



"As is usual with him," H. Allen Smith once wrote, "deep philosophical thoughts parade through the pages; for those who like to read significance and unsurpassed afflatus into their fiction, let me say that there is more meaning in Wodehouse than in Mailer, more antic volutions than in Vonnegut."

GOOD NEWS FOR WODEHOUSE READERS! A new book has recently been issued by Avenel Books, NY, 1983, P. G. Wodehouse: Five Complete Novels. Hardbound, royal octavo (9½" tall), handsome dust jacket, surprisingly good typography, well made as hardbacks go these days. Novels selected are: The Return of Jeeves, Bertie Wooster Sees it Through, Spring Fever, The Butler Did It, and The Old Reliable; a good choice, though any confirmed PGW reader will think of others that might have done as well or better. OM ran across a copy locally, has since seen it in other bookstores, including B. Dalton's chain of bookstores. The publisher tells us that it may be ordered direct or through your book dealer at \$7.98 plus \$1.50 postage (NY and NJ residents add sales tax!), all U.S. currency, naturally. The publisher: Crown Publishers, Inc., 34 Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001.

QUESTION AND ANSWER DEPARTMENT ("Good Lord, Jeeves! Is there anything you don't know?" "I couldn't say, sir." The Inimitable Jeeves):

Q. I have a number of PGW books I would like to sell. How should I go about it? R.G.

A. Dr. Jeremy Thompson, TWS, has developed a handy-dandy "PGW BOOKMART" as an adjunct to PLUM LINES, for this purpose: books wanted, for sale, or trade. His address, as you may see in our membership list, is Dept/Pharmacology, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024. OM

Note that OUR MAILING LABELS were run off by computer, making us look just a tiny bit more efficient. Experiments will be made to see whether or not membership lists may be computerized. We owe these advances to Linda and Jim Rodenbach, owners of an Apple IIe. Ed Lehwald, TWS, had also offered to make our mailing labels, but the question of proximity determined our choice. Thank to all concerned.

OM received his copy of P. G. Wodehouse Short Stories, Folio Society, London, 1983. Octavo (9" tall), nicely patterned cloth covers, well bound, slip cased, very good typography, it sells for \$22.00 if you become a member of the Folio Society and select three other books for the year, somewhat the same plan offered by Limited Editions Club and the Heritage Press Club. The 19 short stories are selected from six categories: Jeeves, Blandings Castle, Ukridge, Mr. Mulliner, Golf, and Beans and Crumpets. OM's defective copy was very quickly replaced by a perfect copy, with the absolute minimum of correspondence or inconvenience.

The SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE WODEHOUSE SOCIETY will be held in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., on October 15th, 1983, Wcy + 2, the 102d anniversary of Plum's birth. Information packets will be sent to all members who indicate an interest in attending. Write to OM, The Wodehouse Society, 82 Evergreen Drive, New Britain, PA 18901. OM has been asked, "Why Doylestown, PA? Why not New York, or San Francisco or London?" To which he replies, "Why NOT Doylestown, PA? It provides adequate and considerably cheaper facilities for smallish conventions...by cheaper, of course, one means to imply cheaper in cost rather than quality...is only 30 miles north of Philadelphia, 80 miles southwest of New York City (two round trip buses daily direct from NYC to Doylestown). Greyhound buses on regular schedule, small-plane airport." Perhaps future conventions will be held in New York, London, Toronto, or San Francisco; but they will necessarily be arranged by members in residence in those great centers of civilization.

Barry Phelps' booklists are, as we've said before, collectible items for the wealth of bibliographic info they carry. His latest list, "GOWF," which relates to Plum's gowf, goff or golf stories, carries a fine supplement by Walter White, TWS, yclept "The Oldest Member's Home Course: P. G. Wodehouse and Sound View Golf Club."

Walter did a remarkable amount of research in reconstructing the plans of a course now extinct, the victim of Progress (the course, not Walter). Plum knew this course well, tramped its fairways and greens, and most of his golfing characters grew out of his experiences and observations here. If you own Wodehouse on Golf, or any other of his golfing stories, this supplement will enhance your appreciation upon reading and re-reading them.

OM, in an obvious attempt to prove that, circumstantial evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, he is only human, made two egregious errors in your May PLUM LINES. First, the item about Goodspeed's offering of a postcard signed by Plum was sent to our editorial offices by Doris Frohnsdorff, TWS (Doris, by the way, is a bookseller specializing in childrens' literature; she is also Ella Palmer's sister), NOT by Pauline Blanc, as reported. To both ladies, obsequious apologies. Second, as every Plummy knows, October 15th, 1983, will be the 102d anniversary of Plum's birth, NOT the 103d. Forsooth.

Harper Brothers recently issued a paperback reprint of Joy in the Morning, changing the title to Jeeves in the Morning, for reasons best known to one or the other of the Harpers brothers, or possibly both.

MINI BIO: - JOHN DUFFIE, TWS, has recently been nominated for the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humor, a coveted literary honor in Canada, for his book The Unimportance of Being Earnest. This writer, champion and lover of the English language, columnist for the Victoria (BC) Monday Magazine, husband of Edith Duffie, incorrigible optimist, is 70...an almost inconceivably ripe old age... Retired after a long and interesting career with the Canadian Pacific Railway, his love for reading led him into a second, though not a secondary, career of writing. Long an admirer of Wodehouse and a few other top-notch humorists, he heard of TWS and, upon seeing our alluring information flyer, added membership in our Society to his other accomplishments. John thinks that other Victorians may be interested in becoming Plumies. His book, published by Milestone Publications, Ltd., Sidney, BC, Canada, sells for \$7.00.

We welcome non-belligerent suggestions or ideas for improving PLUM LINES and/or The Wodehouse Society...within reason, of course. For our convention agenda, we will need ideas for discussion, mooting, etc. And ALWAYS we need items of interest to other Plumies.

THE OLDEST MEMBER

ESSAY IN MINIATURE: -

Inimitable = Above imitation; not to be copied. (Samuel Johnson, LLD)

Have you ever tried to write a story in such a way that, without your name as author, it might be attributed to P. G. Wodehouse? Don't, laddy. It won't work. "The inimitable Wodehouse" is a well-deserved accolade. "There have been imitations," said William Trevor (Cox), writing in Contemporary Novelists, "but it is more difficult than it seems to achieve the apparent casualness of the Wodehouse prose and the subtlety of the feather touch."

Writing style is an individual matter, a reflection of the mind and personality of the writer, sparked by latent talent, bolstered by experience and mature judgment, becoming finally a creation which belongs to that writer alone, and which no other writer can successfully imitate. Nor would any author worth his sodium try.

When we read and re-read Shakespeare, Chaucer or Wodehouse or any of the truly great authors, we have shared their thoughts, peered into their hearts and minds, and savored their personalities. We have known them as well as we know our closest friends. They may have helped us explore the dark nooks and crannies of our own minds. This distinguishes the great writers from the mere word processors: inimitability is their commonly shared characteristic.

Kit Morley, in his preface to Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass, wrote, "It is when you imitate people, not knowing that you imitate them, that the soul suffers." The soul, one supposes, of the reader.

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Pauline Blanc has been mentioned often in PLUM LINES, and deservedly; for she was an early member of our Society, among the first six to join, and the founder of our San Francisco chapter. She is currently in charge of our Commemorative Stamp Campaign (she tells OM that if each member of TWS were to write to The Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee, Stamps Division, U. S. Postal Service, Washington, DC 20260, it is probable that they would seriously consider honoring Plum with a commemorative stamp). She collects Plum's books and involves herself with many of our problems. We asked her how she had become involved with Wodehouse. In the adventurous spirit of those hardy pioneers who settled San Francisco, she replied, placing her letter in a tightly corked bottle which she dropped from the Golden Gate Bridge on the outgoing tide. You do save so much postage that way. Several months later it was found by a kindly shad fisherman in the Delaware River, who...for a princely gratuity...delivered it to OM's door. Here, finally, is Pauline's reply:

"My addiction to P. G. Wodehouse dates from 1972 when, in a hotel in London, I traded my paperback for one of the hotel's, which happened to be The Code of the Woosters - the ideal choice for an introduction to the Master.

"When I got home an item in a San Francisco paper that PGW was celebrating his 92d birthday in a place called Rensenburg so astonished me I sent off a birthday card to him and was further astonished when he replied to it. Thereafter for two years we kept up a lively correspondence and since his death Lady Wodehouse and I have continued the bond. When I am not reading and collecting books by P. G. Wodehouse, I paint, mostly in water color."

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Essays and autobio sketches are solicited.....this is your newsletter...  
you can help to make it more interesting. CM

Sadly, we report that Jeeves Takes Charge, Edward Duke's remarkable theatrical production, closed its New York City run a fortnight or so ago, in spite of generally very good reviews. It seems probable that it will go on the road later on...we have no information on probable dates...so many of you may be able to see it, after all. If the opportunity arises, take advantage of it. Well worth while. Anyhow, our very own drama critic, Linda Rodentbach, saw it with Jim in May, and her review follows:

For those of us who know and love Bertram, Aunt Agatha, and Aunt Dahlia, not to mention Jeeves, the one-man show "Jeeves Takes Charge," currently at The Space at City Center in New York, is a real treat. As Mr. Edward Duke adroitly maneuvers from one character to another, complete with gestures and nuances, we are genuinely entertained by some of our favorite Wodehouse stories.

Mr. Duke's own two years of research and writing this little gem of humorous entertainment, along with his experience, added to the presentation. We were convinced that he knows and loves each one of these characters as much as any Plummy. The aunts were divine, Bertie was played complete with checkered suit and an outrageous strangulated laugh, and Jeeves came complete with starched elbows. It was Gussie, however, who was the unanimous favorite. His lack of upper lip stole the show; we imitated him all the way home.

We remain in genuine admiration of Mr. Duke's ability to entertain us with such energy for the entire two hours by himself. His agility at playing two or three parts in a conversation deserves sincere praise. Even the smallest gestures were changed from part to part: a monacle here, an overbite there.

While The Space at City Center is not as well appointed as some of the better Broadway theaters, we were not disappointed. Even those in our party who are familiar with the Broadway scene, yet who shamefully admit an unfamiliarity with Plum's work, came away pleased with our choice of the afternoon's diversion.

Do see "Jeeves Takes Charge." It is entertaining for any one, but a pure joy for any Plummy.

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We sincerely hope that this will not be the last review of this truly fine show. It deserves to go on to other American cities; it has been pointed out that New York City is not the United States, and its reception in San Francisco, or Denver, or Seattle, or Chicago, or a dozen other cities, may recompense for its folding in NYC.