

Ye Olde Plum News

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GAMES AND PLAYERS

DART

Bertie told Florence: "I also play Darts." "Darts?" "As a matter of fact, I shall very soon be this year's club champion. The event is a snip for me. Ask anybody." (Jeeves and the Feudal spirit, 1954)

You would never have thought, to look at him, (Beach) that forty years ago he had come in first in a choir boy's bicycle race ... and that only two days before the starts of this story he had won the Market Blandings Darts Tournament, out-shooting such seasoned experts as Jno. Robinson, who ran the station taxi cab, and Percy Bulstrode, the local chemist. (Galahad at Blandings, 1965)

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### CHESS

She found its occupant (Lord Uffenhams) seated at the table, playing chess with himself. From the contended expression on his face, he appeared to be winning. (Money In the Bank, 1942)

"Mr Wrenn and I frequently play a game of chess together," said Mr. Cornelius. Sam was not interested in his senile diversions. (Sam the Sudden, 1925)

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PIQUET

"Look here," said Lord Dreever, "this is boring me stiff... Ever played piquet? I could teach you in five minutes." A look almost of awe came into Hargate's face – the look of one who sees a miracle performed before his eyes. A little later: "Let's see, that's twenty pounds you owe me, isn't it?" continued Hargate. "Shocking bad luck you had." (A Gentleman of Leisure, 1910, Chapter XX: "A Lesson in Piquet")

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### PERSIAN MONARCHS

Lord Bosham explained to "Mustard" Pott: "Here's the way it goes. You cut a card, if you know what I mean, and the other fellow cuts a card, if you follow me. Then if the card you've cut is higher than the card the other fellow has cut, you win. While, conversely, if the card the other

fellow's cut is higher than the card you've cut, he wins."

Uncle Fred: "I never expect to witness a finer display of pure science than Mustard gave. He was playing for his daughter's happiness, and the thought seemed to inspire him. Generally, I believe, on these occasions, it is customary to allow the mug to win from time to time as a sort of gesture, but it was clear that Mustard felt that in a crisis like this, old-world courtesy would be out of place. Ignoring the traditions, he won every coup, and when they had finished Emsworth got up, thanked for a pleasant game, said it was fortunate that they had not been playing for money or he might have lost a considerable sum, and left the room... Mustard tells me he was once bitten by a pig, but I doubt if even on that occasion – high spot in his life though it must have been – he can have been more overcome by emotion." (Uncle Fred in the Springtime, 1939)

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CROQUET

"Croquet!" He gulped, and stared at her with unseeing eyes. He was no prude, but he had those decent prejudices of which no self-respecting man can wholly rid himself, however broad-minded he may try to be... Was it not rather the fault of her up-bringing? Probably she had been taught to play croquet when a mere child, hardly able to distinguish right from wrong. (Sundered Hearts, 1920)

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### CRAPS

"Do I play craps?" said Joss, with a light laugh. "That's good. The dicers of a dozen cities would smile if they heard you ask that." (Quick Service, 1940)

"At Craps, I fear, my hand in late years has lost much of its cunning... Let me see" said Uncle Chris meditatively, "What was the precise ritual? Ah! I have it, 'come little seven! ... Baby needs new shoes!'" (Jill, the Reckless, 1921)

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BRIDGE

As a general rule after dinner Grayce liked a rubber or two of Bridge, for she was as ardent a player of that game as ever bid four spades on a hand containing the queen of that suit and three small ones. (Pearls, Girls and Monty Bodkin, 1972)

I was rather frank about Reggie's bridge game one night, and looking back I can see that was when he began to have second thoughts, All I said was "I know you started to learn to play bridge this morning, Reggie, but what time this morning?" but he didn't like it. (Do Butlers Burgle Banks? 1968)

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### SOLITAIRE

It is almost inevitable that a man who is playing solitaire will sooner or later sing. Lord Tidmouth, who had for some little time been humming in an undertone, now came boldly into the open and committed himself to the rendition of a popular ballad... "Oh, shut up!" said Bill. "What are you doing?" "Playing solitaire, laddie." "... "Do you mean to say you really get any pleasure out of that rotten game?" "Darned good game," protested Lord Tidmouth. He manipulated his cards. "Did you ever hear the story of the ventriloquist who played solitaire? He used to annoy his wife by holding long conversations with himself in the sleep. It became such a trial to the poor woman that she had serious thoughts of getting a divorce. And then one evening, by the greatest good luck, he caught himself cheating at solitaire and never spoke to himself again." (Doctor Sally, 1932)

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BACK-GAMMON

Esmond Haddock was quite dominated by his aunts. "Well, we are expecting you in the drawing room." "Yes, Aunt Daphne." "Gertrude is waiting to play backgammon with you." "Yes, Aunt Daphne." "If you feel capable of playing backgammon." "Oh, yes, Aunt Daphne." He slunk from the room with bowed head. (The Mating Season, 1949)

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