



"As in all good farce, there is underlying wisdom, and we certainly approach more truly to life in Mr. Wodehouse's deliberate travesty than we do in following the adventures of crashers and heartbreakers in which the other writers expect us to believe." Gilbert Thomas

YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED THAT we have gone into a larger mailing envelope for PLUM LINES. Our Efficiency Department concluded, after years of study that, since PLUM LINES must be folded only once to fit this env., 1.20 seconds will be saved in preparing each copy for 'stuffing,' as we in the publishing business say. Surely a triumph for Progress!

ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP IN TWS or WHY IT IS worthwhile to pay 1986 dues even if you're not sure it IS worthwhile. The mere fact of mbrshp in our Society looks impressive in resumés and, later, in obits. You are entitled to purchase Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo in either Formula A or B at a considerable discount; you may buy stocks and bonds in the Ukridge Enterprises, Ltd., an investment bound to pay off eventually; you are entitled to read as many of Plum's stories as you can find, and to brag about the quality of your reading matter. Then for members, there is PLUM LINES, our non-profitable quarterly, which keeps cognoscenti posted on the World of Wodehouse, relying on our network of correspondents in far flung places, some places slung farther than others, of course. So DON'T toss your dues statement in File 13...be a paid-up member.

THE SEWANEE REVIEW, an old, prestigious literary journal, is subsidized by a small liberal arts institution, The University of the South. Mr. George Core, its editor graciously granted us the privilege of reprinting Dr. Galligan's article, "P. G. Wodehouse - Master of Farce." Further reproduction of the article requires permission from Sewanee Review, Sewanee, TN 37375-4009.

*He gave us gifts of joy that we might laugh and, laughing, learn to smile.....*

DO KEEP AN EYE OUT for Edward Duke's one-man (12 characters) show, "Jeeves Takes Charge." It has recently reappeared in San Francisco and Los Angeles, much to the delight of our members there. Where next? OM hasn't the faintest idea...just keep an eye peeled... AND, SPEAKING OF SHOWS, "Jerome Kern Goes to Hollywood" opened 24 January at the Ritz Theatre, New York City. A musical revue, it features the show songs of Kern and twelve of his lyricists, among whom...of course...was Plum.

Mrs. Ann Smith, TWS, secretary for Guy Bolton and the Wodehouses, promises to write an account of her interesting experience ... sometime in the future (the NEAR future, we hope), time for reminiscing and writing being in short supply at the moment. You may be sure that we will remind her from time to time, for her account will be of interest to all of us.

Carl Wells is the new president of our San Francisco chapter, having succeeded Doug Stow, busy in establishing a small (but, we hope, lively) business. The matter of planning our 1987 convention rests upon capable shoulders, we are sure.

PLUM LINES - Continued

QUESTION & ANSWER DEPT...

Question: I am starting to collect books by my favorite authors, Plum being among them, of course. Why are first editions so desirable? Bibbly O'Phyle

Answer: Dear Bibbly: If you have even a dram of sentiment in your veins, holding a book in your hands which looks exactly as it looked when its author first saw it fresh from the press should make you feel a bit closer to that author. If the "1st" is scarce because of collector demand, its price will escalate...that's the nature of the rare & used book trade. John T. Winterich, in A Primer of Book-Collecting, said that "...A library with only a small proportion of firsts...say ten percent...could well be a valuable and useful assemblage..." And we do want our collections to be useful, if not actually valuable, assemblages, don't we? OM

Steve and Jane Ruggiero tell us that the Handy Book Exchange, 1762 Avenue Road, Toronto, ON M5M 3A9, has quite a few PGW titles in stock (many not available in the U.S.) and issues stock lists. A couple of years ago Joseph Dind told us of About Books, 280-355 Queen Street, Toronto, "which is one place where you might expect to find Wodehouse books."

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Abbreviated financial statement, TWS:

Balance in the Wodehouse Society Account as of 31 Dec 1985: \$1996.50 MAB

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Jimmy Heineman, who will be its publisher, has a new...and comprehensive...Wodehouse bibliography in preparation. It will list everything known to have been written by him, and will be amended as new discoveries are made. Exact publ date unknown. Price, unknown. We'll let you know as soon as we know.

Daniel Garrison, TWS, has found a publisher for his Wodehouse Types, an encyclopedia of characters in Wodehouse stories. Dan'l calls it a "prospography," but you mustn't be frightened by the terminology, because it's going to be a mighty fine addition to your Wodehouse collection when Hutchinson gets around to publishing it. "Arts and Sciences," a magazine issued by Northwestern University carries an article by Dr. Garrison, "Stalking Wodehouse with Disc and Keyboard...Prosopography by Computer." Dr. Garrison writes: "I am an associate professor of Classics at Northwestern University specializing in Greek and Latin literature and cultural history. I've written a book on the Hellenistic love epigram, Mild Frenzy (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978) and an introduction to Latin called The Language of Virgil (Berne: Peter Lang, 1984. My current research is a book on Greek sexual culture from neolithic times to the age of Augustus. You may announce (he continues) that all members of The Wodehouse Society are invited to the republication gala which ~~gl~~luckless publisher of Wodehouse Types will throw at the Valley Fields Hilton." ☐

  
The Oldest Member

An American Discusses English Culinary Eccentricities  
By Dr. William E. Welmers, TWS \*

I have some problems with English cuisine as portrayed in the works of P. G. Wodehouse. To begin with, the Drones Club members are identified by what they prefer with tea: Eggs, Beans, and Crumpets. But yes, it's a fact; in London you can be served hardboiled eggs or baked beans with tea!

When I read about someone digging into steak and kidney pie, which I presume is a sort of meat pie - but to me a piece of beef ceases to be a steak if it is cut into smallish pieces, and kidneys are what friends of mine back in the '30's used to pay 5¢ per pound to feed the cat; they weren't fit for human consumption. Actually, we were served kidneys, along with liver and bacon and fish and fried tomatoes and eggs, once in a British boarding house in the then Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1950, and I guess even the kidneys were good -- we were both starved and exhausted! But when Plum depicts, as he does in one novel, an American movie mogul pitching into his steak and kidney pie in a restaurant in Beverly Hills, Calif., I have to doubt his knowledge of our eating places. And, in another book, cold steak and kidney pie, presumably a delicacy?

Plum also, repeatedly, refers to an inexpensive dinner as featuring a chop. A pork chop, a lamb chop, or some other chop? To me, a chop generally means pork. In England, I have some suspicion that it more often means lamb, or even mutton. Is that edible? (Another English writer, about a century ago, compared the finest antelope meat he had tasted with good Welsh mutton; that would, for me, rate it as 1-minus on a scale of ten.) I confess my illiteracy when it comes to "chump chop." Even my New World dictionary defines 'chump' as a thick or butt end; I could only associate it with a blockhead or fool.

And a "suet pudding?" Suet is something you feed to woodpeckers or racoons in our charming rural area, or get a little fat fried out of in preparing some other dish. A pudding is sweet, with corn starch and usually eggs, plus chocolate, tapioca, butterscotch, etc. To me, the words 'suet' and 'pudding' are

mutually exclusive. But then, British puddings are American cakes.

Plum says (in something I read recently) that 'biscuits' are what Americans call 'crackers;' but our cookies are also British biscuits, and I have no idea what they call our baking-powder biscuits. And is 'roly-poly pudding' actually a jelly roll?

A further comment on what I would call a pudding: a blancmange. In Ice in the Bedroom, there is an allusion to a blancmange tasting like 'jellied blotting paper.' We know what he means! In Ghana, in 1948-49, we asked our cook if he could make a blancmange, and he assured us he could. It was awful. Very gently, Bee asked him: "Kwame, how many eggs did you put in this blancmange?" As if grievously offended, he assured her, "Oh no, ma, I did not use any eggs." So Bee went on, "How much milk did you use?" As much offended, he protested, "Oh no, ma, I did not use any milk." So Bee asked, "Well, what did you use?" Defensively, he answered, "Oh ma, I only used corn flour and vanilla and sugar and water!" (Darned little sugar at that!) We later told that one to an English woman who had lived in Burma for many years. She knew the product, and explained, "Ah yes; we call it 'shape.' It doesn't have any flavor, any food value, or any other merit. All it has is shape!"

I don't in any way mean to be snide, or even culture-bound. Above all, I cherish tolerance. You can have your jellied eels, as long as you'll let me enjoy my fried squid!

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\* William (Bill) Welmers, Ph.D., Th.M., Professor-Emeritus, UCLA, also taught at Univ. of PA and Cornell Univ. Ordained minister and former missionary. He and Beatrice (Bee) are enjoying retirement in the Arkansas (Ar-kan saw, Suh!) Ozarks.

**COMMENT:** In his In Defense of British Cooking, Brattleboro, VT, 1960, Audrey Gordon said, "I am willing to concede that there are quite a few people in England who are content to ring the changes on a limited variety of foods and who are lacking in culinary daring; many have had neither the opportunity to learn the secrets of foreign cooking nor the money to experiment with the untried. Moreover, the years of depression and war effectively curtailed the traditional fare for long periods of time." Then being a fair-minded Yank, he poses a question: "But how may our own cherished eating habits look to a foreign and unconvinced palate?"

Possibly one of our oversea members might care to tackle Mr. Gordon's question?