

The Gem Collector (Large Print Edition)

P G Wodehouse



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The supper room of the Savoy Hotel was all brightness and glitter and gayety. But Sir James Willoughby Pitt, baronet, of the United Kingdom, looked round about him through the smoke of his cigarette, and felt moodily that this was a flat world, despite the geographers, and that he was very much alone in it. He felt old. If it is ever allowable for a young man of twenty-six to give himself up to melancholy reflections, Jimmy Pitt might have been excused for doing so, at that moment. Nine years ago he had dropped out, or, to put it more exactly, had been kicked out, and had ceased to belong to London. And now he had returned to find himself in a strange city. Jimmy Pitt's complete history would take long to write, for he had contrived to crowd much into those nine years. Abridged, it may be told as follows: There were two brothers, a good brother and a bad brother. Sir Eustace Pitt, the latter, married money. John, his younger brother, remained a bachelor. It may be mentioned, to check needless sympathy, that there was no rivalry between the two. John Pitt had not the slightest desire to marry the lady of his brother's choice, or any other lady. He was a selfsufficing man who from an early age showed signs of becoming some day a financial magnate. Matters went on much the same after the marriage. John continued to go to the city, Eustace to the dogs. Neither brother had any money of his own, the fortune of the Pitts having been squandered to the ultimate farthing by the sportive gentleman who had held the title in the days of the regency, when White's and the Cocoa Tree were in their prime, and fortunes had a habit of disappearing in a single evening. Four years after the marriage, Lady Pitt died, and the widower, having spent three years and a half at Monte Carlo, working out an infallible system for breaking the bank, to the great contentment of Mons. Blanc and the management in general, proceeded to the gardens, where he shot himself in the orthodox manner, leaving many liabilities, few assets, and one son.

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