

# Precious Nonsense

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIDWESTERN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN SOCIETY

April 1993 -- Issue 37

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In Lazy languor motionless,  
We lie and dream of nothingness

Although it may seem so, this is not what we at the MGS have been up to lately. It looks as if S/A Cole has outdone herself again. Last year she commented how the May *Nonsense* always seems to be thrown together. This year she is a month early in throwing together an issue that is two months overdue. (Well, I've been sick.) We hope to be back on track as soon as possible, with the Big Quiz, and what-all (probably by June), but in the meantime, we have **two** synopses of Gilbert's non-Sullivan plays, another drawing, and a long list of interesting G&S events. There are also renewal slips for those who need to renew membership in the MGS (and don't mind the April 30th due date: during a fit of optimism, S/A Cole ran them off at the end of March. If you want to get them back by May 30th, that'll be fine). Also, S/A Cole recently discovered that the MGS's list of where one can go to get G&S-related items is sadly out of date. ***If you know of any G&S-related materials or dealers in that sort of memorabilia, let S/A Cole know who they are, what they have, and how to get in touch with them. The Nonsense after next is going to be a shopper issue, if all goes well, and the information will appear in it.*** It ought to be a big help to collectors. In the meantime, though, let's see what we have here.

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What Cheer! What Cheer! {Midwest-  
ern}

*Utopia Limited* appears to the next production of the Madison Savoyards (P.O. Box 1612; Madison, WI 53701). While the dates for their production don't appear to have been set yet, they seem to usually perform in late July or early August. We'll try to pass on what we hear, or you can get in touch with the company for more information.

The Savoy-Aires are going to have their annual singalong at Loyola University's Galvin Auditorium on May 2, 1993. Participants will be singing along with *The Mikado*. Tickets are \$15.00 each, \$25.00 per couple, and \$5.00 for children under 12. Bring your own score, or reserve one when ordering tickets, which can be done by calling (312) 784-4866. Also, their summer production (which seems to be scheduled for August/September) will be *The Sorcerer*. For more information, the company can be contacted at P.O. Box 126, Evanston, IL 60204, or by calling Daphne Schneider ({708} 332-1248) or Mary Spaeth ({708} 328-1677).

We hear from Don Lord and David Michaels that The Park Ridge Gilbert and Sullivan Society (PARIGASS) will be presenting *The Gondoliers* May 14-15 and 20-22 at St. Mary's Episcopal Church Theater (corner of Crescent and Prospect) in Park Ridge. Their productions are always a lot of fun. For more information and ticket prices (and such), call (708) 825-4718.

The Ohio Light Opera's 1993 season features the operas *Weiner Blut* (June 9\*, 12\*, 24, July 2, 10, 18\*, 21\*, 27\*, August 7\* and 8), *HMS Pinafore* (June 10, 12\*, 16\*, 17, 19\*, 27\*, July 4\*, 9, 13\*, 21, August 1, and 6), *Bittersweet* (June 11, 13\*, 19, 22\*, 23\*, 26\*, 30\*, July 3, 15, 25\*, 30, and August 5), *La Périchole* (June 15\*, 18, 20\*, 26, 29\*, July 1, 17\*, 25, 28, and August 4), *The Gypsy Princess* (June 25, July 3\*, 7\*, 10\*, 20\*, 24, 29, August 1\*, and 7), *Der Vogelhandler (The Birdseller)* (July 6\*, 8, 11\*, 14\*, 17, 23, 31\*, and August 4), and *Utopia Limited* (July 16, 22, 24, 28\*, 31, August 3\*, and 8\*). \* indicates matinee performances. Individual tickets are \$22.00, and can be ordered through the mail or (what might be simpler) by phone with VISA/Mastercard/Discover (Call (216) 263-2345). These shows sell out fast, so the sooner you order,

the better. For more information, contact Ohio Light Opera at The College of Wooster, Wooster, OH 44691.

Now, *Here is a performance not to be missed*, although it is not directly G&Ssy. We learn from Lee Kesselman that the DuPage Chorale, under the direction of Lee R. Kesselman, will be giving a concert version of John Philip Sousa's operetta *El Capitan* on Sunday, June 6, at 8:00 pm. The performance will be held at the Arts Center of the College of DuPage (22d and Park in Glen Ellyn, Illinois), and tickets are \$7.00 (or \$6.00 for students and seniors). Rumor has it that it is tremendously difficult to get the rights to perform this work, so the whole operetta is seldom heard: the famous Sousa March *El Capitan*, based on tunes from the opera, is probably the only part that most people have heard. Sousa's opera work was strongly influenced by the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, and the plot reflects the confusion associated with their works. The hero is both the ruler of Peru, and accidentally the head of the organization that is trying to overthrow the government. Don't miss the opportunity to hear this seldom-performed work!

Light Opera Works' will be presenting *The Count of Luxembourg*, *Babes in Toyland* and *Iolanthe* during its 1993 season. Lehar's *Count of Luxembourg* is scheduled to be performed June 25-27, *Iolanthe* is scheduled for August 27-29, and this year's big attraction, Herbert's *Babes in Toyland*, will be given December 26-January 2. From all appearances, these productions are likely to be sell-outs. For more information, Light Opera Works can be reached at 927 Noyes St., Evanston, IL 60201-2799 {(708) 869-6300}.

The Mariott Lincolnshire Resort and Theater is planning on presenting *The Hot Mikado* June 16 through August 22. The flyer states, "This all-new boogie-woogie adaptation of Gilbert and Sullivan

most popular opera, *The Mikado* swings the Big Band Sounds of the 1940's. Set in the mythical kingdom of Titipu, it's a romantic tale of mistaken identities and hilarious improbabilities set against jumping rhythms reminiscent of Benny Goodman." Subscription prices (for their whole series) aren't listed, but when we called for information, the box office said tickets are going to be \$31.00. For more information, call the Mariott Lincolnshire Theater at (708) 634-0200 (or write the theater at Ten Mariott drive; Lincolnshire, IL 60065). The remaining shows in their season are *Oklahoma* (August 25-October 31), and *42nd Street* (November 3-January 23, 1994).

(By the way, they have group rates. If anyone feels moved to organize a theater outing for the MGS to this show, just let S/A Cole know, and she'll be glad to send you the information the theater sent her on group packages.)

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### What Cheer! What Cheer! {Elsewhere}

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Austin (1606 The High Road, Austin, TX 78746) will be giving *Iolanthe* April 20--May 23 at the Dougherty Arts Center, 1110 Barton Springs Rd., Austin, TX 78704. Sunday matinees are at 3:00 pm, regular performances are at 8:00 pm. For more information, contact the organization's president, Robert Mellin, at (512) 345-5950.

The Mansion House at Grim's Dyke (Old Redding, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 6SH, England / Tel.: (081-954-4227)) is expected to be planning a number of special events to commemorate the centenary of *Utopia Limited* in 1993. When we find out what they are, we'll pass the information on.

The Washington Savoyards (P.O. Box 34584; Bethesda, MD 20827 / (301) 946-6250 {and leave a message, it says in the flyer}) next production is due to be **Princess Ida**, on May 13-16, 1993. Performances will be at the Duke Ellington Theater in Georgetown (35th and "R" St., N.W., Washington DC). Individual tickets are \$18/\$20 if you're an adult, or \$14/\$16 if you're a child or a Senior Citizen.

We hear from Martha Liehe that the University of Colorado's Lyric Theatre Season is going to include what appears to be a double bill of **Ruddigore** and *Man of La*

*Mancha* July 9-31, 1993 at the Music Theater. It sounds like an unusual combination, but it's what the clipping says. That's all the details we have at the moment, but we'll certainly pass on what we hear as we hear it.

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## Let the Welkin Ring with the News

We recently learned that *Thomas Lawlor*, formerly of the Original D'Oyly Carte Opera Company (not to mention S/A Cole's all-time favorite "Captain Corcoran", and, if memory serves, "Bouncer" in the *Compleat Gilbert and Sullivan* series's *Cox and Box*), is now living in Rhode Island (I hope he won't mind our mentioning that he recently married an American mezzo-soprano (Congratulations from the Midwestern Gilbert and Sullivan Society!), so it would appear that England's loss is happily going to be America's gain.) He has had a great deal of experience directing (and directing G&S) and teaching, both with the opera department of the Royal Academy of Music, London, and with G&S societies. Now that he's here, we're sure we'll be hearing of all kind of good things he'll be doing for both American music and American G&S.

### Where Can it Be?

If you missed out on getting some of those G&S stamp first-day covers, member Norman Vogt in DeKalb (IL) says he has 5 left. If you're interested, in one (or several) of them, send him a self-addressed, stamped envelope at least 8 3/4 " x 4 1/2", and a check made out to Norman Vogt for \$10.00. The covers are really pretty, and are autographed by former D'Oyly Carte baritone John Reed. Norman Vogt's address is 101 Ridge Dr., DeKalb, IL 60115. He'll look forward to hearing from you.

And don't forget, If you know of any G&S-related materials or dealers in that sort of memorabilia, let S/A Cole know who they are, what they have, and how to get in touch with them. The Nonsense after next is going to be a shopper issue, if all goes well, and the information will appear in it. It ought to be a big help to collectors.

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## Plots of Gilbert's and Sullivan's Independent Works:

### A Sensation Novel

Description By Arthur Robinson

W.S. Gilbert's **A Sensation Novel**, with music by German Reed, was first performed on January 31, 1871 (the same year as his first collaboration with Sullivan, **Thespis**). The text is included in *Gilbert Before Sullivan*, a collection of six of Gilbert's early musical plays, edited by Jane Stedman. As Dr. Stedman observes, this play anticipates Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Gilbert satirizes the sensation novels of his day by having the stock characters in such a novel come to life and comment disparagingly on the plot, complaining because they are compelled to do the author's bidding, which is often at variance with their own desires. This play involves a bad baronet, a baby changed a birth, a self-decapitation, and other elements familiar to Gilbert and Sullivan devotees.

The first act (or "volume", as Gilbert calls it) opens in a ruined house in which several murders have been committed, where a writer of sensation novels lives for the atmosphere. He normally writes fifty three-volume novels a year, but he is now suffering from a bad case of writer's block: it has taken him nearly a week to write the first volume of his new book. (Even putting live shrimps down his back to make his flesh crawl hasn't helped.)

With an incantation reminiscent of the witches' chant around the caldron in *Macbeth* (in both meter and ingredients: "Finger of a bigamist,/ Cobweb from mysterious vaults,/ Arsenic sold as Epsom salts. . .") he summons the Spirit of Romance, who informs him that his characters--the mild-mannered hero, the pure heroine, the villain and villainess, and the detective--have existences of their own apart from the novel, and come to life at the end of the first and second volumes, and before the last chapter of the third volume. The author flees in terror before his characters can appear.

It turns out that these characters are quite different outside the pages of the novel. The Hero, **Herbert**, a Sunday school teacher, and the heroine, a governess names **Alice Grey**, loathe one another, each bored by the other's insipidity. Herbert is in love with the seductive villainess, **Rockalda** (Ed. note: in life, she had been an overly-indulgent mother, so her punishment was to be the villainess in sensation novels), and Alice is in love with the villain, who has been plotting to abduct her, to succeed in his evil plans.

The villain, a wicked baronet named **Sir Ruthven**, turns out to be as meek as a new-born lamb--outside the novel. These four are joined by the novel's detective,

**Gripper** (disguised as a Grand Turk so that he may follow the others about "without attracting too much attention"), who apologizes for being late, but explains that it is a fictional detective's duty always to be late: if he arrived on time and prevented crimes from being committed, the novel would end too soon. He points out that if he is ever on time, Herbert and Alice will have to marry each other. All are horrified at the thought. The characters must then return to the novel for the second volume, Alice demurely pleading with the baronet to continue his diabolical pursuit of her.

After the second volume, the characters reassemble. Herbert and Alice have just had a narrow escape from marriage in the novel. Sir Ruthven explains that he diverted the train on which Alice was traveling to meet Herbert by murdering the pointsman; "how good of you," comments the grateful Sunday school teacher. Sir Ruthven then reveals to Alice that she is apparently the rightful daughter of a duke, but she was changed at birth--not by a baby farmer, but by Rockalda, who took her place in the cradle (she was twenty years older than the infant Alice, but nobody noticed the difference). Or is the duke Alice's real father? Sir Ruthven is concerned that she may actually turn out to be his own long-lost granddaughter (everyone turns out to be someone else in any self-respecting sensation novel), which might present an obstacle to their marriage; but Gripper, the detective (arriving late as usual), has deduced that he himself may be the missing granddaughter. All of them reluctantly return to the novel for the final volume.

Just before the final chapter of the last volume, Alice and Herbert get together again outside the novel, lamenting that they are about to get married, and this time it

looks as if nobody will prevent the wedding. But Herbert promises, to Alice's relief, to treat her so abominably that the marriage will end in divorce. Rockalda appears, but Sir Ruthven is missing. The others consult the author's manuscript, and learn from it that Sir Ruthven has just cut off his own head. They decide to revolt: they summon the author and protest their fellow character's death. The author is taken aback to learn that his virtuous heroine loves the dastardly baronet, and his benign hero loves the yellow-haired fiend" Rockalda, but the three remind him that they are "conventional types; you can't get on without us," and in effect threaten to go on strike unless the author brings Sir Ruthven back to life. The author protests that he can't restore to life a character who has been decapitated [a situation, incidentally, that confronts a soap-opera writer in the recent movie *Soapdish*], but at last gives in. The detective arrives (late as usual), and refuses to turn out to be Sir Ruthven's granddaughter, so the author agrees that he will turn out to be Sherlock Holmes in disguise [at least in the version published in 1897]. The characters are at last content, Sir Ruthven appears (with his head reattached), and the novel ends happily for everyone--except maybe the author.

At the W.S. Gilbert Sesquicentennial Symposium at MIT in 1985, the participants got to see a production of *A Sensation Novel*. Apparently, German Reed's music was lost or nobody likes it or something, because at least two other composers have set this work to music. (S/A Cole can't remember who they were, but some of our members who were there and were paying more attention could probably set us straight on that point). It's really quite enjoyable to watch, and the music is nice, regardless of which composer's score is used.

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Our Second synopsis is:

## **Engaged; or Cheviot's Choice**

An Entirely Original Farcical Comedy in Three Acts  
First Produced at the Haymarket Theater, under the management of Mr. J.S. Clarke, Wednesday, 3d October, 1877

*Description by Martha Liehe*

**Act I:** As the play opens, in the garden of a humble but picturesque cottage on the border between England and Scotland, two people are conversing. One is *Maggie Macfarlane*, a pretty country lass; the other is her laddie *Angus Macalister*, who has just asked for and been

granted her hand in marriage. Maggie's widowed mother arrives. Learning of the engagement, she blesses the proposed union. Her only misgivings about young Angus concern his abilities to provide a decent living for her only daughter.

It seems he is adept at placing obstacles on railroad tracks in order to derail them (so much for the rustic naïvete of these characters). Once the train is derailed, the passengers must alight and look for refreshment (possibly even overnight accommodations) until repairs can be made. Such provisions are gladly offered by Angus and the Macfarlanes. They pocket in fees and tips as much as they think the traffic will bear. The two ladies then leave the stage, having heard Angus promise he is eager for the impending arrival of a train whose line he has just blocked.

He does not have to wait long, for here come two passengers much agitated and alarmed. One is a young lady, *Miss Belinda Treherne*. With her is *Belvawney*, a young man who speaks to Belinda in terms of obvious endearment. She is openly fond of her escort, too, but is presently in great fear that they will soon be overtaken by a certain *Major McGillicuddy*. This "barbarous" and jealous man believed Miss Treherne would marry him that very morning. She has escaped for now, but if he finds her with Belvawney, he will surely shoot the pair of them.

In order to put an end once and for all to Belinda's worries about the Major, Belvawney suddenly asks her to become his wife instead. He declares undying love for her, and she replies in the same vein. However, she admits to being curious about his "pecuniary position". Belvawney then explains a somewhat strange condition under which he is placed: it appears he has a friend, one *Mr. Cheviot Hill*, who, although secure financially, is remarkably stingy. Hill has a most unfortunate habit of proposing marriage to every young woman he meets. His father, recognizing the influence Belvawney has on Cheviot, provides the friend with £1000 yearly so long as young Hill remains single. Should Cheviot die or marry, the money becomes the property of his uncle *Symperson* traveling with his nephew on the same train that carried Belinda and Belvawney. Miss Treherne is decidedly displeased with what she perceives as an impermanent financial arrangement, and rejects the proposal. She then goes away.

But Belvawney does not give up easily. He recalls something he has heard about Scottish customs: if two people declare their willingness to be wed, then, in Scotland, they are indeed man and wife [shades of fairy marriage]. While he is thus conniving to talk Belinda into matrimony, Maggie Macfarlane appears. Belvawney questions her about what constitutes a Scotch marriage and she confirms his understanding of the simplicity of the process. Then she goes into the cottage and he leaves also.

No sooner has he gone than the amorous, rich, and attractive Cheviot Hill and his Uncle Symperson come in, both looking disheveled from the train accident. The younger man, true to his parsimonious nature, bemoans the ruination of his hat and gloves. Symperson, however, is much more concerned about the £1000 he will receive annually if Cheviot marries. He suggests his daughter *Minnie* as an excellent choice for matrimony. To this, his nephew agrees, making Symperson delighted and anxious for a wedding date to be set. The money thus to be obtained will, to be sure, rob Belvawney of his own yearly salary. Cheviot warns his uncle not to tell his friend of the dire change in his future wealth; he also reminds Symperson that Belvawney's eyes exercise a strange, hypnotic power over his own will. Under the influence of these compelling rays, Cheviot must carry out whatever schemes Belvawney may concoct. Symperson vows silence, rejoicing that he is soon to be smiled upon by Fortune; he then exits.

Young Hill now contemplates the joys he'll experience when Minnie becomes his mate. He speaks of her in such glowing terms that he is overheard by Belvawney, who is naturally dismayed to learn of his friend's approaching marriage. Cheviot declares that even Belvawney's powerful eyes shall no longer control him with their lurid fires. His love for Minnie is so strong and she is so good, so beautiful that he will overcome all obstacles to wed her. He orders Belvawney out.

Just as soon as he is gone, Cheviot's adoration is put to the test. Maggie has come in, a lovely young woman, indeed. He cannot resist, and goes so far as to put his arm around her waist and steal a kiss. This inflames him to such a degree that he actually implores her to become his wife. But Maggie's loyal heart demands a refusal since she is engaged already. Hill, in a rage asks to know the fellow's name that he may curse him. The arrival of Angus makes this unnecessary, for he embraces Maggie tenderly and they both weep. Cheviot is deeply touched; forgetting to curse Angus, he extols the virtues of his own position and tries desperately to convince them that marriage to him would bring eternal happiness to Maggie.

To prove his sincerity, Cheviot offers money to Angus. After many protestations, the ante is set at £2. Maggie asserts she will never be worth that much to poor Angus, so he, crying openly, hands her over and pockets the coins. They enter the cottage.

Once more alone, Cheviot prides himself on winning such a girl as Maggie, for she is not only pretty but, he feels certain, will never be extravagant. As he is singing her praises, who should walk by but Belinda. Fickle as always, Cheviot is drawn to her obvious charms. She is sad, however, and he is curious as to the reason. He even suggests a gift of cash if this would cheer her. When she declines to accept it, he is infatuated by her well-bred modesty. In a gush of emotion, Cheviot proposes to Belinda. But her soul and hand are already promised to his friend Belvawney. This enrages Cheviot. He vows to cut off Belvawney's annual income by himself marrying Minnie Symperson. Belinda implores him, for her sake, to remain forever single.

Suddenly Belvawney appears, greatly alarmed. Major McGillicuddy has tracked them down and demands a confrontation with his erstwhile bride, Belinda. Cheviot proves master of the situation. Pushing Belvawney aside, he convinces Belinda to put her arms around his neck. The Major, armed with pistols, rushes in, ordering them to separate at once. But he is too late: *Belinda and Cheviot declare themselves to be man and wife*. Maggie and Angus show up and hear the entire episode. She falls sobbing on his shoulders, the major sobs uncontrollably, Belvawney tears his hair, and the curtain falls.

**Act II:** Three months have elapsed. We are now in the drawing room of Symperson's London home. There are signs that a wedding is about to take place. It is Minnie's for she enters in a wedding gown, attended by her maid *Parker*. Minnie gets Parker's assurance that she is indeed beautiful, and shall be exceedingly happy as the wife of Cheviot Hill. Her papa (Symperson) enters, also dressed in his best suit. He tells his daughter that, although he hates to lose her, he'll enjoy having £1000 a year as consolation. Symperson then gives Minnie advice about how to handle a husband. They both agree that, although Cheviot has so far had his own way in decision-making, all this will end abruptly as soon as Minnie becomes Mrs. Hill. She then goes off-stage and Belinda enters, dressed as if for a funeral. When she sees Symperson, she believes him to be a servant and asks him to fetch Minnie.

The two girls meet and rush into each other's arms, since they have been good friends since childhood. Belinda had not known this was to be Minnie's wedding day; she then reviews her own strange encounter with the married state. fleeing from a man she

hated, she met a young, wealthy stranger. On his advice, she declared herself to be his wife. Although she has not seen him since that day, Belinda knows that, according to a quaint Scottish law, they are indeed married. Minnie finds this predicament amusing; her friend, horrified by it, does agree to go home and dress herself in clothing appropriate to the occasion, shedding the black she has worn ever since her ill-fated "marriage" took place. the girls go out together.

Cheviot, in bridegroom apparel, enters, pondering upon the step he is about to take. Will he forever regret this day? Then he sees Parker, the maid, and, true to his nature, finds her adorable. Soon his arm is around her waist, although he constantly reminds himself that this is unseemly conduct for a bridegroom-to-be. Fortunately, they are interrupted by Minnie before Cheviot proposes to Parker. The maid leaves, disgusted that she hasn't been given a few coins. Now the young couple discuss the nuptial arrangements and make plans for their life to come. Cheviot's miserliness is proven by his sharp cutting of corners for the bridal cake and his ideas of an ideal marital situation: Minnie shall prepare absurdly simple economical meals and sew all the suits her husband requires (shades of *The Grand Duke*). He does, however, tell his bride-to-be that he is hiring servants to look after her father. She believes Cheviot to be the soul of goodness and leaves in a state of bliss. He stays behind, thinking for a moment of the "tall girl" he met in Scotland, but soon talks himself out of this reverie.

Belvawney appears, feeling awful: he is deeply in love with Miss Treherne, but she insists she is already wed, thanks to the custom of Scotland. She is, furthermore, determined to learn the identity of her husband, the sooner the better. Cheviot tries to console his friend: is there no way out of this predicament? Suddenly, Belvawney realizes there *is* one possible solution: if the cottage where the vows were spoken is in England, no

marriage exists. If it is in Scotland, they are man and wife. He has decided to write to the owner of the house to ascertain the truth. Both young men declare this situation to be immoral and, in the head of their anguish, Cheviot confesses this is to be his wedding day. Belvawney is near panic at this disclosure: how can he face the loss of his yearly stipend? To ruin Cheviot pleasure, Belvawney denounces him, saying there will be no wedding because Cheviot is *already* a married man! Now it's Cheviot's turn to panic. On bended knee, he begs Belvawney not to spoil the nuptials, especially since money has already been spent to provide food, travel tickets, etc.

Now Belvawney decides to play his trump card: he fixes Cheviot in the glare of his magnetic eyes. Laughing fiendishly, the defiant man roars his hateful news. He can prove Cheviot marriage to Belinda because he is the only witness left! Declaring that the cottage in question has since been torn down and its occupants have left the country, Belvawney exits in satanic glee. Poor Cheviot is desolate until he realizes that his bride has been missing for months, the cottage has been pulled down, and those who lived there are far away. Belvawney, therefore, isn't capable of proving anything. Cheviot makes up his mind to proceed with his marriage to Minnie.

At this point, Angus and the Macfarlanes appear. They are the rustics hired by Hill to serve Symperson. Although they don't recognize Cheviot, he knows immediately who they are and asks them to go away. Suddenly Maggie remembers: this is the man who asked for her hand and gave Angus money to relinquish her. Desperate again, Cheviot confides to them his weakness: he always proposes marriage to every pretty girl he meets. As they grope to understand this predicament, Minnie and her father come in. Cheviot covers his chagrin by pretending Mrs. Macfarlane is a washerwoman who has presented him with an exorbitant bill. Maggie, however, becomes hysterical and tells the truth to the Sympersons: Cheviot proposed to her three months ago. She further asserts that she witnessed his marriage to yet a different beautiful lady at that time. Minnie and her father are confused and enraged, even though Cheviot hotly denies having wed a woman whose name he doesn't even know. Symperson, fearing the loss of his promised stipend, demands an explanation, but young Hill cannot give him one.

But Belvawney can! He enters now, assuring the assembled company that he was present when Cheviot and a certain lady declared themselves to be man and wife several months earlier on the border of England and Scotland. Symperson accepts this, telling her daughter to find herself another husband, and Belvawney to find some

other source of income. Not to be so easily dismissed, Belvawney reveals the puzzling facts that no one can be sure exactly where the cottage stood. And where, pray, is the missing woman?

As if in answer, here comes the lovely Belinda, now dressed prettily for the wedding of her chum Minnie. In that instant, Belinda and Cheviot recognize each other and rush into a rapturous embrace. Belvawney staggers back, Minnie faints, Maggie sobs, and the curtain falls.

**Act III:** Once again we are in Symperson's London house. Three days have gone by since the end of Act II. Belvawney is singing at the piano to entertain Belinda and Minnie. The girls pay him lavish compliments, saying the weary days of waiting have passed pleasantly, thanks to his songs, riddles, and conjuring tricks. We learn that the reason for the delay is that Cheviot has gone to Scotland to determine the exact location of the fateful cottage. He is expected back momentarily. Much depends, both romantically and financially, on what he shall discover.

And here he is. As Belvawney watches the cab approach from the window, he asserts that whichever girl loses Cheviot shall, if she agrees, marry him instead. He then goes out, Cheviot enters; the ladies are bursting with questions. But alas! He cannot resolve the puzzle, for those who own the cottage have left the country and are on their way to Central Africa. Belinda and Minnie are inconsolable. Cheviot advises patience; after all, until further information can be received, he is engaged to them both and will divide his affection equally. He is jealous when he learns how little they missed him during his absence, thanks to Belvawney's charms. In the ensuing heated discussion, the girls remind Cheviot that Maggie is also involved in this mess. He would, of course, gladly marry all three of them if the law would allow such goings-on.

Symperson then enters with two letters. One is from the cottage's owner, written before he went to Africa. Ripping it open, he reads that the cottage is "certainly in England". Belinda faints, realizing she has lost Cheviot. But she resolves not to give up, once she has revived, and leaves suddenly. Symperson then reads the other letter: it is from Belvawney. According to him, the Indestructible Bank has stopped payment on Cheviot's shares and they are worthless. When she hears this, Minnie voices her decision to leave Cheviot and flounces away. Her father is indeed crestfallen. Now he won't get his annual gift, and he bemoans the horrid materialism of the human race.

Cheviot comes in, more unhappy than before. None of his three darlings can ever become his own. He commiserates with his uncle, and they both feel that the only way out of this is for Cheviot to end his life. Drowning himself in the nearby river seems the likeliest solution. Symperson shakes his nephew's hand, believing him ready to die, and goes out. Left alone, Cheviot thinks of Belinda: could she ever possibly love him for himself alone? He resolves to find out once and for all. He is overheard by Belvawney, who, coming in unexpectedly, assures his friend that he's too late: Miss Treherne has already given her hand and her heart to himself. This is the last straw for poor Cheviot who draws a pistol from his pocket to end his misery.

Belvawney, greatly upset, offers to surrender Belinda if Cheviot will reconsider. He then confesses he wrote the bank statement himself to gain her love. Cheviot's anger begins to dissipate when he believes he shall have both money and the girl he adores. Enter Symperson, attired in black: he has come to see Cheviot die. When he discovers the young man's change of heart, he gleefully declares he has just seen Belvawney and Belinda leaving together in a cab, affectionately entwined. Cheviot is duped again! He vows revenge and swears he will marry anyone. Why not Minnie? Overjoyed, Symperson goes to find his daughter. She shows up and Cheviot proposes. But when he becomes aware of her mercenary attitude toward his wealth, Cheviot is utterly turned off by Minnie and renounces her. In desperation, he sends for Maggie Macfarlane.

When she arrives, accompanied by her mother and Angus, Cheviot offers marriage to Maggie. She sobs bitterly: she has just filed an action against him for breach of promise. It is already in the hands of her solicitor. Cheviot feels cursed. Mrs. Macfarlane even suggests he might marry her, but he draws the line at this, depressed though he is.

At this moment, Belinda and Belvawney return, followed by Minnie and Symperson. Cheviot fears are well-grounded, for indeed the first two persons have just appeared before a registrar and recited their marriage vows. Once again, Cheviot draws his gun. But wait! There is yet hope. Symperson decides to reread the letter concerning the property's location. He sees that the owner has instructed that the page be turned over. Lo and behold, although the cottage is in England, *the garden is in Scotland--and Cheviot married Belinda in the garden!* An ecstatic Cheviot embraces an equally euphoric Belinda; Belvawney turns to Minnie for comfort, Angus gives solace to Maggie, and Mrs. Macfarlane reposes on the bosom of Symperson.

Finis

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Another MGS Postcard Drawing

This time, though, you have to bring your own postcard. S/A Cole has been trying to load up on prizes for the Big Quiz and for postcard drawings like this one, when she suddenly realized she wasn't quite sure what she should be getting. Books and novelties are all right, but these days one can get such bargains on recordings (especially LPs) that she thought this might be a good question to ask the membership.

This month's question is:

Which of these items do you have: 1.) A Cassette Player; 2.) A Record Player 3.) A CD Player, 4.) a VCR; 5.) a Laserdisc player; or 6.) None of the above?

Write down the numbers of which items you have on a postcard (postage is only 19¢ for a card, and they're easier for S/A Cole to keep track of), and send it to S/A Cole by June 1, 1993. One of the cards will be chosen at random, and that person will receive some nice prize. Needless to say, what the prize will be is going to depend on that person's answer to the question. We'll look forward to hearing from you soon.

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Now, S/A Cole has promised faithfully that she really, truly will start working on the next *Nonsense* as soon as this one is mailed, and I think she means it. She does have some things to work with anyway, since she left out the list of new members and the notices about what members are doing.

So, if you have any news or information, drop her a note about it (if you call her, she'll forget), and if you were going to be writing any plot synopses or whatever, do get them to her. She has a lot of stuff to weed through, but none of it is nearly as interesting as what the members themselves have to say. We'll look forward to hearing from you soon!



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(By the way, the notice on the back from Centre East just showed up, and the offer for MGS members was such a nice one, that we just put it in as it was. It sounds like a fun concert!)