

# P. G. WODEHOUSE

The Creator of  
"JEEVES" and "ARCHIE"

**I**N these depressing days the gift of humour is worth more than the ransom of kings. P. G. Wodehouse, known generally as "P. G.," is one of the world's greatest humorists. That

his work is appreciated in his own country is a lasting reproof to the pessimist who can see no hope left for Britain.

To interest and amuse, and to take

to be a writer. At Dulwich, while he humoured the authorities by reaching the Classical Sixth, his real education seems, on looking back, to have consisted in reading W. S. Gilbert and James Payn. The one immediate result of his classical studies was a series of extravagant farces, written in verse and arranged after the fashion of the Greek tragedies, with his acquaintances, masters and boys alike, drawn as citizens of ancient Athens.

When the time came for him to leave Dulwich he was informed that as literature was too poor a career for any self-respecting individual, he must enter a bank. He obeyed, though reluctantly. He did not like the bank, nor did the bank like him—professionally, at least. His immediate superior told him, finally, more in sorrow than in anger, or perhaps it was the other way round, that he would never, unless he devoted more time to his study of banking, make a success of commerce. P. G. agreed with the utmost composure, and straightway resigned his post. He was even then earning more money from his pen in his spare time than



Aged three months.



Aged seven years.



Aged twelve.

people out of themselves and make them laugh and forget, this is the mission of P. G. Wodehouse. But if you were to ask him what his mission was, why he wrote, and for what purpose, he would most probably roar with laughter and reach for his note-book and jot down another idea for a story: the story of the high-souled young humorist who had a mission.

P. G. wanders happily up and down the world, watching humanity at work and at play, like a rather curious and intelligent boy who has just left school and has not yet had time to lose hope and interest. Where most of us see only gloom and despair and ugliness, P. G. sees humour and laughter and beauty. Hence, of course, his popularity.

His career has been a record of hard work. From his earliest days he always intended

the bank paid him, or was ever likely to pay. He branched out boldly as a writer, in spite of the warnings of well-mean-

ing relatives. His success as a writer should have been, if the prophecies had been correct, uncertain. As a matter of fact, it was about the most certain thing that ever happened.

He laid the foundation of his future prosperity on the "By the Way" column of the *Globe*, then one of the brightest features of London journalism. In due course P. G. became editor of the column himself, and each day for some years turned out a constant stream of humorous paragraphs and light verse that never fell below his own high standard.

His work of late years is too well known to need detailed description. He is an established favourite everywhere, a real humorist. But it was as a writer of school stories that he made his name. Has any magazine ever had serials that aroused more interest in the English public schools than did P. G.'s school stories in the *Captain*? It is no exaggeration to say now that these tales broke the old tradition of school stories, and introduced to the reading public the English public schoolboy as he really is—a healthy, careless, hero-worshipping, sport-loving young animal with a code of honour and ideals that might with advantage be copied in other walks of life.

His hobbies and pursuits are many. His knowledge of sport, so clearly expressed in his stories, is founded on personal experience. He has in his time played most games. At Dulwich he was in the

Eleven for two years, being given his place in the team for his bowling, although he had a cut—his one stroke at that time—

which was in its way a terror. By constant practice, and in spite of his glasses, he made himself a good field. He was also a fine footballer, getting his cap in a season when Dulwich lost no school matches. In addition, P. G. has done much boxing, and he has, to the horror of all good Rugger men, played Soccer. In these days, however, he has abandoned even cricket, and ponders of an evening after a hard day's golf on how ever he managed to live before he discovered the only game. He motors, of course. He reads enormously: old books and new books—anything. He likes Persian kittens and bulldogs and parrots—grey parrots

that can talk to a man sensibly.

He has already written about twenty-five books, as well as musical comedies, revues, and plays, and is still only forty. What seems even more wonderful is that he keeps on working at the same high rate of production without ever being at a loss for material. He does not know exactly how he gets his ideas, but the ideas come almost automatically—in the street, at the theatre, in trains or tubes, anywhere, anyhow.

Perhaps his most successful character is Jeeves, the inimitable and ever-resourceful valet, a new series of whose adventures commences in the present number.



Aged twenty.



Present Day.