



BY THE WAY

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Wodehouse's Lesser Clergy – Part II

We continue the identification of the lesser clergy who grace the Wodehouse pages, started last September, with the Late Rev. Henry Garnet, who leads an alphabetical extravaganza of Revs and Curates ending with the Rev. Sidney Potter-Pirbright, uncle of the irrepressible Catsmeat. The list should be completed in September 2014.

The Late Rev. Henry Garnet

Late Vicar of Much Middlefold, and father of Jeremy Garnet, Ukridge's close friend and confidant in the years immediately after Ukridge's marriage.

(Love Among the Chickens)

Rev. Sidney Gooch

Vicar of Rising Mattock, Hants, who though an outstanding specimen of muscular Christianity, showed himself deficient in tact.

*(‘Anselm Gets His Chance’
in Eggs, Beans and Crumpets)*

Rev. John Hatton

An Old Oxonian who ran boys' clubs at Carnation Hall in Lambeth, frequented the Barrel Club, and took both credit and payment for published fiction written by James Orlebar Cloyster.

(Not George Washington)

Rev. G Hayward

The Vicar of Lower Bingley, receiving an artificially high allowance of twelve minutes in the Great Sermon Handicap, was unfortunate to be competing on a day on which the Rev. James Bates had an ulterior motive.

*(‘The Great Sermon Handicap’
in The Inimitable Jeeves)*

The High Priest of Hec

Best known for his complaint to the Grand Vizier of Oom (adviser to the King) about the quality of meat being used for sacrifices.

(‘The Coming of Gowf’ in The Clicking of Cuthbert)

‘Rev.’ Sidney Hemingway

Said to cure souls at Chipley, he had a small, round face like a sheep with a benevolent expression, pince-nez, a collar buttoned at the back, and a file with the police marked ‘Soapy Sid’.

*(‘Aunt Agatha Takes the Count’
in The Inimitable Jeeves)*

Rev. Francis Heppenstall

Vicar of Twing, Glos., who held Classics reading parties, helped Bertie Wooster through Smalls, and was installed as favourite for the Great Sermon Handicap, though in the event his serious attack of hay fever caused him to be a non-runner. He took an unfashionably ethical view to the betting arrangements for the Girl's Egg-and-Spoon Race at Twing Village Sports.

*(‘The Great Sermon Handicap’, ‘The Metropolitan Touch’ and ‘The Purity of the Turf’
in The Inimitable Jeeves)*

Rev. Orlo Hough

The Vicar of Boustead Magna delivered a sermon according to the form book, but his allowance of a mere nine minutes gave him no chance to make an impression on the judges.

*(‘The Great Sermon Handicap’
in The Inimitable Jeeves)*

Rev. Aubrey Jerningham

Author of *Is There a Hell?*, a 600-page volume bound in thick cloth, ideal for blacking the eye of an unwanted suitor who steals kisses. As the incumbent of Valley Fields, though, he shrank from the thought of unmarried couples living together in his parish.

(Sam the Sudden)

Rev. B J Jipson

Vetted souls at either Piggleston or Wigmarsh-in-the-Dell in Hertfordshire, and produced a series of daughters, Catherine being his fourth and Myrtle the sixth.

(‘Unpleasantness at Kozy Kot’ in the American edition of A Few Quick Ones, and in Star Weekly)

Rev. Alexander Jones

The Vicar of Upper Bingley, though receiving just three minutes in the Great Sermon Handicap, did nothing to justify his reputation.

*(‘The Great Sermon Handicap’
in The Inimitable Jeeves)*

Very Rev. The Dean of Margate

Like the Dean of Bittlesham (see September 2012), his evidently guilty conscience persuaded him to ask Adrian Mulliner if he could have a word in private.

(‘The Smile That Wins’ in the American magazine version of the story in *Mulliner Nights*)

Rev. Joseph Marson

Husband of Sarah and father of Ashe, he hailed from either Much Middlefold, Shropshire or Hayling, Massachusetts.

(*Something Fresh; Something New*)

Rev. Anselm Mulliner

The curate of Rising Mattock, where he is secretly engaged to Myrtle Jellaby, daughter of the local squire. When given an opportunity to preach a Sermon on Brotherly Love, he so moved members of the congregation that sufficient funds for the couple to marry were thrust at them from an unexpected source.

(‘Anselm Gets His Chance’ in *Eggs, Beans and Crumpets*)

Rev. Augustine Mulliner

Curate at Lower-Briskett-in-the-Midden before receiving the living of Vicar at Walsingford-below-Chiveney-on-Thames, he stands out alongside Harold Pinker as one of the most entertaining members of the Church in any of Wodehouse’s writing. When not swallowing excessive doses of Buck-U-Uppo, he is saving bishops from hairy dogs, stopping quarrels between his superiors, reducing Lady Bishopesses to cooing admiration, and protecting both the Bishop and Bishopess from the rigours of the law after an evening out at the Home From Home night club.

(‘Mulliner’s Buck-U-Uppo’ and ‘The Bishop’s Move’ in *Meet Mr Mulliner*; ‘Gala Night’ in *Mulliner Nights*)

Very Rev. Parsloe-Parsloe, Dean

We know neither the Christian name of Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe’s father, nor the location to which he was attached. What we do know is that he, too, had suspicions of his son, arranging with the keeper of the pub in Shepperton where the young Gregory was living to provide him with bed and breakfast and nothing else. His estimable view was that if Gregory wanted dinner, he would have to earn it.

(*Summer Lightning*)

Rev. Arthur James Perceval

Headmaster of St Austin’s immediately prior to the Rev. Herbert, whose purist approach to grammar extended to correcting his wife’s dialogue.

(*The Prize Poem in Tales of St Austin’s*)

Rev. Herbert Perceval

Known to a generation of schoolboys at St Austin’s as the Old ’Un, he liked to start potentially painful inquisitions with the sentence “Now, for what purpose did I summon you . . .?”

(*The Pothunters*)

Rev. Edwin T Philpots

A cadaverous-looking man with light blue eyes and a melancholy face, who mused meditatively in the columns of *Cosy Moments* and *Peaceful Moments*.

(*The Prince and Betty* – American version only; *Psmith, Journalist*)

Rev. Harold ‘Stinker’ Pinker

The kindly, muscular curate at Market Snodsbury who had an array of talents, including boxing (for Oxford), rugby football (for Harlequins and England), and such standards of clumsiness that ‘broken’ seemed to be his watchword, whether describing engagements, coloured slides, occasional tables, or the valuable vase belonging to Sir Watkyn Bassett, which helped to prejudice the latter against Stinker’s proposed marriage to his niece ‘Stiffy’ Byng.

(*Stiff Upper Lip, Jeeves*)

Rev. William Plomer

Vicar of Market Snodsbury, whose strained fetlock paved the way for Gussie Fink-Nottle to present the prizes at the Grammar School speechday.

(*Right Ho, Jeeves*)

Rev. Alistair Pond Pond

Long-time vicar of Rudge-in-the-Vale, the father of Alice and Vivien proved capable of touching even Lester Carmody for five shillings.

(*Money for Nothing*)

Rev. Sidney Potter-Pirbright

Vicar of King’s Deverill who looked as though he had been stuffed by an inexperienced taxidermist. His guest list included his niece Corky Pirbright, Gussie Fink-Nottle, the odiferous dog Sam Goldwyn, and the equally odiferous Thomas Gregson.

(*The Mating Season*)