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A Study in Scotch: Drinks in Mulliner

BY KEN CLEVINGER

IT IS RUMMY, when you reflect on it, how amusing it is that a Mulliner story starts with some Tankard of Ale saying to some Small Bass in the cozy bar parlour of the Anglers' Rest that . . . well, almost any remark will do. And as important to the introduction as this formula is, we know it makes absolutely no-never-mind to the dénouement, pardon my French. Yet it is naming the drink, qua drinker, that draws you in. This matter of drinks in Mulliner merits further inquiry.

Our first mystery: Angostura. Were Adrian Mulliner to investigate, he would find that Angostura is a brand name for a bitters distilled from the bark of certain South American citrus trees and much used in the flavoring of drinks, alcoholic or otherwise. It is not to be confused with Bitter, a very dry British ale heavily flavored with hops. Thus, a Mild and Bitter is a beer drinker seeking a blend of the hoppy Bitter with a softer, blander beer, whereas a Lemonade and Angostura is a teetotaler who wants the sweetness of his Lemonade cut with bitters.

To consider this matter of drinks in Mulliner, I have sipped the essence of 43 Mulliner stories. Without any claim of completeness, my survey reveals over 50 "drinks." Forty-two different drinks appear as "listeners" in the stories. Seeking to impose some sort of order, I arbitrarily set up six categories of drinks: common distilled spirits—Scotch, whisky (which in those days, Norman Murphy tells me, would almost certainly have been Scotch), brandy, gin, and rum; malt beverages—beer, ale, stout, and lager; wines—including sherry, port, and champagne; liquors of a more exotic nature; named cocktails; and finally, the nonalcoholic options in the stories. Candor also requires noting that Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo reportedly tastes like "old



Ken Clevenger delivers a sermon at the Providence convention.

boot-soles beaten up in sherry," so that magic potion might be included in the wines.

Whether it is a quick one, a stiff one, liquid balm, a spot, a bracer, or a reviver, drinks are a leitmotif in Mulliner. Scotch tops all drinks with references in 26 stories, more if we count the whisky. In 24 stories Mr. Mulliner himself imbibes, and almost without exception his drink is hot Scotch and lemon. Mr. Mulliner's two departures from this rule are in "A Slice of Life," where his drink is a hot Scotch with a slice of lemon, and in "The Romance of a Bulb-Squeezer," wherein he omits the lemon entirely. Mr. Mulliner's favorite ingredient is referenced as just Scotch ("The Rise of Minna Nordstrom"), Scotch on the Rocks (twice), and once as a

Scotch and soda (“The Reverent Wooing of Archibald”). Scotch on the Rocks has the distinction of being not merely an alcoholic drink but also a “character” with lines. An example of this literary device is related in Appendix 3 of the Ring and Jaggard volume *Wodehouse at the Anglers’ Rest*, where they note that E. Phillips Oppenheim, in his autobiography, tells a story about Wodehouse’s use of a gin and tonic to identify a drinker at a watering hole in the South of France.

Whisky is the next most prevalent distilled beverage in the Mulliner stories, even though, as mentioned above, it almost certainly would have meant Scotch when the stories were written. Irish whisky was the only other type available in the United Kingdom then and even that was uncommon. However, I count the mention of rye in “The Story of William,” set in the United States, as a whisky sighting and Webster’s lapping the stuff up in “The Story of Webster” is also counted. A reference in 17 stories is thus noted. Whisky Sour, Whisky and Splash, and a Double Whisky and Splash are characters. Whisky and soda is slightly less common than a splash. Whisky and soda also seems the drink of solace. It is never a character but appears as the preferred poison after one has passed through the proverbial furnace. It is, for instance, “revivifying” to George once safely home in “The Truth about George.”

Following close on whisky’s heels is gin, but only once taken straight in the case of an anonymous dog in “The Knightly Quest of Mervyn.” Primarily gin is in a mix. Classically, gin is served as a martini, and among the Mulliner characters there are a Dry Martini and a Gin and Italian Vermouth. Martini cocktails, specified as medium dry, are also drunk. And gin is also mixed with Angostura, ginger beer, ginger ale, and sometimes, confusingly, described as gin and ginger. Doubtless Miss Postlethwaite knows her customers’ customs when they place such an order.

Brandy appears rarely and never as a character. It mixes with soda in two stories and is an ingredient in several ad hoc mixtures. The combinations are curious and no proportions are given, but even if the brandy is old (hence more sippable), the mixtures are not recommended as a party punch.

Curiously, given the British naval tradition and long association with Caribbean culture, rum is rarely featured. And when it is, it is as the character Rum and Milk in five stories. An amazingly popular drink, I must say, for when I imagine myself sitting in the bar parlor of the Anglers’ Rest, my drink is much more likely to be the Double Best Port or a Draught Ale (depending on the weather and the mood) than Rum and Milk; but to each his own.

Malt beverages of all types, with appearances in 23 stories, are second only to Scotch. Fifteen characters are so defined: a generous mix of Ales, Lagers, Stouts, Beers, and the classic Small Bass, with a record nine servings. The choice of malt beverages is vast. You can be a Tankard of Ale or Stout or a Draught Beer in a Pewter. Most often the malt beverage is served as a Pint; it may be of Bitter, Lager, Stout, or Half and Half. But a Half (pint) of Stout is not unknown. And just as a Bass is always Small, there is also a Small Lager and the lager may be, irrespective of portion size, a Light Lager. Beer in a bottle is not unknown, but the Stout, Beer, Bitter, and Ale characters are surely drawn from classic, hand-pulled, porcelain taps. And Draught Ale and Draught Stout are doubtless straightforward characters of substance. More subtle or complex are the Stout and Mild, Mild and Bitter, Stout and Bitter, and Half and Half, drawn and mixed under the taps by the erudite barmaid.

Most drinks evoke some image of the drinker. If distilled spirits cost more than malt beverages, is the drinker more richly dressed? What makes a Milk and Rum “well-informed” and Lemon Squash an anti-smoking advocate? Why should a Mild and Bitter be “tactless” and a Sherry and Bitters “genial”? But like the debate over whether Bertie has a monocle or not, we all have our own mental pictures of these characters. So a Tankard of Ale is different from Ninepennyworth of Sherry, but how, exactly? The comic genius is in letting us form our own images rather than an exact description of a particular character.

We can be pretty certain that the malt beverages and whisky-like distilled spirits hold more allure than the wine behind the Anglers’ Rest bar. Champagne is the king of vinous quaffs with nine mentions but only one champagne character: a Half bot. And it can be mixed with a little port, sherry, Italian vermouth, old brandy, and green Chartreuse as is done in “The Ordeal of Osbert Mulliner.” Likewise, if you mix oxygen and potassium with a splash of trinitrotoluol and a spot of old brandy, you can make a libation that can be retailed in America as champagne for a nice price, as we learn from Wilfred Mulliner.

Sherry barely noses out port as the next favorite fruit of the vine. There are three Sherry characters: Ninepennyworth, Sherry and Bitters, and Sherry and Angostura. Rationalists may quibble that these last two represent a distinction without a difference. But Wodehouse never wrote imprecisely. Angostura has a different taste compared to other bitters, and a connoisseur would specify which.

Port appears as a Small Port, the Double Best Port, and Port from the Wood, and is also drunk as a glass

of Port, the Oldest Port, and the '87 Port. Also among the wines, Italian vermouth makes cameo appearances with, or is it in, gin in three stories.

Like the lesser wines, there are liqueurs which are rarely drunk and never appear as a character, so the next category is cocktails. In three stories, cocktails are mentioned but none are specified. Excepting the martini, addressed above in the context of gin and Italian vermouth, cocktails are only named in two tales: "The Story of William" and "The Knightly Quest of Mervyn."

There are seven specific cocktails named (never as a character), and none are described by their ingredients. In "The Story of William," the Dynamite Dewdrop, Dreamland Special, and Undertaker's Joy all have the propensity to help the imbiber forget losing the girl he loves. None of these drinks could be found on the webtender.com internet site. But I note that (the American patron's strongly held opinion to the contrary notwithstanding) there are several drinks named Earthquake. For example, Earthquake #1 is made of gin, whisky, and Pernod, and the Earthquake Cocktail is concocted of gin, bourbon, and absinthe. Both might enable the drinker to doze peacefully through even a San Francisco-sized earthquake.

In "The Knightly Quest of Mervyn," of the four cocktails mentioned, two are easily identified. A Side-Car is made of cognac (or other brandy), Cointreau (or other orange liqueur), and lemon juice. The Bronx has multiple variations as well. The other two cocktails are shudderingly mentioned by Oofy Prosser: a Lizard's Breath and the All Quiet on the Western Front. These may be examples of the rarest Wodehouse writing: total fiction without a direct, real-world antecedent. The webtender.com site has seven cocktails with *breath* in the name, including Buzzard's Breath and Dragon's Breath, but none that sound like something Oofy Prosser and his hoity-toity society friends would drink. The All Quiet on the Western Front cocktail is problematic. The website has nothing suggestive. Was Wodehouse paying another tribute to a great book? Is the mind-numbing image merely suggestive of an alcohol-induced stupor? I suppose that in the 1920s and '30s there may have been drink names that echoed the catchphrases of the Great War. Certainly today our drinks do not shy away from names that reflect the prevalent zeitgeist. For example, there is a drink on webtender.com named Passed Out Naked on the Bathroom Floor! Oh, for Jeeves and his magic elixir to relieve the morning head!

Of course, the best relief is avoidance, and the Mulliner stories are replete with nonalcoholic drinks. The Lemon Sour character has two appearances and

Lemon Squash one. A Milk and Soda is doubtless aptly described as "meek" and "little" in one of the few instances where a description and drink seem to mesh. And clearly the Plain Vichy and the Ginger Ale are teetotal characters, as was Clarence Mulliner with the excellent glass of water he had when a prisoner of the Mayor of Tooting East. It is equally clear that, while a bracing sip of something stimulating is a good accompaniment to the pleasure of reading a Mulliner story, it is hardly necessary. I myself have read at least one, "Came the Dawn," while cold sober and without a whit less enjoyment. Though I still dream that I shall be offered a glass of the '87 Port one day . . .



U.K. Divine Providence Convention Reports

FOR MORE ENTERTAINING convention coverage, check out the P G Wodehouse Society (UK) website at <http://www.pgwodehousesociety.org.uk/>, and click on "Recent Events." Christine Hewitt, Tony Ring, Tim Andrew, Salatrix, Jelle Otten, and Hilary Bruce contribute to give a convention perspective from across the pond.

The *Telegraph* Reviews *A Wodehouse Handbook*

DAVID TWISTON-DAVIES says it is "some of the most dedicated sleuthing" and "remarkable" in his review of Colonel Norman Murphy's *A Wodehouse Handbook* in the *Telegraph*. (We're not at all surprised by the compliments, since we of TWS have said the same for many years.) You may find the review at <http://tinyurl.com/ysodwp>.

There's also a short article about Norman by Chris Hastings and Beth Jones at <http://tinyurl.com/2nv2qf>.

Mr Potter, being, as are all publishers, more like a shrinking violet than anything else in the world, nearly swooned. His scalp tingled: his jaw fell: and his toes began to open and shut like poppet valves.

"Mr Potter Takes a Rest Cure" (1935)

If Jeeves Were a Dog . . .

BY ANNE COTTON

Anne Cotton (nom de Plum Lady Bassett) gave this speech at the Divine Providence convention. We fetched it from Anne; she was happy to turn it over to our editorial paws.

IT WAS AT a NEWTS convention that I was first told that I would be giving a talk at this convention. I said, "What on earth about?" The unanimous opinion was Dogs. Having a canine pair of my own, I accepted the challenge, and soon settled on the intriguing old game of "If So-and-So were a dog, what kind of dog would So-and-So be, and why?"

I'd like to thank Dan Garrison for his encouragement, and for the character comments from his *Who's Who in Wodehouse*. The notes about individual breeds of dogs are almost all from an excellent work called *The Right Dog for You* by Dr. Daniel Tortora.

Now, on to our first subject: Jeeves. He is definitely a substantial presence. He looms large, at least when the situation calls for large looming. The toy breeds can be discarded at once. So, too, the terriers. When Jeeves speaks, he does not "yap," nor waste his words in idle conversation. Jeeves may shimmer in and out of rooms, but he never seems to race about, and so we can discard the herding breeds. But on his vacations, where does he head? To the shore, where he shrimps—which I believe means actually wading into water to a depth of at least some inches. Ah, a water-loving dog! We're narrowing the field nicely. And keep in mind that he is constantly pulling Bertie out of hot water; so a water-rescue breed is indicated. Now there does happen to be a perfect candidate: It's a large dog, one that demands respect, moves sedately (in fact it is often a couch potato), and, thanks to its webbed feet, is known for brilliant water-rescue work. It is very often black (the valet's favorite color of clothing). It is also a champion drooler, but you can't expect a perfect match in every respect.

This breed is the Newfoundland. Our expert says: "Newfs love the water, and puppies may sleep with their heads in the water bowl. The breed has been used

. . . as guardians for children [such as Bertie]. . . Able and willing to help their masters on command and acting with initiative when necessary. . . Seems to undertake the duties of nursemaid naturally without



training." I rest my case. The Newfie is surely the doggie parallel for Jeeves.

Now to Bertie Wooster. He's a sporting type if ever there was one, at least those involving a wager. To say that his mind wanders is rather like saying, "I say, there's a spot of a shower" during a hurricane. Here is a creature that loves life but is not known for an ability to concentrate. I did find one rather nice candidate in the sporting group.

The Irish Setter! More than a bit crazy, these beautiful creatures are described by our expert as "impulsive, highly distractible, rollicking, gay, has moments of sheer giddiness, excitable, good with energetic older children but a bit too excitable for toddlers. . . . A dog of this breed may develop bad habits if left alone or untrained." Yes, that's Bertie.



For this next example, we're playing the game a bit in reverse. I started with the dog breed and asked Rosie M. Banks and Cyril Waddesley-Davenport (aka Susan and Dan Cohen), who own and love them, which character they best matched. The dog is the Clumber Spaniel.

Dan says: "It is Tuppy Glossop. What brought both of us to this conclusion is gluttony. The image of Tuppy stealing the steak-and-kidney-pie and our Clumber Toby running around the house with the Christmas turkey (that really happened two years ago) is simply too good to ignore. Clumbers are famous eaters, and food thieves. They are also very stubborn—Tuppy was stubborn—they have light hair, and look rather like



bulldogs. Clumbers have been described as a spaniel designed by a bulldog-lover." Just the dog for a lad who is described by Dan Garrison as having "light hair" and "a high squeaky voice, in build and appearance somewhat resembling a bulldog."

Stephanie Byng is our first female to be matched. We may as well bring up that word which, though entirely normal and appropriate when applied to female dogs, is considered well beyond the pale when applied to humans. But, as one dog friend noted, "They don't

call them bitches for nothing.” (Wodehouse calls them “aunts.”) Stiffy, while not really mean at all, is one of Wodehouse’s strong female characters. Stiffy is rather rare in the world of Wodehouse in that she herself is definitely a dog person. And I found, when I began prowling about in my dog reference work, that she had in fact found her perfect counterpart to keep as her own pet. It’s her Aberdeen terrier, another name for the familiar Scottie.

Of course we must allow extra latitude to this ward and niece of Sir Watkyn Bassett, who would in olden times undoubtedly have the sobriquet of “the Severe.” Growing up with a pill of a magistrate does tend to dampen the spirit. But Stiffy does retain redeeming features, such as putting Stinker Pinker up to stealing a policeman’s helmet. And she loves Bartholomew. Our dog guru has this to say: “It is the most behaviorally variable of all the terriers—in any one day a member of this breed can be playful, irritable, loving, aggressive, obedient, dominant, stubborn, submissive, sullen, snappish, quiet and noisy.” Since Stiffy found the Scottie her perfect companion, we should not be surprised.



Now we come to a more complex character indeed: that other Bassett with whom I am often unfortunately confused, namely Madeline. For this ethereal and daisy-obsessed creature who sees things that others cannot see, it will take a dog who is itself a fantastical creature—in fact, hardly a real dog at all. As it happens, there is one perfect match for Madeline. With apologies to those lovers of this breed, I fear it looks to me like nothing more than a semi-bald rat on a bad hair day.

This is a Chinese Crested. My research tells me that the Chinese Cresteds are exceptionally loving and like to hug and smile. However, children must not be rough with this breed as it does not have the protective hair that other breeds have and can get injured easily. Puppies should be well-socialized and exposed to loud noises when young to avoid potential timidity. Chinese



Cresteds also tend to become very attached to their owners, and they crave constant companionship. Just the dog for a woman whom Dan Garrison describes as a “soppy girl with a soupy, treacly voice

and a tinkling, silvery laugh,” whose “favorite reading is *Winnie-the-Pooh* and the works of Rosie M. Banks.”

Let us proceed to one of my own favorite Wodehouse characters, the dreaded Aunt Agatha. No stars or daisy chains for her; this lady has barbed wire in her voice and steel in her spine. Of the many appropriately ill-tempered breeds available, I nominate the giant Schnauzer.

According to Dr. Tortora, this breed “is about the size of a German Shepherd and may be considerably more aggressive.” He writes of a German Shepherd he knew named Satan: “Satan ruled the household with an iron jaw. . . . [His] was the first case I had of a dog that actually enacted a curfew. . . . To avoid Satan’s wrath, the teenage son had to sneak into his room after a late date by climbing in the window.” Aunt Agatha’s household is run along these same lines.



Now we come to a far more amiable aunt, Dahlia Travers. Her salient points are a carrying voice and a determined will; she also has a fine sense of humor. Anyone who can badger Bertie into doing anything at her bidding, and at the same time keep his affection, is a special person, and she needs a special dog to match. With due respect for the aforementioned Madeline,



I nominate the Basset Hound.

Our dog expert says this hound “has great endurance” and “can follow a trail over difficult terrain,” which suits Aunt Dahlia’s field prowess and

her single-minded pursuit of silver cow creamers. The description also says that this animal is “stubborn, but can be controlled if treated with kindness and affection. Most Bassets snore loudly.” While we have no proof of the latter statement, the former also affirms this choice.

But let us return to one of the less congenial ladies, Constance Keeble. Aside from Constance’s deplorable taste in secretaries for her brother, she seems happiest when busting up the love affairs of her junior relatives and running Blandings with a hand of hardened steel—and tracking down Galahad’s memoirs, whose publication would be an unthinkable family tragedy. She is a guardian of everything from morals to respectability, two things often confused with each

other in error. Constance needs to be a guard dog of some sort—a guard dog who, when it stares into one's eyes and bares a tooth, demands instant respect. I rather favor the Rottweiler for this job.

They have the right heritage. As Dr. Tortora points out, "Specimens were used as the 'devil dogs' that attacked Gregory Peck in the film *The Omen*, and . . .



some guard-dog trainers refer to the Rottweiler as 'the Cadillac of attack dogs.'" He adds, "Behavioral problems may include . . . guarding food, objects and places from family members; overprotectiveness;

demanding behavior; willful disobedience and excessive aggression." I bet Clarence would be the first to agree.

Clarence, that tall, lanky ninth Earl of Emsworth, was easy to match within the canine kingdom, though at first those who do not really know the breed may be surprised at my choice. Clarence is a quiet, retiring sort; he makes retirement into a solid career. He seems possessed of Wodehouse's own gift for disappearing from overcrowded rooms and finding sweet solitude, either in the library or at the Empress's sty. He is never heard to raise his voice except on the rarest occasions (such as his prize pig feeling ill). So where do we find a gentle and quiet and unobtrusive dog? Simple. A retired greyhound fits the bill to perfection.

What you may not know about greyhounds is their extreme gentleness of temper, shy almost to a fault. They dislike loud people intensely. They need 10 or 15 minutes a day of good running, and the rest of the day



they become couch potatoes. Our dog expert agrees, describing them as "high-strung, easily upset by sudden movements, starting readily; stubborn, and trainable only while calm." I can just envision Clarence, like a greyhound, draped lazily over the fence of the pigsty admiring the Empress, and perfectly happy to spend hours without moving.

While we're at Blandings, let us take up the case of Rupert J. Baxter, called "the Efficient" by some, but by others called names which cannot really be mentioned

in mixed company. I looked in the terrier group for a match for Baxter, and lit at once on the American Staffordshire, otherwise known as the pit bull. They are very antisocial creatures, and so is Baxter. They are able to focus on an enemy and probably carry grudges marvelously, but pit bulls are generally too courageous to be a good match for Baxter. About the best match I could find was the short-haired fox terrier.

While these dogs do have their lovable side, and we have to go far to find anyone who would call Baxter "lovable," they were developed, according to Dr. Tortora, to get foxes out of their holes "by lunging, snapping and growling with unrelenting



tenacity until the fox bolted. The fox would then be chased by the Foxhounds and followed by so-called English 'gentlemen' on horseback who considered it sporting to chase a little fox over hill and dale with up to 35 hounds in fierce pursuit." He describes this terrier as "a scrappy, impulsive, extraverted, lovable dynamo" who nevertheless is "disobedient when excited." In his chart of terrier characteristics, this breed scores highly in territoriality, dominant toward strange dogs, and more dominant with familiar people.

I cannot omit from this list Lady Bassett, from "Strychnine in the Soup." Lady Bassett has unfortunately never been given a first name; personally, I rather favor Hermione. She is a big-game hunter, which is not a terribly social hobby. She has no trouble shooting people, though in a friendly sort of way. I believe that a Mastiff fits the bill.

Dr. Tortora owns a two-year-old Mastiff, whom he describes as weighing "only" 180 pounds. The Romans used them in England as "gladiator, bull, bear, lion and tiger combatants." A Mastiff which measures at least 30 inches at the shoulder "doesn't really have to obey anyone, but dogs of this breed usually do, given time, consistent patience and warm, rewarding and *nonpunitive* training. Never hit a mastiff for any reason." Speaking for Lady Bassett, I completely agree. One would take a swing at this woman, as this dog, at one's peril.



SINCE MY nom de Plum is Lady Bassett, perhaps I can be allowed to hypothesize about which dog she would want to own. (The NEWTS should have known I'd get around to my own dogs eventually.) Let me begin by introducing you to Merlin.

Merlin was the sassiest, brattiest little retriever you'd ever meet. He is still a perpetual puppy in a breed rightly described as the Peter Pan of the dog world. Our dog expert describes the breed as "bright and active; easily distractible; untemperamental; and very friendly."



Merlin, now the elder

He never, ever fights. He is a true preux chevalier. And his perpetual youth shows when he is distracted in a flash from any serious business at hand by any sort of merriment offstage. Does this begin to suggest anyone in the Wodehouse canon?

Ladies and gentlemen, I introduce you to the canine Galahad Threepwood. They both love the company of young people, often helping smooth out the social bumps on young lovers' paths to the altar.

They never bother about social position when choosing their friends. And they are the ultimate party animals. Gally would have adored Merlin. Heaven knows what mischief the two of them could get up to, given room and time.

My second canine companion is Emma, best described as "soft," both of temperament and coat. Seemingly a bit shy and retiring at first, Emma can really get her way when she wants to. She teases poor Merlin unmercifully, often charging in and ripping a toy out of his mouth when she decides she wants it. Now, the iron paw comes in a sometimes velvet glove, which leads me to Emma's human counterpart: Bobbie Wickham, who invariably gets her own way by persuasion or bullying as the situation demands. As Dan Garrison sums it up, she is "a spirited but erratic girl with an instinct for mischief, inclined to treat her suitors badly; every fellow who comes in contact with her finds himself

That's an understatement. Merlin has just turned nine, going on two, and he is currently on staff at our local obedience school. He goes to puppy kindergarten to socialize the actual puppies, helping them learn how to say "hello" nicely to other dogs.



Anne's Merlin is his young and sassy years

sooner or later up to the Adam's apple in some ghastly mess." That's my Emma, all right.

But what about Plum himself? If he were a dog, what would he be? His own preference was for the small breeds, and I found my candidate for this position among the toy breeds. Plum's desire for privacy is legendary, as is the "glide" when Ethel was entertaining and he preferred to go hole up in his study and write. It's not that he was totally unsociable; he just preferred his own company, and he had a very short attention span when it came to the business of entertaining guests. A good match for Plum would be the Pug.



Anne's Emma, ready for her close-up

Dr. Tortora describes the Pug as "companionable, needing minimum care and not requiring coddling; stubborn but easygoing." He adds that they are easy to live with and to care for. His charts of personality traits show the Pug to be gentle, predictable, only moderately territorial, generally submissive to familiar people, and emotionally stable. He does not mention how prolific they are with the typewriter. I leave it to you to decide if this is a reasonable match; and I admit I am far less confident of a pairing here than with any of Plum's characters. But then, real people are so much more complicated than fictional ones.



A Plum of a dog: The Pug

So now at last we have gone to the dogs and back, with side excursions through Plum's world. To those of us who love canines, the similarities are striking—but not surprising.



Leaving Emma and Merlin at home, Anne Cotton attends the canine-free Divine Providence convention.

A Most Divine Sermon

BY STEPHEN PERSING

Stephen's lesson in love (or is it lunch?) won the Brotherly Love Sermon Challenge at the Divine Providence convention against stiff competition—but then, it was delivered by a ringer, the Very Rev. Father Wendell Verrill.

ONE DAY Saint Leontius was lunching with Mehujael, son of Irad, Enoch, son of Hepzibah, and others whose parentage was in doubt, as they traveled the Damascus road. Their repast, purchased at the local watering hole, moved the Saint to speak: "Alas," he said, "what is this muck they calleth 'ale'? It tasteth of drainage ditches after the flooding of the Nile. Verily, there is not a good pub between here and Nazareth."

Mehujael agreed, saying, "Thou canst trust no one these days. Give them an inch, they'll take a cubit."

The Saint agreed, saying: "When thou hast ale, thou shouldst call it ale. When thou hast a mess of pottage, thou shouldst call it thy birthright. There is no room in Heaven for euphemisms. Such laxity of language bids me think of brotherly love among the Hivites and the Hittites."

"Ooh, tell us a story!" cried All and Sundry, son of Etcetera.

"I shall relate a parable," said the Saint, "for that is what Saints do." And here is the parable he told: "What the Hivites and Hittites called 'brotherly love' was practiced with spears and cudgels, swords and knobkerries—something like a shillelagh, nice and heavy, very useful in a good donnybrook. The Lord saw what they were up to and was more than a trifle vexed with them. And when the Hivites rose from their labors at noon to belabor the Hittites the Lord could stand it no longer. He appeared to the Hivites and spoke, saying: 'Hast thou lost thine marbles? Art thou completely round the twist? If this be brotherly love, then the Lord thy God is Marie of Roumania.'"

The Hivites didn't know what to do. Some took God's words as an admonition to pay more heed to their own kith and kin, and began to wallop their near and dear with the aforementioned arsenal—especially the knobkerries, which, as I said before, are handy for denting the cranium. But a Hivite wise man spoke, and begged the Lord, "Tell us what thou meanest, for we are hungry from a long day's labor and came out to battle with naught but elevenses in our stomachs."

And the Lord spoke again. "Thou catchest not my drift. Smiting thy neighbor is not brotherly love. If thou hungers, let thou eat, and save thy smiting for the beasts



of the field and birds of the air, whom I put on this earth for thy sustenance. And forgetteth not thy vegetables, also. Harken to me, for I have had an idea and, being Who I am, it is a pip. Thou shalt sway the hearts of thy kindred thusly: from this day forth thou shalt erect tall signs beside all thy thoroughfares, and take out ads in thy newspapers and all thy best magazines. Yea, shalt thou even broadcast singing commercials over thy wireless, and the message thou shalt send is: Eat more Manna!"

The Hivites, being obedient to God's will, spread the word and created an advertising campaign the likes of which even Solomon could not equal. Every hieroglyph and cuneiform wedge spelled out the Message. The Manna Channel was carried on all cable and satellite systems. Manna was selling like hotcakes, which it closely resembles—sales up 20 percent in the first quarter alone, while trade in knobkerries declined. Great was the hoopla and ballyhoo, and the sound of the salesman was heard in the land. And, behold! On a full stomach the smiting of Hittites seemed to be too much work. The people took up more peaceful occupations such as football and Parliamentary democracy. So peace came to the lands of the Hivites and, by extension, the Hittites.

And it came to pass that one day a Hivite and a Hittite were walking down the street, when the Hivite spoke, saying, "Begorrah, the Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to eat manna at noon, rather than clout thee and thy kindred."

And the Hittite said, "Faith and begob, thy God is afraid thou shalt have thy hat handed to thee, as 'twas at the World Cup."

Then the Hivite and the Hittite began to smite each other with bladders, being the only weapons at hand, and not as efficacious as a cosh at close range. The Hivites rose up against the Hittites, and the Hittites rose up against the Hivites, and some wandering Jebusites who were just passing through on their way to vacation in Canaan were set upon by both sides. And when the Lord saw this, he waxed wroth and began smiting both tribes. The Lord cried out, "Foolish mortals! If this is thy idea of brotherly love, I shall love you all to death!" And when the battle was over, the bruised and much baffled Jebusites raised an obelisk to commemorate the passing of the Hivites and the Hittites, and on it they inscribed their version of God's words to the Hivites: Make Lunch, Not War.

Tom Wainwright



Beth and Tom Wainwright

TOM WAINWRIGHT, TWS treasurer from 1989 to 2001 (the longest term in our history), passed away peacefully on November 27, 2007, in California. Tom was a loving husband and father, and he lived to see the birth of his 10th grandchild.

Tom received his Ph.D. in physics from Notre Dame University, and his career at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory included research on the electron band structure of metals, theory of fluids, and nuclear weapons effects. Tom was a winner of the Ernest O. Lawrence Award in 1973, which honors scientists and engineers for exceptional contributions in research and development.

Tom married Mary Elizabeth “Beth” Long of New York City in 1959, and they raised their family of five children in Livermore, California. Beth writes: “Tom derived immense enjoyment from being a member of The Wodehouse Society, and was one of the first members in the San Francisco bay area. I remember an informal meeting, held on PGW’s 90th birthday, in our Livermore home, attended by Ed and Missy Ratcliffe and Len Lawson, who came in complete golf costume, knickers and all. Tom loved the fun and camaraderie of national conventions and local chapter meetings. At one convention he was presented with a large papier mâché piggy bank for his service as treasurer. He made treasured friendships among the Wodehouse members. Tom acted the part of Galahad in the ‘Fish and Prawns’ skit presented by the Blandings Castle chapter at the second San Francisco convention. At the 2005 Los Angeles convention he appeared in the chapter’s video/skit ‘Hollywood Comes to Blandings,’ parts of which we had a jolly time filming in our backyard. Although we watched the *Wodehouse Playhouse* videos repeatedly, the books were Tom’s favorites because there he could find the witticisms that delighted him.”

Len Lawson and Ed Ratcliffe add: “We in The Wodehouse Society remember Tom for his delight in

reading and discussing Wodehouse. At the laboratory his interest in Wodehouse attracted our attention and led to that memorable dinner to celebrate PGW’s 90th birthday in 1971. For many years he was a leading member, and sometimes president, of our Blandings Castle chapter, and hundreds of us remember Tom’s portrayal of Beach in Blandings Castle skits at our conventions. His first presentation of Beach was in a skit written by Norman Murphy for the 1991 New York convention. The lives of many of us are richer because of Tom. He will be missed in so many ways, and at so many times.”

Wodehouse On Stage

Musicals Tonight theatrical readings

March 10, April 7, April 21

McGinn/Cazale Theatre

2162 Broadway, New York City, NY

Tickets: www.smarttix.com or 212-868-4444

MUSICALS TONIGHT, which recently staged three Wodehouse & Kern musicals (*Have a Heart*; *Oh, Lady! Lady!!*; and *The Beauty Prize*) is now beginning a series of theatrical readings of Wodehouse short stories. They will present two stories each at 6 P.M. on three evenings this winter and spring. Stories to be presented are “Fate” (from *Young Men in Spats*); “Buttercup Day” (from *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*); “Pig-Hoo-o-o-o-ey!” and “Monkey Business” (from *Blandings Castle*); “The Ordeal of Osbert Mulliner” and “The Passing of Ambrose” (from *Mr Mulliner Speaking*). The series director is Robyne Parrish.

The Play’s the Thing

December 21, 2007–March 13, 2008

Asolo Repertory Theatre

Sarasota, FL

Tickets: 800-361-8388 or www.asolo.org

The Play’s the Thing

April 4–27, 2008

The Phipps Center for the Arts

Hudson, WI

Tickets: www.thehipps.org or 715-386-8409

TURAI AND MANSKY, writers of hit operettas, bring their composer, Adam, to an Italian castle as a surprise for their leading lady and Adam’s fiancée, Ilona. Adam is surprised to find Ilona with another man. Turai struggles to reunite the lovers, keep his writing team together, and finish a new play, all in one day.

Collecting Wodehouse: *The White Feather* and *Not George Washington*

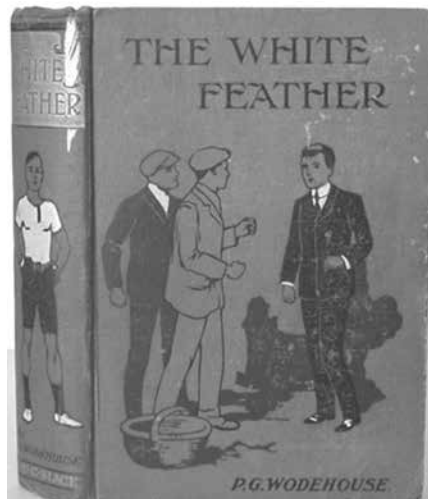
BY JOHN GRAHAM

THE CALENDAR may already say 2008, but this collecting column is devoted to P. G. Wodehouse's activities 101 years ago. The year 1907 was the young writer's most successful to date, judging by his output and earnings. We know this thanks in large part to one of the great treasures in the Dulwich College Library, a small notebook entitled "Money Received for Literary Work" in which Plum recorded his literary successes from February 1900 ("won 10/6 for a prize contribution to 'Public School Magazine'") through February 1908 (when he earned £46 for multiple contributions). Recently I had the opportunity to examine a digital copy of the notebook, thanks to TWS member Tamaki Morimura.

Wodehouse started 1907 with a bang, earning more than £97 in the month of January alone. For the year as a whole, he figured his income as 527 pounds, 17 shillings, and 1 penny (£527.17.1). This was a staggering sum for a young man in his mid-20s—equivalent these days to about £50,000 based on changes in prices or £200,000 based on changes in wages. (Trust me—I'm an economist! If you don't trust me, check out the user-friendly website www.measuringworth.com.)

Plum's earnings that year came from contributions to magazines (including *Punch* and *Pearson's*), his now-regular "By The Way" column in *The Globe*, book royalties, and even a few lucrative payments for song lyrics. In April he recorded a payment from *The Captain* magazine for his new serial "Junior Jackson" (which would become the first half of *Mike*) and in October advance book royalties of £17.10 for *The White Feather* and £13.10 for *Not George Washington*. It is these last two books I want to consider in more detail.

The White Feather was published by A. & C. Black on October 9, 1907, two full years after it had first



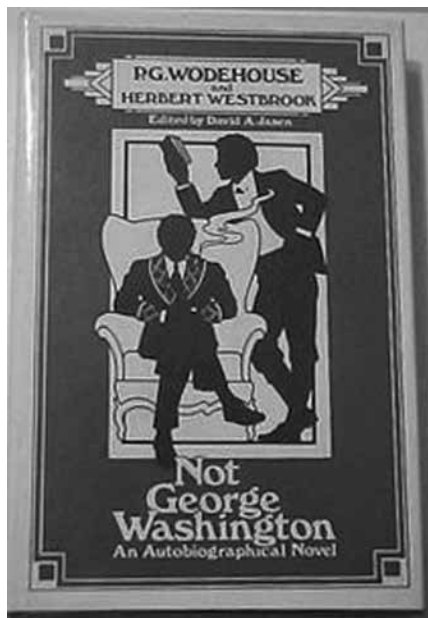
appeared in *The Captain*. With the 1906 publication of his first novel for adults, *Love Among the Chickens*, Wodehouse was moving away from juvenilia, but he clearly found it hard to abandon a good thing. Recording a payment in his notebook in January 1907 of £16.2.3 for royalties on his first five school books, he marvels: "Rather good, this, considering that the most recent of the books [*The Head of Kay's*] has been out for a year."

In "The School Stories of P. G. Wodehouse" (*Book and Magazine Collector*, November 2003), Tony Ring and Nick Townend call *The White*

Feather the last of "the six" stories, which had begun with *The Pothunters* in 1902. Unlike 1909's *Mike*, which introduces a quasi-adult Psmith, "the six" share similar settings and plots, nearly interchangeable schoolboy protagonists, and almost identical publishing histories (all six were reprinted in uniform editions in the 1920s and again in the 1970s.) The first edition of *The White Feather*, in tan pictorial boards drawn in black, white, and gold, contains 12 illustrated plates by Plum's friend Bill Townend. There is no advertising supplement in the first issue. Ring and Townend catalogue three early reissues all identical to the first, save for the presence

of different ad supplements (which are easily removed by unscrupulous dealers and collectors). They price a first edition in very good condition (without dust wrapper) at £600–£800. By contrast, on this side of the Atlantic, Quill and Brush's 2005 *Author Price Guides* values a first at \$4,500. I saw a copy on eBay in late January for \$2,250.

Not George Washington (coauthored with Herbert Westbrook) was published by Cassell & Company, Limited on October 18, just nine days after *The White Feather*. Richard Usborne (in *A Wodehouse Companion*) calls it "a very poor novel," but I think this judgment is too severe and understates the importance of the book on several



counts. First, it is the only coauthored novel Wodehouse published in book form during his lifetime. (*The Globe By The Way Book*, also coauthored with Westbrook, is not a novel; *A Man of Means* with C. H. Bovill is almost a novel, but did not appear in book form until 1991.) Second, it is the only novel he ever wrote in first-person female (Margaret Goodwin is one of the book's four narrators). And third, perhaps even more than *Psmith in the City*, it may be Plum's most autobiographical novel.

James Orlebar Cloyster is a young, ambitious writer (think Wodehouse), recently engaged but reluctant to marry, who works for a London newspaper called the *Orb* (think *Globe*) on the "On Your Way" column (you get the idea). His friend Julian Eversleigh is a slacker living in Rupert Street (just like Westbrook, and Norman Murphy can show you the actual spot). Cloyster's problem is that he writes so quickly, the magazines have tired of his name. Eversleigh comes to his rescue: Cloyster can continue to publish by writing articles under the names of his friends (including Eversleigh of course) who will share in the profits. Not very honest (hence the book's title), but it works!

In his Wodehouse biography, David Jasen points out how much life imitates art, or in this case, perhaps the reverse. Starting in 1904, one of Plum's most reliable outlets was a monthly periodical called *The Books of To-Day and the Books of To-Morrow*. In January 1907 he records in his notebook having three articles there in one month ("Farewell to 1906," "New Year Resolutions," and "More Mind-Readers"). Never before had he published more than two at a time, so what was the secret of this newfound success? Plum puts an asterisk next to the last article, and notes: "I wrote this under H. Westbrook's name. We divided the gns. Clever work."

Not George Washington was published in reddish-brown cloth with gold lettering. The first issue has eight gold circles on the front cover and "Cassell and Company, Limited" at the base of the spine. There are two undated reissues (one with eight gold circles and one with seven circles) where the publisher's name on the spine is simply "Cassell." All 3 issues are extremely scarce. Quill and Brush price a first at \$6,500 and either reissue at \$2,500. It is perhaps fortunate that the first American edition did not appear until 1980, since this means that copies are still available and reasonably affordable (well under \$100). The book was published by Continuum and has an introduction by David Jasen.

The title page of the 1907 Cassell edition lists Herbert Westbrook's name above Wodehouse's, while the 1980 American edition has Wodehouse's name first. Who really deserves credit as being first author?

Unfortunately, Wodehouse's notebook provides no clues. But, in the McIlvaine bibliography, there is an excerpt from an August 3, 1907, letter by Wodehouse (number N45.19) which says: "I absolutely refuse to give people the impression that I wrote the book with some slight help from Mr. Westbrook when my share in it is really so small." Despite this, most biographers have concluded (correctly, I think) that while Westbrook may well have developed the story line, Plum did most of the writing. It only takes a line like this (from Chapter XV) to convince me that they are right: "It is wonderful how friendly Convention is to Art when Art does not appear to want to borrow money."

Ann Wodehouse For Sale!

MARK MELVIN WRITES: "I recently acquired this painting, which came from Hunstanton Hall in Norfolk. It is of a lady called Ann Wodehouse, who was the wife of Sir Nicholas Le Strange. She is an ancestor of P. G. Wodehouse, who frequently visited Hunstanton Hall to visit his relatives, and I am sure he would have admired this painting. It is a beautiful 18th-century painting, possibly painted for her marriage. If you might know of someone who might be interested in acquiring this painting, I would be very happy to discuss it with them. Very best regards!"

[Please e-mail if you have interest.]



Ann Wodehouse surveys the proceedings,
currently at Mark Melvin's house.

Chapters Corner

IT'S FUN being with other fans and reading about what others are doing. So please use this column to tell the Wodehouse world about your chapter's activities. Representatives of chapters, please send all info to the editor, Gary Hall (see back page). If you're not a member of a local chapter but would like to attend a meeting or become a member, you may get in touch with the contact person listed.

Anglers' Rest

(Seattle and vicinity)
Contact: Susan Collicott
Phone:
E-mail:



Birmingham Banjolele Band

(Birmingham, Alabama, and vicinity)
Contact: Caralyn Campbell
Phone:
E-mail:



THE BIRMINGHAM BANJOLELE BAND has rescheduled their February 9 meeting for another date in March, when hopefully the regulars will be over the flu. At that time, we'll meet at the Birmingham Museum of Art for lunch, a book talk on *Sam the Sudden*, and a tour of the silver, Wedgwood, and English collections. Also in March, the BBB is going on the road to Nashville, so that some of our Tennessee-based members can get together with some of the Birmingham regulars. Our numbers grow a little with each meeting. We celebrate the first anniversary of our group in May, and we're looking forward to many more.

Blandings Castle Chapter

(Greater San Francisco Bay area)
Contact: Ed and Missy Ratcliffe
Phone:
E-mail:



The Broadway Special

(New York City and vicinity)
Contact: Amy Plofker
Phone:
E-mail:



THE BROADWAY SPECIAL met at The Players in Manhattan's Gramercy Park on Burns Night, January 25, to consider a quartet of Drones Club stories:

"Tried in the Furnace," "The Amazing Hat Mystery," "Goodbye to All Cats," and "Uncle Fred Flits By." It being Burns Night, members turned out in tartan plaid, including Philip Shreffler in formal Clan Donald kilt (he having been accepted as a member of the clan by Lord MacDonald himself during a journey some years ago to the Isle of Skye). The meeting had to open with the singing of "My Luve Is Like a Red, Red Rose" and "Is There for Honest Poverty," in the latter of which the "yon birkie ca'd a lord" is a perfect description of a Drones member.

It was agreed that one element that makes Drones stories different from, say, Oldest Member and Anglers' Rest tales is the fact that the Drones have that Eton and Oxford background that didn't quite take, making them wool-headedly articulate—what we might call "dim young things."

"Uncle Fred Flits By" is, of course, a perennial favorite, but the Special was also fond of the "fiends in hell" Mothers of "Tried in the Furnace" and the cat-flinging of "Goodbye to All Cats," though it was opined that the dogs are better limned and more sympathetic.

The meeting concluded, as does New Year's Eve, Burns Night, and most Scottish ceilidhs, with hands clasped around the table and "Auld Lang Syne" rendered with conviction.

Capital! Capital!

(Washington, D.C., and vicinity)
Contact: Jeff Peterson
Phone:
E-mail:



Capital F.O.R.M.

(Friends Of Ralston McTodd—Ottawa and vicinity)
Contact: Megan Carton
Phone:
E-mail:



Chapter One

(Greater Philadelphia area)
Contact: Susan Cohen
Phone:
Fax:
E-mail:



FOR OUR MAIDEN MEETING of the New Year on January 6, we gave the Dark Horse Pub a respite from our usual debaucherous chapter meetings and held a brunch/theater event elsewhere. Organized by Dave Ruef (aka Monty Bodkin) and Karen Ruef (aka Daphne Dolores Morehead), the gathering began

with 16 ravenous Chaps storming the restaurant Buca di Beppo for a family-style meal and banter. Having laid waste to anything remotely edible, the gaggle serpentine its way to the “acclaimed and edgy” Wilma Theater on Broad Street in Philadelphia. There we enjoyed a first-rate performance of *Age of Arousal*. The “scandalous and humorous” play explored themes of feminism, friendship, and love in the Victorian era that ushered in Plum’s Edwardian period youth. We’ll return to the Dark Horse Pub for our next meeting, to be held on Sunday, March 30, 1:00 P.M. New member and poet Larry Dugan will give a presentation based on a paper he wrote, “Worcestershirewards: Wodehouse and the Baroque.” We will also collect our annual donation to cover the care and feeding of our newts at the Philadelphia Zoo. On a sad note: Chapter One member Hal Lynch died recently. Hal was a very charming and amusing man who will be sorely missed.

The Chicago Accident Syndicate

(Chicago and thereabouts)

Contact: Daniel & Tina Garrison

Phone:

E-mail:



OUR CHAPTER holds bimonthly meetings with a wide range of activities. Sometimes members meet in each other’s homes to enjoy a potluck supper and read Wodehouse. Sometimes we meet in an Irish pub. We enjoy theater outings followed by dinner at a restaurant. We go to the Chicago Botanical Gardens to stroll through the English garden there, while reading excerpts from Wodehouse. We play miniature golf together and have one grand croquet game every year.

The Clients of Adrian Mulliner

(For enthusiasts of both PGW and Sherlock Holmes)

Contact: Marilyn MacGregor

Phone:



The Drone Rangers

(Houston and vicinity)

Contact: Toni Rudersdorf

Phone:

E-mail:



The Flying Pigs

(Cincinnati area and elsewhere)

Contact: Susan Brokaw

Phone:

E-mail:



The Flying Pigs in full flight (clockwise from top center): Bill Scrivener, Todd Bell, Moe Anderson, Eleanor Dial, John Dial, Susan Pace, Donna Anderson, Susan Brokaw, and Dirk Wonnell

THE FLYING PIGS are enjoying a spell of winter dormancy. Still, we entertain one another via e-mail. Some of us are looking forward to participating in one of Cincinnati’s premier events: the Flying Pig Marathon, held the first weekend in May. At the time of this report there are three intrepid Wodehouseans who intend to complete the 10K walk on Saturday, May 3. We invite any *Plum Lines* readers with time on their hands in early May to join us on the walking route. We’re not out to break records, or much of a sweat for that matter, but just to enjoy the gathering and get in a bit of physical exercise before lunch. There are all sorts of civilized well-wishers along the route shouting bucking encouragements and passing out cups of water. And when one crosses the finish line, there are all kinds of porcine goodies to be had, including the coveted Flying Pig medal on a ribbon sash. For further information, you can go to the official website at www.flyingpigmarathon.com. Anyone who would like to participate is encouraged to contact Susan Brokaw (e-mail above). If we have a small party, the FPs will work on arranging an evening gathering with browsing and sluicing, midwestern style. As always, Society members who live in the greater Cincinnati area are encouraged to join our little group.

The Mottled Oyster Club / Jellied Eels

(San Antonio and South Texas)

Contact: Lynette Poss

Phone:

E-mail:



WE OF THE Mottled Oyster/Jellied Eel have been nothing if not lighthearted and giddy since last we reported in. At our December meeting, Janet and Bryan Lilius (oft-times referred to as the Lili) did gift us each with a miniature key-chain Empress which both croaks (it’s a stretch to call the noise an oink) and lights up her well-fed nose when one presses a button on her back. As can be rightly imagined, there is no stopping the hilarity that ensues. Anyone who dares to suggest

that reading “The Clicking of Cuthbert” for the fourth time might be pushing that classic to overexposure is quickly croaked down by the group. Jan Ford created a version of Jingle Bells on the pig, to our delight, if not to the equal delight of those Barnes and Noble customers within listening distance (poor benighted chappies and chappettes). Clark Adams holds that we can produce a Christmas album by recording the group playing the aforementioned favorite, along with other cherished seasonal hymns and carols. Janet suggests that we give them out as door prizes at the convention which the eight of us shall one day host. “Nay, not to be given away!” sayeth Alan Ashworth, that Ukridge among us. “We will mail out multiple copies to each TWS chapter, along with invoices, to help defray our costs!” And on it goes, one inspired idea following the other, while we croink and flash our way through the evening. We can only hope that our newest member, Ray Hengst, is not scared away by the high volume of our high spirits.

We have not yet approached that august body, but Liz Davenport has suggested that together with the Drone Rangers we hold a very informal gathering of Texas chapters some fine weekend, congregating halfway between San Anontio and Houston. Perhaps when the bluebonnets are out in their finest glory? If needs be, we might even be prevailed upon to promise not to peddle our Christmas CDs. Maybe.

The New England Wodehouse Thingummy Society (NEWTS)

(Boston and elsewhere in New England)

Contact: David Landman

Phone:

E-mail:



The Northwodes

(St. Paul, Minneapolis, and vicinity)

Contact: Kristine Fowler

Phone:

E-mail:



THE NORTHWODES celebrated the imminent new year in fine style at the historic St. Paul home of Christina and Peter Heinrichs. A gong worthy of Beach himself summoned us to the potluck feast; Anatole would have approved of Mary’s chicken and Diane and Richard’s cake, among other sumptuous offerings. In the accompanying feast of reason and flow of soul, amazing coincidences were discovered: Dave had visited a previous resident of the house who shared his stamp-collecting hobby; current owner Pete

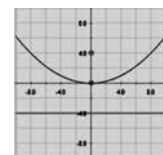
is also a philatelist; and Mike and Dave found out they’d graduated from DeLaSalle High School in the same year—which did not have a Wodehouse club at that time or they might have met earlier. We eventually got around to the advertised entertainment for the evening, viz., the Wodehouse documentaries on the recent Jeeves DVD rerelease; all agreed these extras were interesting and very well done—and one brave soul even decided to watch both the Arthur Treacher movies later (thanks, Christina, for saving the rest of us from having to research this point). Our next outing may well be the April production of *The Play’s the Thing* in nearby Hudson, Wisconsin; any nearby Wodehouseans are invited to join us.

The Pale Parabolites

(Toronto and vicinity)

Contact: Peter M. Nixon

E-mail:



THE PALE PARABOLITES . . . those who are seeking the Pale Parabola of Joy . . . whatever that may be. The Pale Parabolites’ motto is *nil admirari*. Like the Empress of Blandings, the Pale Parabolites take things as they come and marvel at nothing.

The Pelikan Club

(Kansas City and vicinity)

Contact: Sallie Hobbs

E-mail:



The Perfecto-Zizzbaum Motion Picture Corporation

(Los Angeles and vicinity)

Contact: Melissa D. Aaron

Phone:

E-mail:



WE MEET the second Sunday of every month at 12:30 at Vroman’s Bookstore, 695 E. Colorado, Pasadena. The readings change every month and can be found by checking our calendar or subscribing to our mailing list. NB to Plummies in Southern California, whether domiciled or just passing through—come up and see us. We also occasionally attend events of interest, such as the Avalon Ball on Catalina Island; an Art Deco dance in the fabulous Casino; and the Lanterman House Tea, a ragtime-era event. We go to ukulele festivals, silent movies, etc. Subscribers to our email list can be kept abreast of such local amusements. Information about our mailing list and important links can be found at our website: www.lahacal.org/

wodehouse.

The Pickering Motor Company

(Detroit and vicinity)

Contact: Elliott Milstein

Phone:

E-mail:



THE FIRST 2008 MEETING of the Board of Directors of the Pickering Motor Company took place on January 17 at the home of President LuAnn Warren. The browsing and sluicing reached new summits with the introduction of a rare barrel-strength Scotch whisky from David Warren's private stock and a phenomenal meal prepared by the president and served by the lovely and charming Emily Warren, who promised to do so on the express condition that she and her friend Alexa were not mentioned in this article.

The first agenda item was a birthday celebration of founding member Michael Smith. Next came the president's annual report, quoted here in part: "The Pickering Motor Company was formed in 2002 . . . to plan the 2003 Wodehouse convention, but later taking on a life of its own. After the convention was over, the Chapter continued on, meeting irregularly at local coffee shops and eateries . . . [and] members' homes. Over the years, the chapter membership has grown by 20%, as well as retaining 100% of the charter members."

The report then went on to list all of the books read and discussed over the years: five in 2007 and 18 overall—an impressive achievement by a Motor Company in the midst of one of the largest downturns in auto industry history.

The members of the Board who attended the national convention in Providence, Rhode Island, gave their report of the festivities, including their proud second-place showing in the Wodehouse Scripture Knowledge contest (though Elliott still maintains that Oofy Prosser was a critical component of the Great Hats Sweepstake and that Monty Bodkin was a millionaire, a contention confirmed by evidence in this meeting's book selection.)

The report of the Divine Providence convention brought up many stories of past conventions, with special emphasis on the What Ho, Toronto! convention hosted by Pickering. There was some discussion of members representing the company at the British Society's annual dinner this year, but if American dollar continues to do its pretty fair imitation of the 1899 Indian rupee, the venture will likely be mitigated. The subject was therefore tabled. Larry proposed that Pickering, now with a larger and more urbane membership, offer to host the next convention. Dicron asked that the motion

be tabled until after the St. Paul convention.

After so much lively discussion and debate, not much time was left to devote to the evening's book selection, *The Luck of the Bodkins*, other than pointing out how much of the book related back to Wodehouse's own life (writing *Anything Goes*, frequent transatlantic crossings, and his tax issues), and Sherry's comment that she particularly liked the women characters in this book, an aspect in Wodehouse's overall excellence she has occasionally found wanting. The distaff side of the Board was in general agreement on this point.

The election of officers, always a touchy subject, was then raised, and after a brief discussion it was concluded that if Sherry was ever to take the presidency from LuAnn, it would have to be at the summer meeting when Sherry does not attend.

Big Money was the next book chosen. The next meeting date will set by the president in the near future. The meeting adjourned, though some members continued to socialize while others crept off to bed.

For all those Plummies in the Detroit area who have not yet contacted us, see what you're missing? Give us a call and join in the fun. The next meeting is at Larry's house in his newly renovated train room. Larry is not one to be outdone by a mere brisket, no matter how mouth-wateringly delectable it is, so the next meeting promises to be another spectacular meal and fun time.

The Portland Greater Wodehouse Society (PGWs)

(Portland, Oregon and vicinity)

Contact: Carol James

Phone:

E-mail:



The Size 14 Hat Club

(Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Contact: Jill Robinson

E-mail:

The Soup & Fish Club

(Northern Virginia area)

Contact: Deborah Dillard

Phone:

E-mail:



THE NOBLE AIM of the Soup and Fish Club is to bring the joy of Wodehouse to the younger generation. The chapter's head and sole member, Deborah Dillard, aka Mary Kent, visits school librarians and gives presentations on the Master's great works to their students, and she occasionally tackles other projects to spread the word about Wodehouse.

More Revelers Caught in the Act at the Divine Providence Convention

Photos by Toni Rudersdorf



Masha Lebedeva and
Patricia Levinson



Barbara Jacobitti



Lynn Vesley-Gross



Good cheer and good company



Pat Yong

Old Home Week in Moscow!

IF YOU READ your December issue of *Plum Lines* closely, then you know that The Russian Wodehouse Society (TRWS) is organizing a week-long tour of Moscow with a decidedly Wodehousean bent. We are delighted to inform you that the dates of the Old Home Week in Moscow have now been settled for **August 10–16, 2008**.

Very few people (with the exception of those who have been reading Masha Lebedeva's series in *Wooster Sauce* on the Russian references in Wodehouse) may appreciate the part Russia played in Wodehouse's writing. In August you can see it yourself. The Old Home Week in Moscow program includes visits to the Kremlin (though we will not meet the big shots who reside there) and the palatial Tsaritsyno (the would-be Moscow residence of the Russian empress Catherine the Great); a Moscow sightseeing bus tour; and walks around Moscow, with visits to Leo Tolstoy's Museum-Estate Khamovniki and Feodor Chaliapin's House Museum, where these Great Russians once lived and worked. You will have a unique opportunity to compare Blandings Castle with Moscow country estates—Anton Chekhov's Literary and Memorial Museum (Melikhovo) and the country mansion of the famous Russian poet Lermontov (Serednikovo). Should you feel apprehensive of the Russian literary heritage being a bit dull, it may cheer you up to learn that other social and enjoyable activities will augment the intellectual uplift you will experience during these gripping and wholesome excursions.

Draft Schedule of the Old Home Week in Moscow

Sunday, August 10	Afternoon: Arrival and Registration Evening: Welcome Dinner
Monday, August 11	Morning: Visit to Moscow Kremlin and Armory Afternoon: Visit to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior; Moskva River boat trip
Tuesday, August 12	Morning: Moscow sightseeing bus tour Afternoon: Walking tour of Moscow, Chaliapin House Museum
Wednesday, August 13	Morning: Tolstoy Museum-Estate "Khamovniki" Afternoon: Mini-golf tournament
Thursday, August 14	Day trip to Serednikovo (Lermontov's country mansion)
Friday, August 15	Day trip to Melikhovo Literary and Memorial Museum-Reserve
Saturday, August 16	Morning: Visit to the park at Tsaritsyno Evening: Farewell Dinner

(This is an approximate itinerary, and we reserve the right to change or omit some elements of the week.)

There have been numerous expressions of interest in Old Home Week in Moscow from the members of different Wodehouse societies, and the number of those interested is enough to show that the dream of this international Wodehousean gathering in Russia will come true. Meanwhile, we encourage other Wodehouseans to contact us, as we are still open to receiving more guests. To get information on the Moscow week online in English, go to: <http://wodehouse.ru/moscow2008.htm>. If you would like to take part in the Week, please email Masha Lebedeva—or write to her at her home address—and you will be provided with more information as soon as it is available.

All the Gnus That's Fit to Yak About

KAREN SHOTTING WRITES: In an article by Christopher Reynolds in the December 30, 2007, Sunday *Los Angeles Times*, entitled "The Inner Workings of the Castle," the following quote appeared: "As for America's other mansions, none can match the role played by Hearst's in the first half of the 20th century. . . . [I]t may be impossible now to match a houseguest roster that starts with actor Charlie Chaplin dining on venison, author P. G. Wodehouse cracking wise about the yaks in the private zoo, photographer Cecil Beaton joining a trail ride, comic Harpo Marx turning somersaults in the library, and actors David Niven and Cary Grant bemoaning the shortage of booze."

Pretty good company for our favorite author. Who knew that he "cracked wise" about yaks? Gnus, yes. But yaks? If only we knew what the joke was . . .

The 2011 Convention!

YES, THE 2011 CONVENTION can be yours! The details about how the host chapter is chosen are available in TWS's Convention Steering Committee (CSC) Charter. If you are unable to get it from TWS's website (<http://www.wodehouse.org/twsCSCcharter.html>) for some reason, please write to Elin Woodger for a copy (see below).

All bids for the 2011 convention must be submitted to Jean Tillson by September 12, 2008.

The host chapter selection will be made well in advance of the 2009 St. Paul convention. The CSC Charter mandates: (1) Any chapter wishing to host a convention must submit their bid to the Committee by nine months before the next convention (in this case, by September 12, 2008). (2) The Committee will notify bidding chapters whether their bids have been successful at least six months before the next convention. Thus, chapters wanting to host the 2011 convention will be notified by December 12, 2008, whether their bid has been successful or not. (3) If the Committee receives no bids by the nine-month deadline, they will use those nine months to make their own convention plans—which may mean selecting a likely chapter and inviting them to play Persian Monarchs, with the honor of hosting the 2011 convention as the stakes.

For full host chapter selection criteria, download the CSC Charter from our website.

A Nether View

BY JELLE OTTEN,

OUR DUTCHMAN IN PROVIDENCE

WAS IT DIVINE PROVIDENCE that made Providence divine during the Divine Providence convention? TWS conventions are always divine, and this year the host hotel, the Providence Biltmore, made the grade.

On Thursday, at the registration desk, we met many old friends. Some were friends we'd already met three months earlier during the Week With Wodehouse in England. We also met many new friends during the browsing and sluicing. In the evening we attended a concert at the Brooklyn Coffee & Tea House, somewhere on the outskirts of Providence. We came and saw and heard the award-winning contemporary singer/songwriter Terry Kitchen and his special guest, Gary Hall. It was for us a lovely introduction to American folk music, and absolutely a big deal!

On Friday we made a trip to Newport. We visited some "cottages," with some surprises. At Beechwood (the summer cottage of the Astors) we were welcomed by an actor playing the great friend and chum of P. G. Wodehouse: Cole "Anything Goes" Porter. Spontaneously, he gave a conducted tour of the cottage. Another cottage, the Vanderbilts' Breakers, seemed like the place where Ronnie Fish hid the Empress of Blandings. At the Friday evening entertainment (which was clean and bright) we were frightened by the prospect of the Last Judgment that might be passed on Bertie Wooster. But luckily the outcome was that Bertie and Jeeves would live forever!

Saturday is traditionally filled with lectures and culminates in the banquet. The most exciting event at the banquet was the costume competition. So many people are enthusiastic about coming in colorful and dashing costumes. It is a wise decision to create many categories so that many people are qualified for prizes. It's a nice task to be a member of the costume jury!

The highlight of the Divine Providence convention was certainly the Great Sermon Handicap presented by the Very Reverend Father Wendell Verrill. As Protestant Dutch we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves in this exciting Sunday service. It was a dignified conclusion to the Divine Providence convention!

He was the sort of man who would have tried to cheer Napoleon up by talking about the Winter Sports at Moscow.

Summer Lightning (1929)

Bring on the Girls, but Make Sure They're English

BY DAVID A. LANDMAN

THE WRITER of the description of the English girl reproduced below from the *Ladies Home Journal* of February 1901 (p. 16), which at so many points corroborates the authenticity of Wodehouse's many emancipated girls, is Annie Hector (b. Dublin, 1825), who, under the pen name Mrs. Alexander, published

over 40 novels—now largely forgotten. Widely popular in her own day, her most prominent work, *The Wooing O't* (1873) is, according to the Oxford University Press's *Irish Literature Companion*, "a three-decker tale of an orphaned middle-class London girl who refuses an English lord, but accepts his impoverished cousin," a



The Life of the English Girl

By MRS. ALEXANDER

Author of "The Wooing O't," "Her Dearest Foe," etc.



THE birth of a baby girl is not always a source of unmixed rejoicing in England, as the women in that country already outnumber the men considerably, and the difficulty of providing for them increases with growing numbers. Moreover, among "the upper ten thousand" too large a supply of girls among the junior members of aristocratic families impoverishes a landed estate, for they must be dowered, and, as yet, girls of this class do nothing to provide for themselves.

The first stage of girl life in the nursery is marked by the strong distinction made by father, mother and nurse between a little girl, or, as the latter generally puts it, "a young lady," and a little boy. The girls are early taught not to romp and shout, but to be quiet, dignified and careful; and so the first lines of duty and deportment are laid down. The next step used to be the introduction of the nursery governess and the transformation of the nursery into an embryo schoolroom, but in late years the kindergarten, or preparatory school, has advantageously replaced the older system. Later comes the boarding-school, or classes, according to the means and station of the parents. Modern boarding-schools have largely developed into colleges. Here the drawback is the amount of work crowded into too short a space of time. Few parents like to forego the society of their daughters, or to incur the cost of continuing their education after they are eighteen years old. Many girls, however, if naturally studious, or lovers of art or of music, continue to take private lessons after their return home. These pursuits are frequently interfered with by the distractions of society, into which the English girl now enters freely. Then comes the lover, and with him come sunlight and cloud-bank.

§§§

IN ALL matters connected with love, engagements and marriage the English girl is nearly as free as her American sister. Unless there is some serious fault in the man's character parents seldom object to a daughter's choice. Want of sufficient means often obliges a young couple to endure a long engagement, which is in no way so solemn an affair as a German betrothal. Perhaps young people enter into engagements in England too thoughtlessly, for certain it is that these are frequently broken. Indeed, seriousness, in some directions, is chiefly remarkable by its absence from English girl life.

Foreign travel plays a large part in the education of an English girl in almost every class save the humblest. Dressmakers and milliners go abroad to learn, if possible,

the dexterous touch, the skillful cut of the Parisian. The artist and the musician find it essential to visit the schools of Germany and France. The teacher must acquire the languages of these countries with a correct accent, and the daughters of professional men, country gentlemen, men of business, whether they are rich or struggling, all manage to take or send their girls abroad for holiday trips or for short sojourns at school.

§§§

BESIDES all these "the resident governess" is needed in the home of the country gentleman where his daughters have an almost ideal life of freedom and healthy outdoor enjoyment. These country girls are usually not so highly educated as their sisters of the town, but they have a wisdom quite unknown to the latter. To country girls is known the story of flower life from day to day both in field and garden. They gather the secrets of the woods, and understand the mute language of their dogs and their high-spirited horses. They roam from castle to cottage, at home in both, kindly and frank with the occupants of each, and gifted with the easy nameless charm of manner which arises from assured position. These country ladies are, when the daughters of fairly well off squires, often sent to London schools or colleges.

But the resources of country squires are not always sufficient for so expensive a finish to the educational period. Many well-born owners of broad lands are in straightened circumstances. The girls of the family, however, feel little of this, as they join gayly in such periodical festivities as the County Ball, the Hunt Ball, the Race Ball in winter, and the garden, tennis and picnic parties in summer, even though these gayeties necessitate some rapid needlework in changing their evening and other gowns to prevent a certain monotony of garments. But in the majority of cases girlhood soon runs its brief course and wedding bells "ring out" its pleasant existence. So the girls disappear into the frequently trying state of matrimony, for which they might often be better prepared, although the greater number acquit themselves well.

Below or above the social strata of which I have hitherto written stretch rank after rank of girls whose lots are cast on different levels, whose training is widely dissimilar, yet, broadly speaking, they have a certain similarity. The last fifty years has seen a marvelous amount of change. Typist and journalist, teacher and servant, shop-girl, factory girl, society girl, all have won to themselves the freedom of city and suburb by the highest of titles: "serious, earnest work."

plot that no doubt went far to show how class snobbery cuts both ways. (My source does not say whether there was a sequel entitled *I Could Kick Myself*.)

Annie Hector was *not* one of those authors who wrote under a troika of names, real or pseudonymic, a tactic that Pelham Wodehouse early on discovered afforded a leg up to publication, but one, surprisingly, he did not accord the majority of the female authors in his novels. In his works we encounter, to be sure, a Daphne Dolores Morehead, who sold a serial novel to *Milady's Boudoir*; Bella Mae Jobson, who wrote for *Wee Tots*; Luella Granville Waterman, who wrote "Moments in the Nursery" for *Peaceful Moments* and apparently shopped the same article to *Cosy Moments*; Lora Delane Porter, eugenicist and feminist; the never-popular Clare Throckmorton Stooze, a one-booker; and two others to be named below. And that, I believe (under correction), is all. It is therefore interesting to note that there are in the oeuvre more female writers possessing the confidence or gall to use only two names—Florence Craye, Cornelia Fothergill, Margaret Goodwin, Pomoma Grindle, Bessie March, Gwendolen Moon, Aileen Peavey, Evangeline Pembury, Betty Silver, Stultitia Bodwin, and Vera Upshaw, to name a few. Rosie M. Banks falls somewhere between these categories, using only a middle initial. (I presume all right-thinking readers of this journal will possess a copy of Professor Daniel Garrison's *Who's Who in Wodehouse*, where these fictional bluestockings can be chivvied to their respective lairs. If not, I should like to know why.)

Mrs. Alexander (and other Victorian women writers, notably Mrs. Hemans and Mrs. Gaskell) preferred the security of the marital honorific. It absolved her from being written off as a "scribbling old maid" and, at the same time, implying that her "writing was motivated by feeling rather than financial necessity, a concern for women anxious to maintain the appearance of leisured-class status."¹ Wodehouse has women writers who take refuge behind the marital sobriquet and also hedge all bets by using it before a prepossessing praenomen, nomen, and cognomen. Mrs. Julia Burdett Parslow is such a one and Mrs. Carrie Melrose Bopp the other. Mrs. Elmer Ford apparently could not bring herself to scale such dizzy heights of nomenclature. One Wodehousian female writer, Lady Wickham, eschewed the "Mrs." dodge and avoided the social stigma that she might have obtained from stooping to writing literature by publishing under a masculine pseudonym, George Masterman.

The freedom of the English girl that Mrs. Alexander describes was denied her own generation. Her husband, the merchant and explorer Alexander Hector, frowned

on the writing she had engaged in since a child, and in deference to his wishes Annie dutifully spiked her literary guns, which up to then had consisted of contributions to London weeklies. At Alexander's death in the early 1860s, however, she uncorked her belletristic bombard and peppered the world with more than 40 successful novels and numerous magazine articles until her death in 1902. Though her photograph shows a woman of formidable "auntish" demeanor with the merest touch of Dahlian bonhomie (one suspects she hoped the tondo profiles that flank the headline of her article would be mistaken for her), it is disappointing to learn that Annie had only guts enough to employ her husband's first name as her nom de plume. No Mrs. Annie French Hector for her.

A sidelight to boring history is that in 1832 Annie's husband, Alexander Hector, set himself up in trade in Baghdad, where rumor has it he dealt in defective muskets. On one of his treks, he served as storekeeper and bursar to Francis Rawdon Chesney's famous Euphrates Expedition of 1835. This expedition to determine the navigability of the Euphrates was the brainchild of none other than the brilliant poet and novelist Thomas Love Peacock in his capacity as Chief Examiner of Indian Correspondence for the East India Company. To my knowledge Peacock has not been mooted as an influence on Wodehouse, though his droll but incisive satires of Regency society compare well with Plum's droll but incisive satires of Edwardian society. (I'm too busy to investigate further—my agent reports that my time is completely booked until 2012 for cameo appearances on stage and screen as a French chef.)

By the turn of the century Annie Hector had become a regular contributor to the *Ladies Home Journal*. Plummies will have no difficulty, I trust, in perceiving the relevance of this reproduced essay to many of Plum's mettlesome young women and thereby gain further evidence of just how true is Colonel Murphy's dictum that Wodehouse drew most of his characters and situations from the actual life of the time

¹ From the Cornell University Library website; see <http://tinyurl.com/2a5o9l>.

Myrtle Prosser was a woman of considerable but extremely severe beauty. She did not resemble her father, who looked like a cassowary, but suggested rather one of those engravings of the mistresses of Bourbon kings which make one feel that the monarchs who selected them must have been men of iron, impervious to fear, or else shortsighted.

Ice in the Bedroom (1961)

The Mystery of Jeeves's Origin

BY MIKE ECKMAN

This is Part 2 of a talk that Mike gave at the Norwegian Explorers Conference on July 7, 2007, in which some intriguing comparisons are found between Jeeves and Sherlock Holmes.

DOYLE contributed more than the Holmes stories or Holmes himself in shaping the character of Jeeves. Jeeves is known for his composure under all circumstances. Bertie reports that, for reasons of his own, Jeeves preferred “at all times to preserve the impassivity of a waxwork at Madame Toussaud’s.”³² Bertie doubts that Jeeves “would do much more than raise an eyebrow if, when entering his pantry, he found one of those peculiar fauna from the Book of Revelations [sic] in the sink.”³³

One fine morning, Bertie asks if there is anything in the papers. “Some slight friction threatening in the Balkans, sir,” Jeeves replies.³⁴ Jeeves’s composure is similar to that of Austin, Professor Challenger’s servant in Doyle’s “The Poison Belt”:

“I’m expecting the end of the world today, Austin.”

“Yes, sir, what time, sir?”

“I can’t say. Before evening.”

“Very good, sir.” The taciturn Austin saluted and withdrew.³⁵

Although it is not stated, Austin probably shimmered out just as Jeeves did so often. Bertie states that Jeeves just seems to manifest himself when he is needed:

One of the rummy things about Jeeves is that, unless you watch like a hawk, you very seldom see him come into a room. He’s like one of those weird birds in India who dissolve themselves into thin air and nip through space in a sort of disembodied way and assemble the parts again just where they want them. I’ve got a cousin who’s what they call a Theosophist, and he says he’s often nearly worked the thing himself.³⁶

Robert McCrum reports that Wodehouse was impressed with Doyle’s advocacy of spiritualism. Wodehouse attended several séances in the mid-1920s, and his interest in mystical matters lasted throughout his life. At his death, he had 61 titles in his library on spiritualism and related topics.³⁷ Perhaps Jeeves’s facility



*Mike Eckman looking
scholarly at the Divine
Providence convention
(photo by
Toni Rudersdorf)*

of movement was inspired by what Wodehouse learned as a result of Doyle’s spiritualism.

With his talent of being inconspicuous, Jeeves, like Holmes, would be able to pursue suspects with great success. Consider the exchange between Holmes and Dr. Leon Sterndale in “The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot”:

“I followed you.”

“I saw no one.”

“That is what you may expect to see when I follow you.”³⁸

Wodehouse may also have been impressed by “The Adventure of the Six Napoleons” and the mention of the Napoleon of Crime in “The Final Problem.” Bertie sometimes states that only a Napoleon could handle a particular problem. Once, after getting what he thinks is a particularly good idea, Bertie writes that “Napoleon might have got it, but I’ll bet Darwin and Shakespeare and Marcus Aurelius wouldn’t have thought of it in a thousand years.”³⁹

After hearing one of Jeeves’s better ideas, Bertie states that “Aunt Dahlia, speaking of Napoleon, had claimed that he was pretty hot in an emergency, but I was prepared to bet that not even Napoleon could have topped this superb effort.”⁴⁰

Not all comparisons to Napoleon are so favorable. Bertie is often blackmailed into performing various crimes by seemingly proper females. Bertie complains, “Show me a delicately nurtured female, and I will show you a ruthless Napoleon of Crime.”⁴¹

Jeeves agrees that women can sometimes act immorally. When young Bingo Little finds that Bertie’s aunt is trying to hire his cook away from him, Jeeves is able to give little consolation. “I fear, sir,” sighed Jeeves, “that when it comes to a matter of cooks, ladies have but a rudimentary sense of morality.”⁴² Jeeves does not hesitate to say, “The female of the species is more deadly than the male, sir.”⁴³ Although hiring away a cook is not in the same category of crime as murder, Jeeves’s comment does remind me of Holmes stating, “I assure you that the most winning woman I ever knew

was hanged for poisoning three little children for their insurance-money.”⁴⁴

But how would Jeeves perform as a detective? In *Stiff Upper Lip*, Jeeves, he pretends to be Chief Inspector Witherspoon of Scotland Yard in order to extricate Bertie from a troublesome situation.⁴⁵ No detection is required for Jeeves’s role as Witherspoon, but Wodehouse and Jeeves employ Holmes’s methods in other stories.

In *Right Ho*, Jeeves, Bertie is in danger of marriage to the overly sentimental Madeline Bassett unless he can get her back in the arms of the man who loves her and whom she loves. The estranged couple is in the middle of a tremendous row, and every other resident of the country house seems to have some disagreement with his or her partner. Using his knowledge of “A Scandal in Bohemia,” Jeeves advises Bertie: “Possibly you may recollect that it was an axiom of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, that the instinct of everyone, upon an alarm of fire, is to save the object dearest to them.”⁴⁶

Bertie decides to ring the fire alarm in the middle of the night, hoping that the danger of fire will cause the couples to reunite and forget all differences. Once the couples realize that the alarm is false and then discover they are all locked out of the house, everybody is indeed united—united in the common purpose of heaping abuse on Bertie. Because the only key to the house is with the servants who are at a dance nine miles away, Bertie is sent as the solitary cyclist to get the key from the butler. Bertie’s discomfort and exhaustion on the journey are offset by his release from the engagement with Madeline as well as one of Jeeves’s omelets with “half a bot. of something.”⁴⁷

Possibly remembering the stories in which Holmes was called in to recover missing documents, be they treaties, submarine plans, or letters that lend themselves to blackmail, Wodehouse has Bertie trying to recover or destroy memoirs, letters, and notebooks that also lend themselves to blackmail. Although Holmes’s challenge may be to prevent international incidents and protect the good name and even lives of those involved, Bertie’s motivations are on a smaller scale: avoiding marriage, satisfying an aunt, or helping an old school chum.

In *The Code of the Woosters*, Gussie Fink-Nottle has lost a notebook in which he has subjected “the characters of Roderick Spode and Sir Watkyn Bassett to a pitiless examination.” Unless Bertie can recover the notebook before Sir Watkyn learns of it, Gussie’s engagement to Madeline Bassett may be broken off and Bertie substituted as the groom.⁴⁸

In one of the early stories, when Bertie still thinks he wants to marry, he attempts to stop the publication of

his Uncle Willoughby’s memoirs, *Recollections of a Long Life*. Bertie’s intended tells him he must steal it because “it is full of stories about people one knows who are the essence of propriety today, but who seem to have behaved, when they were in London in the ’eighties, in a manner that would not have been tolerated in the foc’sle of a whaler.”⁴⁹

In this case, Jeeves intervenes to ensure that the memoirs do reach the publisher, and Bertie is saved from marriage. When confronted by Bertie, Jeeves responds: “I acted for the best, sir. I think that both you and Lady Florence overestimated the danger of people being offended by being mentioned in Sir Willoughby’s *Recollections*. It has been my experience, sir, that the normal person enjoys seeing his or her name in print, irrespective of what is said about them.”⁵⁰

After a good night’s sleep, Bertie finds that he agrees with Jeeves’s actions, and in future stories he readily accepts Jeeves’s assistance in avoiding marriage. Bertie, in fact, finds that there is little that Jeeves does not know. When Bertie’s old friend Bicky visits him and starts to describe his situation, only to hear “So Jeeves told me,” Bicky remarks that “Jeeves seems to know everything.” Bertie responds, “Rather rummily, that’s exactly what I was thinking just now myself.”⁵¹

Jeeves often has just the right knowledge at just the right time to solve a case. In speaking of his own mind, Holmes writes:

You will know, or Watson has written in vain, that I hold a vast store of out-of-the-way knowledge without scientific system, but very available for the needs of my work. My mind is like a crowded box-room with packets of all sorts stowed away therein—so many that I may well have but a vague perception of what was there. I had known that there was something which might bear upon this matter.⁵²

Bertie learns to take full advantage of Jeeves’s crowded box-room of a mind. Jeeves’s extended family and acquaintances keep him informed of what is happening in society. For a man who appears to read only improving books, Jeeves is never at a loss in providing information regarding popular literature and current events. At one time he confidently advises Bertie: “Pardon me, sir. People are no long going to Reigelheimer’s. The place at the moment is Frolics on the Roof.”⁵³

Jeeves also sees and observes. Upon reading Jeeves’s detailed account of night on the town, Bertie remarks, “How you notice everything at these places beats me. I

couldn't tell you a thing about them except that I've had a good time." Jeeves replies: "It's just a knack, sir."⁵⁴

Jeeves always has the right word or phrase, be it in English, French, or Latin. His knowledge of literature is prodigious, and he can always find a quote to apply in the wide variety of situations in which his master finds himself. In his book *Plum Sauce: A P. G. Wodehouse Companion*, Richard Osborne lists some of Jeeves's sources: "Lucretius, Pliny the Younger, Whittier, Fitzgerald, Pater, Shelley, Kipling, Keats, Scott, Wordsworth, Emerson, Marcus Aurelius, Shakespeare, Browning, Rosie M. Banks, Moore, Virgil, Horace, Dickens, Tennyson, Milton, Henley, the Bible, Stevenson, Gray, Burns, Byron and whoever it was who wrote 'The Wreck of the Hesperus'."^{55, 56}

Bertie often relies on Jeeves's knowledge of Shakespeare. When Sir Roderick Glossip complains about Bertie's banjolele playing, Bertie responds:

"Well let me tell you that the man that hath no music in himself . . ." I stepped to the door. "Jeeves," I called down the passage, "what was it Shakespeare said the man who hadn't music in himself was fit for?"

"Treason, stratagems and spoils, sir."

"Thank you, Jeeves."⁵⁷

Bertie, however, sometimes objects to Jeeves's literary allusions.

"Feminine psychology is admittedly odd, sir. The poet Pope . . ."

"Never mind about the poet Pope, Jeeves."

"No, sir."

"There are times that one wants to hear all about the poet Pope and times when one doesn't."⁵⁸

Jeeves's knowledge even extends to success in wagering, be it on a horse race or an egg-and-spoon race at a rural church festival. Indeed, listening in on a conversation between Jeeves and Holmes would be extremely interesting. Perhaps they could talk while fishing. In "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place," Holmes asks a local about the fishing and hears: "Well, sir, I've heard there are trout in the mill-stream and pike in the Hall lake." Holmes replies, "That's good enough. Watson and I are famous fishermen—are we not, Watson?"⁵⁹

Jeeves, too, likes to fish and appears to go off to the sea at least once a year for some shrimping. In one story

he is rewarded with a trip to Florida to catch a tarpon. Bertie comments, "Heaven help the tarpon that tries to pit its feeble cunning against you, Jeeves."⁶⁰

Whether Jeeves caught his tarpon is unknown. We do have, however, Watson's report that "we did actually use our fishing tackle in the mill-stream, with the result that we had a dish of trout for our supper. It was only after that meal that Holmes showed signs of renewed activity."⁶¹ Although Watson never states it, perhaps he agrees with Bertie that fish is a factor in the success of an intelligent person.

Jeeves certainly has the mental capacity, knowledge, and willingness to employ stratagems to handle cases as Holmes did. Regardless of Jeeves's actual paternity, I think that it is clear that the Doyle/Holmes stories can be considered the ancestor of the Wodehouse/Jeeves stories. The Jeeves canon, however, has not been subjected to the degree of analysis that the Holmes canon has. Such a review would be interesting. The dating of the Jeeves stories would be a real task in itself, and playing "The Game"⁶² with the stories would be very enjoyable. There is the potential for a downside, though. I fear that once such an analysis is undertaken, I might come upon a paper supporting the proposition that Jeeves was a woman.⁶³

Footnotes

³² Wodehouse, P. G. *Jeeves and the Tie That Binds* (New York: Perennial Library, 1990), 151.

³³ Wodehouse, *The Cat-nappers* (New York: Perennial Library, 1985), 180–181.

³⁴ Wodehouse, "Jeeves in the Springtime," in *Enter Jeeves*, 128.

³⁵ Osborne, Richard. *Plum Sauce: A P. G. Wodehouse Companion* (New York: Overlook Press, 2002), 84.

³⁶ Wodehouse, "The Artistic Career of Corky," in *The World of Jeeves* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 80; *Right Ho, Jeeves* (New York: Penguin Books, 1953), 187–188; *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* (New York: Perennial Library, 1983), 87.

³⁷ McCrum, Robert, *Wodehouse: A Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 161–162.

³⁸ Doyle, "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot," in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (New York, Doubleday & Co., 1988), 967.

³⁹ Wodehouse, "Fixing it for Freddie," in *The World of Jeeves* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 327.

⁴⁰ Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 191.

⁴¹ Wodehouse, *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves* (New York: Perennial Library, 1983), 76.

⁴² Wodehouse, "Clustering Round Young Bingo," in *The*

World of Jeeves, 350.

⁴³ Wodehouse, "Jeeves Makes an Omelette," in *The World of Jeeves*, 606.

⁴⁴ Doyle, "The Sign of the Four," in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, 96.

⁴⁵ Wodehouse, *Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*, 87.

⁴⁶ Wodehouse, *Right Ho, Jeeves*, 219.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 247.

⁴⁸ Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters*, 60–61.

⁴⁹ Wodehouse, "Jeeves Takes Charge," in *The World of Jeeves*, 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵¹ Wodehouse, "Jeeves and the Hard-boiled Egg," in *The World of Jeeves*, 131.

⁵² Doyle, "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane," in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, 1090.

⁵³ Wodehouse, "The Aunt and the Sluggard," in *The World of Jeeves*, 154.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁵⁵ Usborne, 92.

⁵⁶ Longfellow wrote "The Wreck of the Hesperus."

⁵⁷ Wodehouse, *Thank You, Jeeves* (New York: Perennial Library, 1989), 12.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁵⁹ Doyle, "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place," in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, 1106–1107.

⁶⁰ Wodehouse, "Jeeves and the Greasy Bird," in *The World of Jeeves*, 654.

⁶¹ Doyle, "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place," in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, 1109.

⁶² The game is finding the actual historical events and people that make up the Holmes adventures, assuming that Holmes, Watson, and the cases are real.

⁶³ Rex Stout's infamous essay "Watson Was a Woman" can be found in *Profile by Gaslight: An Irregular Reader about the Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, edited by Edgar W. Smith (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944).



One of the million smiles that adorned the faces of Society members at the Divine Providence convention.

A Man of Means

ROBERT MOLUMBY of Evanston, Illinois, writes: I have been a member of The Wodehouse Society for a number of years, and a collector of his works since the mid-1970s. In late June 2007, I purchased a copy of an early collection of PGW's stories which I had not previously seen. The collection is entitled *A Man of Means: A Series of Six Stories*. The stories appeared as a serialized collection, one story each month from May through October, 1916, in a monthly British publication entitled the *Pictorial Review*. It is a delightful collection of short stories, and I recommend it to Wodehouse Society members who might not have discovered it. The ISBN number is 1421975300. And it is now available on Amazon.com!

Hal Lynch

DAN AND SUSAN COHEN inform us that Hal Lynch, a longtime member of Philadelphia's Chapter One, has died at the age of 83. Dan and Susan write: "Hal (nom de Plum Peasmarch) had been in declining health for several years, and his death is a great loss. He was a Wodehouse fan, a passionate Dickensian, and a puppeteer of great skill. He was also one of the nicest, most decent, and funniest people you could ever meet. We will really miss him."

Francine Morris Swift

DIANA SMITH writes that longtime TWS member Francine Morris Swift died this past autumn. Diana was a longtime friend of Francine and of Francine's late husband, Wayne Bradley Swift, and remembered Francine as Wodehousian to the core.

Coincidence, or . . . ?

EVY HERZOG WRITES: My husband John and I slipped out of the Divine Providence convention to attend Sunday Mass. During the sermon, the priest spoke of the value of an appreciative attitude to life, rather than an attitude of entitlement, which so easily leads to disgruntlement. He went on, "In the Catholic view of life, all is gift, all is grace. There is no such thing as coincidence. It is all Divine Providence." John and I looked at each other and silently mouthed, "Wow." I think the official proclamations that were auctioned off Saturday night weren't the highest endorsement our Society received for this weekend of friendship and humor. We're glad we were there to hear it.

Volunteer Officers

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Kris Fowler

Membership Secretary (new-member inquiries,
contact information changes):
Ian Michaud

<http://www.wodehouse.org/inquiry/>

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We appreciate your articles, Quick Ones, and observations. Send them to Gary Hall at the addresses above!

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Plum in Arrow

Tony Whittome, Hutchinson editorial director, finds great joy in publishing Wodehouse and loves to introduce Plum to a new generation. Now he proudly announces a new venture. In the course of 2008, Arrow Publishing (a division of Hutchinson) will republish 45 titles in paperback, with new covers and aimed at the 21st-century reader.

With bold lettering of the Master's name and cover art generally showing plot moments (rather than one artist's idea of what Jeeves or Lord Emsworth looks like), the series is a wonderful additional to the pantheon of Wodehouse books. Great care has been taken with textual editing—Tony tells us that they are “using the exemplary Everyman texts on which members of the Society advised.” Arrow launches in May with 18 titles. The new books will not be marketed in the United States, but will be available from online booksellers in the United Kingdom or Canada. More information will be available on Arrow's website (www.wodehouse.co.uk) after May 1, 2008.

