



Precious Nonsense



NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWESTERN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

December 1990 -- Issue 28

Pain, trouble, and care, Misery, heart-ache, and worry,
Quick, out of your lair! Get you all gone in a hurry!

I hope nobody really feels that way about the Nonsense, but it was about time the last issue of the year got itself gone from here in a hurry and into members' hands. This issue is (considerably) shorter than the last issues have been, so it could be completed and distributed more quickly. Our indefatigable (well, shall we leave it at fatigued) Secretary/Archivist Cole is still sorting through the parodies and news notes and all that have come in over the last six months, so the upcoming issues ought to be standard length. In the meantime, though, we have some news, a description of The Girl Said No, and some more notices of G&S merchandise that came to hand, plus membership renewals. And now, if you please, we'll proceed.

What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwestern}

It's still pretty tentative, but the Park Ridge Gilbert and Sullivan Society will probably be giving The Pirates of Penzance sometime next year. We'll pass on any details we hear.

The Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Co. are going to be giving H.M.S. Pinafore March 14-17, 1990 (while no times are mentioned, they'll presumably have the usual 8:00 pm weeknight performances, with a 2:00 pm Sunday matinee) at Mandel Hall, on the campus of the University of Chicago. On April 6, they'll be performing at the Beverly Arts Center, and they are tentatively scheduled to appear during the Summer Nights Festival on August 16-18. We expect to have another issue of the Nonsense between then (March, that is) and now, so we'll pass on any more information as we get it.

The Whitewater Opera Co. (805 Promenade, P.O. Box 633, Richmond, IN 47345 / (317) 962-

7106: the "Oldest independent full-time professional opera company in the State of Indiana") are going to present Pinafore April 27 (8:00 pm) and 28 (2:00 pm), 1991, at the Centerville (Indiana) High School Auditorium, Willow Grove Road, Centerville. For more information, do get in touch with the company.

As far as we know, the Savoy-Aires (P.O. Box 126, Evanston, IL 60204) are still going to be giving their Third Annual sing-a-long in April 1991, featuring H.M.S. Pinafore, and will present Offenbach's opera The Brigands in the summer, with the libretto translated by W.S. Gilbert. This presentation will be a Chicagoland premiere of the work, as far as anyone knows, and promises to be something to see. We hear from member Larry Garvin that it went over well when Ann Arbor's Comic Opera Guild presented it in 1985 or 1986. In any case, it'll be great to have it presented in this area, too, and we'll be looking forward to more details.

What Cheer! What Cheer! {Elsewhere}

We hear from the Washington Savoyards (P.O. Box 34584, Bethesda, MD 20827 / (301) 946-6250) that it's a "go" for their new productions of Trial by Jury and Sorcerer (January 24-27, 1991) and Patience (May 30-June 2). Series tickets run from \$20-\$30, depending on age and mixing preference, and individual tickets run from \$11 to \$16, again depending on age and seating preference. For more information, get in touch with the company.

So far as we can tell, the performance date hasn't been set, but the Montreal West Operatic Society's next performance is going to be Patience. It probably won't be until sometime next year, but in the meantime, the company can be reached at C.P. 1091, Montreal, QC H3B 3K9, Canada.

Unless we very much mistake, the Gilbert & Sullivan Society of Shreveport (LA) is going to be presenting Utopia Limited beginning March 15, 1991. We glean this information from an audition notice we received in October, so things may have changed since then. In any event, the company can be reached at 8323 Suffolk, Shreveport, LA 71106 for more information.

Let the Welkin Ring with the News

We didn't get a chance to mention it earlier, but The Connecticut Gilbert & Sullivan Society recently presented Pinafore (October 19-21), and the Rose Valley Chorus and Orchestra (Media, Pennsylvania) gave Ruddigore November 2-10. We certainly hope their productions went well, and judging from what we've heard and seen of these companies' work, we have no doubts they did.

We're also sad to see, in the December 1990 Palace Peeper, that **Muriel Harding** died recently (no date is mentioned). She was a D'Oyly Carte soprano from 1946-56, and for those of us with the postwar Decca G&S recordings is one of the most

familiar. Her performances as "Josephine", "Mabel", and "Elsie Maynard" are still very enjoyable after all these years. She is survived by her husband, Donald Adams, and their daughter, Josephine, the notice in the Peeper adds.

The Report on the Last Postcard Drawing (About a Video Lending Library)

Judging from the responses to the idea of the MGS setting up a G&S Video Lending Library, the MGS will probably be doing it, only not yet. While none of the postcard respondents were adverse to the idea, we still have to come up with a workable system for acquiring and circulating the tapes. Apparently, no groups are willing to donate videos of their productions, and although several respondents expressed a willingness to donate money to buy tapes, we would still have to figure out how to go about selecting the tapes we would buy (we can't buy them all, so we have to figure out a fair way of choosing the ones we would have to buy). Member Ruthann Stetak gave us a lead on the Sherlock Holmes video lending library, so we have to get in touch with it for some tips. In any event, the MGS will, more likely than not, have a circulating collection, but it may take some time to get it set up.

In the meantime, the winners of the Light Opera Works mugs were Norman Vogt and Charlee Hutton. We hope they are putting the mugs to good use.

Also, while we didn't have a drawing on this question, we got some response on another question raised in the last Nonsense: the prospect of having next year's Annual Outing in conjunction with a weekend of performances of the Ohio Light Opera, in Wooster, Ohio. Ohio members thought it would be a great idea, but members from elsewhere weren't so sure. One pointed out that we would probably have trouble finding a weekend during which more than one or two G&S shows were being performed. During a weekend, Ohio Light Opera would give about five shows, but the majority would be "brainless Viennese and early American opera". The MGS probably has enough members in

Ohio to support an outing out there, but finding a suitable block of days is still a problem. The MGS powers-that-be won't make any final decisions until after the Ohio Light Opera 1991 Schedule comes out. **If any of our Ohio members would like to liaison with the Ohio Light Opera management in planning an Annual Outing, we're taking volunteers.**

We got this letter some time ago, and would have put it in the last Nonsense if we had space. Ever since it was learned that Mike LeBell's Video in Los Angeles was selling copies of a certain famous but obscure film, it has been a topic of some interest, as this letter indicates.

Dear S/A Cole,

I couldn't resist writing a letter to the editor to share a recent experience with you. My daughter knows that I think much of the programming on TV is not worth the time to watch or listen to so she brought me an old-time movie to play on our VCR. When I say old-time, I mean from the 1930's, because that is when I was produced and sometimes I feel old. This movie, I believe, catches the mood of us who are over 50. It is a clever situation with music, dancing, happy times, a twist in the plot, people pretending to be someone they really aren't, love and trust, friendship, some double dealing, humor, and actors who are not listed on the front page of People Magazine.

I'm not going to keep it from you any longer: the music is SULLIVAN'S and the songs sung are from various favorite operas. Yes, GILBERT is represented there too. People just don't sing out while they serve dinner in a restaurant any more and the music I might hear on the street today hurts my ears and turns my disposition. I enjoyed seeing and hearing Tenor Richard Tucker in this film even though he made his entrance on a load of garbage.

I am sure I will enjoy seeing this movie more than once so it is a good addition to our home film library. Did you think I was going to close and not tell you the name of the film? I couldn't do that: it

is **The Girl Said No** (1937). It had an alternate title of **With Words and Music**. I like the pretty face of Irene Hervey and the smart-know-it-all manner of Robert Armstrong. Andrew Stone produced and directed it. I think my daughter made a wise choice and I thank her.

The film is about a bookie (Robert Armstrong) who bets a couple of his friends he could spend the evening with a particular taxi dancer (Irene Hervey) for less than \$10.00. The girl is very pretty, very smart, and very sneaky; and through one trick and another ends up taking the fellow for his entire bank roll. His friends had given him ten-to-one odds, so the gambling debt amounts to \$1000. Still smarting from being made to look like a chump the night before, the bookie decides he's going to make the girl pay that debt by tricking her as badly as she tricked him.

The bookie has among his clients some theater producers and managers, so he decides to convince the girl that he is an agent who can put her name in lights within two months for an initial fee (that amounts to the \$1000) and a percentage of her earnings once she is a star. The bookie's plan is to get her into a show for one night, get the \$1000, then drop her like a hot potato and get a big laugh out of having tricked a tricky character like her. He does put on a good pretence for her, and, after some cajoling, she agrees and begins to take the required private singing, dancing, and acting lessons. Unbeknownst to her, the teachers are kicking back half of what she pays them to the bookie and his friends, to go toward the gambling debt.

Now, here is where the G&S comes in. The bookie and his friends frequent a restaurant called "The Buttercup Café", which is run by the former patriarchs of a light opera company that had, in its day, specialized in performing the G&S Operas. Their name is the Hathaways, which doesn't make any difference to the story as such, but it will make keeping the characters straight easier. The Hathaways are now considered a bunch of has-beens. As a matter of fact, the film opens with the former performers (now waitresses and short-order cooks) singing "A Magnet Hung in a Hardware Shop" along with a radio. But back to the story. One night, toward the end of the two months, the bookie and his friends stop by the café in time to

see the Hathaways rehearsing "My Eyes are Fully Open" from Ruddigore. The bookie has an idea: if he borrowed a theater and convinced the Hathaways to put on a show, he could get the dancer into that show, and get his money and big laugh. The Hathaways need little persuasion to come out of retirement, and they start rounding up their company for a production of Mikado.

The plot starts to thicken at this point. The bookie has told the Hathaways that the girl is backing the show, and that in order to impress her, he has told her the Hathaways are living at the Ritz Hotel after returning from a continental tour. When he and the girl meet the Hathaways at the Ritz, is he surprised when he learns they are living at the Ritz! They didn't think it was right to deceive the girl. The bookie is even more surprised and alarmed when he learns the girl has quit her job at the dance hall. She no longer wants to be the kind of person she had been, and besides, she's going into show business (as far as she knows) and won't need the job. Later that evening, when the Hathaways and their company give the (now former) dancer a G&S concert at the restaurant, the bookie is horrified to learn that, not only had the Hathaways sold the café in order to pay for their rooms at the Ritz, but all the members of their company had quit their jobs in order to go back into show business! The joke is starting to get out of hand, and the fact that he is a complete heel is beginning to dawn on the bookie.

The show soon opens, to an audience consisting of everybody the bookie's friends could coerce into coming. They have been instructed to applaud everything whether they like it or not. Judging from their expressions after "A Wand'ring Minstrel", they aren't liking it. The Hathaways, however, think they're making a big hit, and tell the bookie what a hero he is for helping them so. The girl is as happy as the rest of them, and cheerfully gives him the rest of the \$1000. As one of the girl's friends comments, the bookie looks like 20,000 years in Sing Sing.

In the meantime, the theater owner's lawyer (who isn't in on the joke) has found out the show is going on, and has threatened to call the police. The bookie's friends want to take the money and run, but the bookie won't leave. Finally, when they can hear the police sirens coming, the bookie dashes

onstage and confesses the plot: that the whole thing was a cruel practical joke and that he's nothing but a louse. When he invites the cast to say so, the girl tells him that anyone who can stand up and take his medicine like he has is a pretty big man.

The police arrive, but instead of being there to arrest anyone, they are an escort for one of the bookie's theatrical producer clients. He wants to buy a horse the bookie had a lead on. With the commission, the bookie could back the show himself, but the producer tells him nobody wants to hear this old stuff. Well, who should respond to that remark but the city's top theatrical critics, who, much to the bookie's surprise, were in the audience. They greatly enjoyed the show, and think the bookie ought to be commended for bringing the Hathaways (and presumably traditional G&S) back. The show goes on to a gleeful ending: Yum-Yum gets Nanki-Poo, Ko-Ko gets Katisha, and the Bookie gets the Girl (who, contrary to the title of the film, does say "yes"). I greatly enjoyed it, and I bet other MGS members would enjoy it, too.

Happily yours,
Mrs. Carol Lee Cole

{I seem to remember from the talk Mikado expert Ralph MacPhail Jr. gave at the **Basingstoke!** conference last year on the various versions of The Mikado that were on Broadway, that the late 1930's saw a rash of non-traditional Mikados. He would know for sure, but, perhaps the producers of this film were putting in their comments on the value of traditional G&S performance. Oh, well, it doesn't make any difference: it's a fun film either way. Ed.}

Where Can it Be?

After last month's enormous list of G&S products, you'd think there wasn't much left that hadn't been mentioned. Well, a few more things we'd neglected to include have turned up since then, and here they are.

We know this is a bit late for the 1990 holiday season, but this was the fastest we could get it out.

Both Charlee Hutton and the MGS have Christmas greeting cards for sale this year.

Charlee Hutton (5872 Rose Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805) received her shipment of Geoffrey Shovelton Christmas/regular cards, and has them for sale for 45¢/card + \$1.00 shipping per 10 cards. She says the designs have been issued before, but they're still pretty. The Christmas designs include Father Christmas in a gondola (bright yellow cardstock) with the greeting "With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from"; and Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum kissing under the mistletoe (ivory cardstock). The front of the card says "Season's Greetings", and the inside says "With best wishes for Christmas & the New Year". As for the regular cards, they feature a pen-and-ink drawing (dated 1982) of Nanki-Poo flirting with Yum-Yum (pink paper, french-folded), a scraperboard picture of Casilda and Luiz (white paper, french-folded), and another pen-and-ink of Princess Ida working on her geometry (Astrobright Blue (deep aqua) paper, french-folded).

Also, this year, Anne Stanyon gave the MGS a charming picture to use to raise some money. Needless to say, we can use it, and in that we used the picture on the annual MGS holiday greeting (enclosed), we also got a lot of mileage out of the picture. But as for the money-raising aspect, it seemed Christmas cards are fairly easy to come by--even G&S-related ones are comparatively easy to find. After some consideration, the MGS powers-that-be thought that some G&S holiday postcards might be a novel, marketable idea. After all, the MGS is famous for its postcards (at least its postcard drawings). So, if anyone wants any, we have postcards featuring the Anne Stanyon picture of Sullivan admiring his Christmas tree for \$1.25 for the first 10, and \$1.00 for each additional package of 10 (postage included). They are printed in blue ink on either white or ivory index card stock: please specify which color you want. As I said, I'm sorry the notice is coming out so late, but there's no harm in stocking up for next year.

Speaking of Christmas cards, The Sir Arthur Sullivan Society (c/o Mr. Peter Gibbons, 71 Hockley Lane, Eastern Green, Coventry, CV5 7FS, England) has its Christmas cards available, as well

(and come to think of it, Anne Stanyon drew the picture on them, too!). They feature a colorful picture of Sullivan and a girl at a Christmas party, and are quite pretty. The price is £2.75 for 10, which, with shipping, worked out to be \$10.00. Checks should be payable to SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN SOCIETY. By the way, membership information is also available from Mrs. Pat Gibbons (for non-UK members, anyway).

Now this is a find: The Musical Wonder House (P.O. Box 274 {18 High St.}, Wiscasset, ME 04578 / (207) 882-7163, or (1-800) 336-3725 outside Maine) has, among many other recordings of music box renderings of great pieces of music, a cassette recording called Gilbert & Sullivan Gems (TC1500 /\$11.95). It is "Beloved G&S arias performed on musical boxes from **their** [Gilbert and Sullivan's] own time period!" and if you like to listen to music boxes, you'll like this tape. The tape has a lot of melodies from Pinafore and Mikado, plus the Cachucha and "I am a Courtier" from Gondoliers, The Judge's Song from Trial By Jury, "Were I thy Bride" (Yeomen), the First Act Finale from Patience, and "With Catlike Tread" and "Poor Wand'ring One" from Pirates. Also available is a tape of G&S on the grandfather of the MIDI keyboard: a Steinway Grand Player Piano. The tape is Gilbert & Sullivan Favorites (TC1990/\$9.95). According to the explanation in the program notes, the player piano was designed to enable one person to play a piece or arrangement requiring four to six hands to play: it was just that hardly anybody used it that way. Anyway, this recording includes tune potpourris from Iolanthe, Ruddigore, Gondoliers, and two from Mikado, as rendered by Danilo Konvalinka (the founder and owner of the Musical Wonder House, which, incidentally, is a musical box museum. If you get up to Wiscasset, Maine, between Memorial Day and October 15, you might want to make a visit.). The Musical Wonder House also has a lot of other tapes, including Christmas tunes, melodies from opera, marches, and popular tunes on music boxes at competitive prices. Shipping on tapes is \$2.00 for the first cassette, and \$1.00 for each additional tape sent to the same address. They take Visa/Mastercard, and have a toll-free number, so you can call in your order. Do give

them a call, and tell them the MGS sent you.

By the way, it seems these tapes were supposed to have come out in conjunction with the Gilbert and Sullivan exhibit at the Pierpont Morgan Library last year, but were unavoidably delayed until now. But they're available now, so we should make the most of them, I should think.

We have more leads on LPs, too: In the Rose Records Catalog (for a copy, write to Rose Records at 214 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60604), we noticed close-out recordings of Pirates (London Jubilee JL-42003), Yeomen/Victoria and Merrie England (London OSA 12117) and Iolanthe (Arabesque/8066-21) for \$5.99 each, plus shipping (\$3.00 on 1-4 items, \$3.50 on 5 or more) and 8% tax if you live in Illinois. Orders can be placed by phone (using Visa/Mastercard) at (1-800) 955-ROSE, or at (312) 663-0713 if you live in Illinois; or they can be faxed to (312) 663-3559. Their cut-out recording usually go fast, so it wouldn't hurt to call first.

The Berkshire Record Outlet (Rt. 102 Pleasant St., R.R. 1, Lee, MA 01238-9804 / (413) 243-4080 / FAX (1-413-243-4340 / { (1-800) 992-1200 for \$15.00 minimum Visa/Mastercard orders}) is still selling The Gilbert & Sullivan Story/Victorian Popular Songs Recorded in Concert (Grand Prix Label: GP2-9009) for \$3.98, and has added Yeoman of the Guard Overture and Other Pieces Arranged or Composed for Brass Band (Chandos label: BBRD 1035 / \$4.99); The Zoo/Cox and Box (London Label: OSA 1171 / \$5.99); The Beauty Stone (Pearl label: SHE 579/80 / \$13.98); and on the PRT label, for \$3.98 per 2-record set, Excerpts from Trial by Jury, Cox & Box, and Yeomen of the Guard, Excerpts from Ruddigore and Gondoliers, and Overtures (Yeomen, Gondoliers, Pirates, Iolanthe, Mikado, Ruddigore, Pinafore) and Best-known Arias & Choruses. The Berkshire Record Outlet is also going to start listing their holdings in CompuServe's "Electronic Mall" (for our members with computers with modems). The Outlet should be able to explain the details, but the last catalog said they hoped to be up by mid-January.

Mike LeBell's Video [75 Fremont Place; Los

Angeles, CA 90005 / (213) 938-3333 (between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm Pacific Daylight time) has quality video copies of the films The Mikado (1939, with Kenny Baker and Martyn Green) and The Girl Said No. Each title is \$24.95, plus \$2.05 postage and handling. It is quite a bargain, because both films are charming (S/A Cole liked them, anyway) and, to our knowledge, unavailable elsewhere! In addition, the store handles all manner of other unusual film videos, so if you are interested in vintage videos of any sort, get in touch with them.

The University of Michigan G&S Society has filmed many of its productions, and they are now available for \$15.00 per tape. Available programs are Princess Ida (November '84), Pinafore (April '85), Grand Duke (December '85), Pirates (April '86), Trial by Jury/Cox and Box (Summer '86), Ruddigore (April '87), Gondoliers (April '88), Utopia (December '88), Mikado (April '89), Sorcerer (December '89), and Iolanthe (April '90). To order, include a note explaining which tapes you want, and a check for \$15.00 per tape, made out to UMGASS. Please include your telephone number as well so UMGASS can contact you in case of emergency. Send your orders to UMGASS, c/o Jeff Smith, 4871 Packard, Apt. A4, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, and allow 4 weeks for receipt. (And tell 'em the Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society sent you. Ed.) We're still waiting on a report of what the videos look like.

S/A Cole was exploring the many works available through interlibrary loan, and managed to find a copy of a book that would be of interest to the many G&S enthusiasts who are fond of H.M.S. Pinafore. She had such a good time with it that she couldn't keep it to herself, and sent in the following "book report."

W.S. Gilbert and H.M.S. Pinafore

A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to read what was probably the funniest G&S-related children's book I had ever seen. Like most genuinely funny children's books, it's even funnier to adults than it is to children. The book was The

Pinafore Picture book; The Story of H.M.S. Pinafore told by Sir W.S. Gilbert (Alice B. Woodward, illustrator. New York: Macmillan, 1908). The Gilbert scholars in our midst no doubt know more about the circumstances of its publication (I don't), but nonetheless, it's an especially interesting book, not only for the writing style, but for the way the plot of Pinafore is explained. These days, it's fashionable to do unique versions of Pinafore (a la World War II, American, stylized, what-have-you), but as far as I know, nobody has rendered the opera the way Gilbert describes it in the book. What with the G&S Opera Company giving Pinafore this year, it seemed appropriate to talk about Gilbert's book. It might give them a couple of ideas.

This article will no doubt be dragged over a couple of Nonsense issues. During the course of it, we expect to get an idea of what Gilbert had in mind for the opera's presentation by 1908. For starters, though, let's look at why Gilbert says he wrote the book and what he thought about that much-maligned character Dick Deadeye.

Now, we should bear in mind, that the book was published in 1908, so what Gilbert says about the plot and characters now may not necessarily be what he was thinking thirty years earlier when the opera was first produced. The fact that the plot was also altered a bit for younger readers should also be considered (for instance, the Big Big "D" is toned down to "Hang It". I would be presumptuous to say that the book describes Gilbert's intentions for the opera's performance. I don't know enough about Gilbert and the way he worked to be sure. The book does give a good idea of Gilbert's intentions for the opera's performance in 1908, though, and would therefore be a valid, traditional interpretation of the work.

Has anyone ever read Ian Fleming's book Chitty Chitty Bang Bang? The plot, a spy story for children, is much funnier than the movie, and draws a lot of its charm from the style in which it is told. The reader gets the feeling that his or her uncle is telling a story that their mother wouldn't want them to hear, if she knew they were being told. Gilbert's Pinafore Picture Book has that same arch, conspiratorial style. The reader is let in on grown-up secrets and the aside comments that make the action of the story look gloriously ridiculous. It's

didactic without being preachy (for instance, many comments are made about Josephine's breaking her promise to her papa to not tell Ralph she loves him, and about her eloping without her father's permission. The way the comments are worded, though, indicate the author believed the reader already knew breaking promises and running away from one's parents were naughty things to do, so he didn't have to harp on the point). The pictures are lovely, too.

According to the introduction, the book was written because, first of all, "many very young ladies and gentlemen are never taken to the Theatre at all", and that those who are taken will have trouble seeing the stage, and that they "find it rather difficult to follow the story of a play, much of which is told in songs set to beautiful music, and all of which is written in language which is better suited to their papas and Mamas than to themselves." Another reason Gilbert gives is that the work isn't performed often enough, so he's giving them the story of the work now so they won't have to wait until they're "very middle-aged ladies and gentlemen" to find out what it's all about. He certainly does give these very young ladies and gentlemen the story, in detail never seen on stage.

The plot is essentially the same as the Pinafore we all know, aside from the "Hang it" and the dropping of the character "Hebe". Gilbert also connects it more closely to the Bab Ballad "The Bumboat Woman's Story" by tying Little Buttercup to Poll Pineapple. The amplification of the main characters in this Pinafore, however, makes the story fresh and a bit unfamiliar. They don't bear all that much resemblance to the understanding many directors have of them. Probably the most noticeable differences in understanding have to do with Little Buttercup and Dick Deadeye. Normally, Dick Deadeye is a terrible villain and Little Buttercup is a beloved older woman. Well, this is what Gilbert says about Buttercup:

As the sailors sat and talked they wee
joined by a rather stout but very interesting
elderly woman of striking personal appearance. . . Her real name was Poll Pineapple,
but the crew nick-named her "Little Buttercup," partly because it is a pretty name, but principally because she was not at all like a

buttercup, or indeed anything else than a stout, quick-tempered and rather mysterious lady, with a red face and black eyebrows like leeches, and who seemed to know something unpleasant about everybody on board. She had a habit of making quite nice people uncomfortable by hinting things in a vague way, and at the same time with so much meaning (by skillful use of her heavy black eyebrows), that they began to wonder whether they hadn't done something dreadful, at some time or another, and forgotten all about it. So Little Buttercup was not really popular with the crew, but they were much too kind-hearted to let her know it. (page 10)

He goes on to say how glad the sailors were when Buttercup finished her song, because she sang it every time she came on board, and after a few months it got tiresome. She certainly doesn't sound like the sweet character we all know and love.

As the story progresses, she is asked to tell the sailors a story (they're on "dog watch" amusing themselves), and she tells them she knows who is doing shameful things (like taking sugar-plums to bed with him, sucking his thumb in his hammock, or putting raspberry jam in his messmates' boots). The response is: "Let's change the subject," said Bill Bobstay (he was the one who ate sugar-plums in bed), "we all have our faults. But, after all, we're not so bad as poor Dick Deadeye--that's one comfort!" (page 14.)

A couple of years ago, a defense of Dick Deadeye made the G&S newsletter circuit. Dick Deadeye was also the admirable hero of the Ronald Searle full-length animated feature Dick Deadeye (in which he is entrusted with the job of retrieving the Ultimate Secret from the Pirate King who stole it). Well, these two estimations of his character seem closer to Gilbert's estimation (of 1908, at least) than that of most G&S directors. The narration after Bill Bobstay's remark says,

Now this was very unjust on the part of Mr. Bobstay. Dick Deadeye, who sat apart from the others, busy manicuring his nails, was one of the ugliest persons who ever entered

the Navy. His face had been so knocked about and burnt and scarred in various battles and from falling down from aloft, that not one feature was in its proper place. . . [He] looked just as if he had been crumpled up in the hand of some enormous giant. He ought properly to have been made a Greenwich Pensioner long ago, but Captain Corcoran was too kind-hearted to hint that Dick Deadeye was deformed, and so he was allowed to continue to serve his country as a man-o'-war's man as best he could. Now Dick Deadeye was generally disliked because he was so unpleasant to look at, but he was really one of the best and kindest and most sensible men on board the *Pinafore*, and this shows how wrong and unjust it is to judge unfavourably of a man because he is ugly and deformed. . . But so strong was the prejudice against Boor Dick Deadeye, that nothing he could say or do appeared to be right. The worst construction was placed upon his most innocent remarks, and his noblest sentiments were always attributed to some unworthy motive. They had no idea what the motive was, but they felt sure there *was* a motive, and that he ought to be ashamed of it. (page 14-17)

When was the last time you saw a sympathetic Dick Deadeye? The descriptions of other characters are equally revealing, and we'll probably go into them later. In the meantime, if you can find a copy of The Pinafore Picture Book, do read it: it's not only enlightening, but extremely diverting!

Welcome New Members

Diane and Mike Koetter (Salt Lake City, UT), who found out about the MGS during Ohio Light Opera's last season.

Charles Coolong, Jr. (Hatfield, MA), has an extensive collections of G&S recordings, both on video and audio (videos of each opera, and the complete collection of the latest (original) D'Oyly Carte recordings with John Reed.

and **Evan and Catherine Richards** (McFarland, WI), **Robert and Carol Dombroski** (McFarland, WI), **David McNeil** (Chicago, IL), and **Ernest Richards** (Cincinnati, OH), who we're also glad to have!

And I think that about does it for December. Time has been at a premium in the Cole household lately, so as mentioned earlier, a lot of parodies, news notes, and what-have-you have yet to be sorted through. The next Nonsense, due out in February, ought to clean out the files. In the meantime, do keep those cards and letters coming, and have a happy holiday!

The Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan
Society
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