

Ye Olde Plum News

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SOME CLASSES OF PROFESSIONALS

BUTLERS

For an instant he stood eyeing the butler with that natural alarm which comes to all of us when in presence of a man who a few short hours earlier has given us one look and made us feel like a condemned food product. (Summer Lightning, 1929)

Butlers as a class seem to grow less and less like anything human in proportion to the magnificence of their surroundings. ... Blandings Castle was one of the more important of England's show-places, and Beach, accordingly had acquired a dignified inertia which almost qualified him for inclusion in the vegetable kingdom. He moved, when he moved at all, very slowly. He distilled speech with the air of one measuring out drops of some precious drug. (Something Fresh, 1915)

For some reason, probably known to scientists, butlers, as far as any rate as outward appearance is concerned, do not grow old as we grow old. Keggs...looked almost precisely as he had looked a quarter of a century ago. Then he had resembled a Roman emperor who had been doing himself too well on starchy foods. His aspect now was of a somewhat stouter Roman emperor, one that had given up any attempt to watch his calories and liked his potatoes with lots of butter on them. (Something Fishy, 1957)

When Smedley Cork, in their conversation on the terrace, had described James Phipps (the butler) as carefree, he had been misled, as casual observers are so apt to be misled, by the fact that butlers, like oysters, wear the mask and do not show their emotions. (The Old Reliable, 1951)

Phipps did not laugh, for laughter is not permitted to English butlers by the rules of their Guild, but he allowed his lips to twitch slightly... (The Old Reliable, 1951)

My dear Smedley, you can't stick lighted matches between the toes of an English butler. He would raise his eyebrows and freeze you with a glance. You'd feel as if he had caught you using the wrong fork. (The Old Reliable, 1951)

I was well over thirty before I could convince myself, when paying a social call, that the reason the butler looked at me in that cold and distant way was it was his normal expression when on duty, and that he did not do it because he suspected that I was overdrawn at the bank, had pressed my trousers under the mattress, and was trying to make last year's hat do for another season. (Butlers and the Buttled, 1932)

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### CURATES

*'Most of them are beefy young fellows who rowed for their colleges. I don't believe I have ever seen a pale young curate. (Mulliner's Buck-U-Uppo, 1927)*

*Curates are specially trained to handle this sort of situation. A tough hard-boiled curate, spitting out of the corner of his mouth, would soon have subsided these mothers, he reflected. (Tried in the Furnace, 1932)*

*In all villages, of course, there must of necessity be an occasional tough egg – in the case of Blandings Parva the names of Willie Drake and Thomas (Rat-face) Blenkiron spring to mind – but it was seldom that the local infants offered anything beyond the power of a curate to control. (Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend, 1935)*

*'The Pinker I'm after is a curate. 'I'm a curate. 'You are? Yes, by Jove you're perfectly right. I see your collar button at the back, You're not H. P. Pinker by any chance?... Prop forward for Oxford and England a few years ago?' 'Yes. 'Well, would you be interested in becoming a vicar?... My chap at Hockley-cum-Meston is downing tools now that his ninetieth birthday is approaching, and I've been scouring the countryside for a spare. Extraordinarily difficult the quest has been, because what I wanted was a vicar who was a good prop forward,' (Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves, 1950)*

*About the curate 'Bill' Bailey: 'What sort of chap is he? Pale and fragile, I suppose, with a touch of consumption and a tendency to recite the collect for the day in a high tenor voice?' 'Pale and fragile, my foot. He boxed three years for Oxford.'... 'Large chap with a face like a gorilla.' (Service With a Smile, 1962)*

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INTERIOR DECORATORS

'I'm engaged. 'Boy next door?' 'No, a man in London. 'What's his line?' 'He's interior decorator. 'You're kidding. 'No, that's what he is. 'Then ditch him. 'What?' 'Ditch him,' said Kelly firmly. 'I was once engaged to an interior decorator, so I speak as one who knows. They're the scum of the earth.' (Company for Henry, 1967)

The authorities in charge of human affairs have decreed, no doubt for some excellent reason, that interior decorators as a class shall look simply terrible. Possibly the thought behind this was that if they were beautiful as well as talented, the mixture would be too rich. ... But every now and

then a few can be found who deviate from this norm, and prominent among these was the L. P. Green, whom Algy disliked so much. With his melting hazel eyes, his perfectly modelled features, his silky moustache and his flashing smile he might have been a motion picture star whose face have launched a thousand bags of popcorn. (Company for Henry, 1967)

My nephew Cyril (said Mr. Mulliner) had a greater passion for mystery stories than anyone I have ever met. I attribute this to the fact that, like so many interior decorators, he was a fragile, delicate young fellow, extraordinarily vulnerable to any ailment that happened to be going the rounds. (Strychnine in the Soup, 1932)

The Sheridan Apartment house stands in the heart of New York's Bohemian and artistic quarter. If you threw a brick from any of its windows, you would be certain to brain some rising young interior decorator, some Vorticist sculptor or a writer of verse libre. (The Small Bachelor, 1927)

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### PSYCHIATRISTS

*Sir Roderick Glossop, Honoria's father, is always called a nerve specialist, because it sounds better, but everybody knows that he's really a sort of janitor to the looney bin. I mean to say, when your uncle the Duke begins to feel the strain a bit and you find him in the blue drawing-room sticking straws in his hair, old Glossop is the first person you send for. (Sir Rodney Comes to Lunch, 1922)*

*He (Sir Roderick) had a pair of shaggy eyebrows which gave his eyes a piercing look which was not at all the sort of thing a fellow wanted to encounter on an empty stomach. He was fairly tall and he had the most enormous head, with practically no hair on it, which made it seem bigger and much more like the dome of St. Paul's. I suppose he must have taken about nine or something in hats. Shows what a rotten thing it is to let your brain develop too much. (Sir Rodney Comes to Lunch, 1922)*

*'One of those fellows who ask you questions about your childhood and gradually dig up the reason why you go about shouting 'Fire!' in crowded theatres. They find it's because somebody took away your all-day sucker when you were six.' ... I thought they were called head-shrinkers.' 'That, I believe, is the medical term.' (A Pelican at Blandings, 1969)*

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