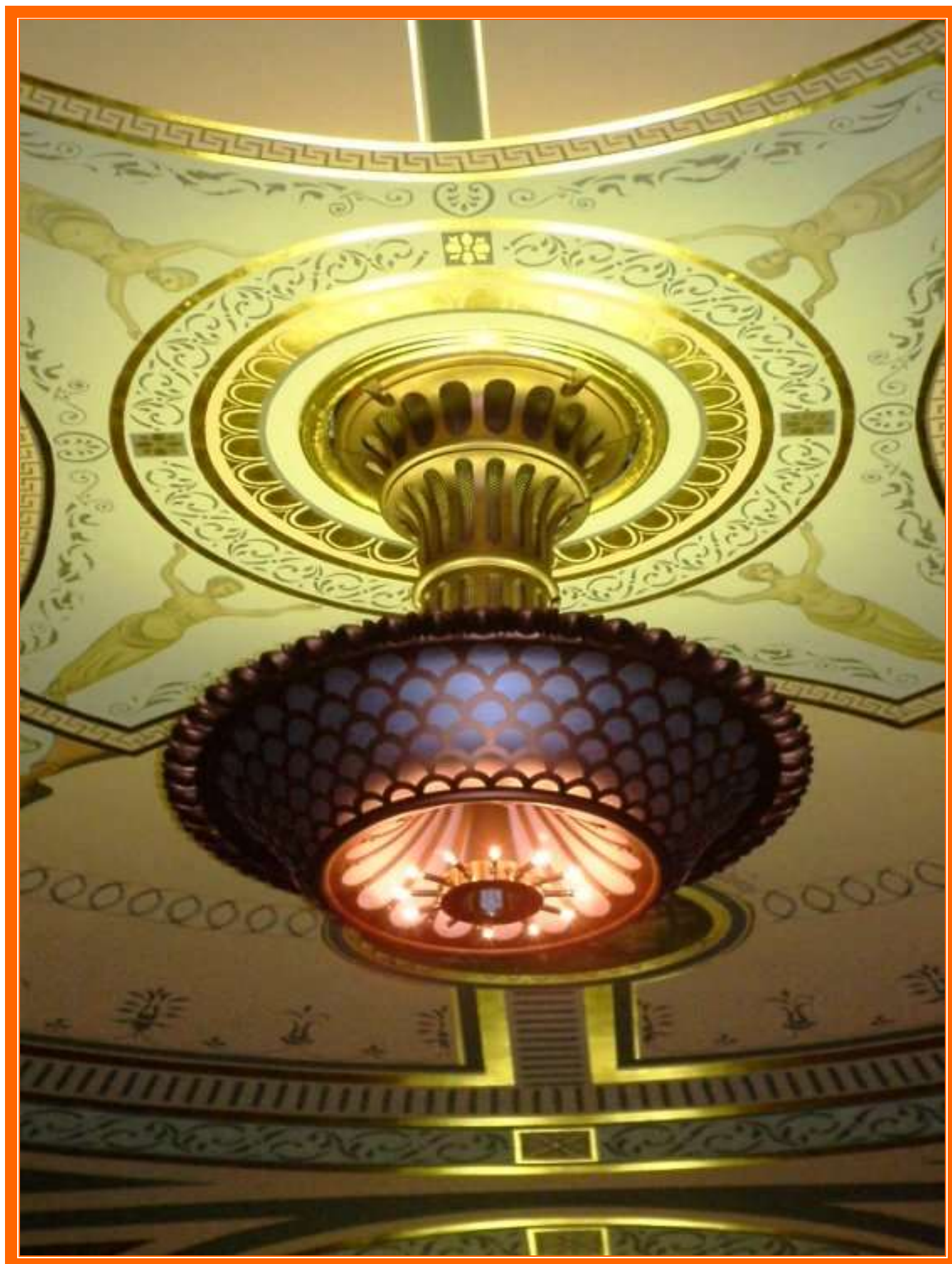


## **VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS**

Colour photographs from [www.williamsugghistory.co.uk](http://www.williamsugghistory.co.uk) show examples of gas sunburners although not in theatres. (Chris Sugg: CIBSE Heritage Group).



## VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS



**VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS**

**BRITANNIA**  
THEATRE, HOXTON.

THE GREAT DRAMA OF  
**TWENTY STRAWS!**

From the admirable Story by Eliza Winstanley, Published in "BOW BELLS,"  
and produced (by kind permission), with

TWENTY STRAWS.

TWENTY STRAWS.



STARTLING SCENES:



EXCITING SITUATIONS:



AND

ASTOUNDING EFFECTS:

THIS NIGHT ONLY, JULY 28, for THE BENEFIT  
OF  
**M R. T. H Y D E.**

# **VICTORIAN THEATRES & MUSIC HALLS**

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