

NAXOS
AudioBooks

George & Weedon Grossmith

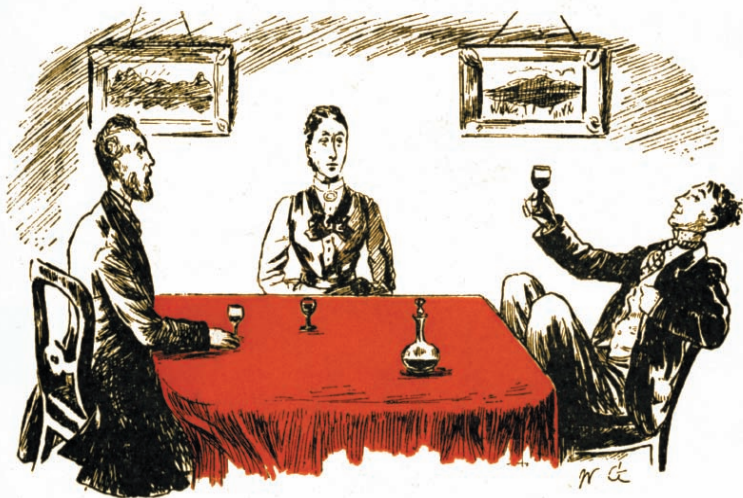
THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

The Diary of a Nobody

CLASSIC
FICTION

Read by **Martin Jarvis**



NA440312D

1	The Diary of a Nobody – Introduction by Mr. Pooter	1:10
2	Chapter 1	3:43
3	April 5th	4:02
4	Chapter 2 April 9th	4:54
5	April 12th	3:55
6	April 15th, Sunday	5:14
7	Chapter 3 April 19th	5:37
8	April 24th	4:48
9	April 28th	3:20
10	Chapter 4 April 30th	4:09
11	May 7th	4:46
12	Before I could think of a reply...	4:10
13	Chapter 5 May 8th	5:32
14	May 12th	4:47
15	June 6th	3:35
16	July 31st	4:16

17	Chapter 6 August 4th	4:39
18	August 7th	3:02
19	August 16th	3:52
20	Chapter 7 August 22nd	4:25
21	August 28th	3:30
22	November 1st	4:00
23	Chapter 8 November 5th, Sunday	5:50
24	November 9th	3:25
25	November 13th	3:26
26	Chapter 9 November 15th	4:18
27	At ten o'clock we went down to supper...	3:34
28	Chapter 10 November 16th	4:53
29	November 19th, Sunday	3:07
30	Chapter 11 November 20th	3:02
31	November 23rd	5:51
32	November 25th	3:53
33	In the evening (Sunday evening of all others)...	4:19
34	Chapter 12 December 17th	4:31
35	December 20th	4:08

36	Chapter 13 December 24th	4:33
38	December 27th	4:14
38	December 29th	5:33
39	Chapter 14 January 1st	4:12
40	January 4th	3:46
41	January 21st	3:48
42	January 25th	5:02
43	Chapter 15 February 8th	4:08
44	February 11th	4:16
45	Chapter 16 February 18th	4:28
46	For my own part, I was horrified...	3:09
47	Chapter 17 March 20th	3:18
48	When he had gone outside, I picked up the battered hat...	3:24
49	Chapter 18 April 8th	3:52
50	April 16th	4:37
51	When I had quite finished my supper...	4:12
52	April 17th	4:54

53	Chapter 19 April 27th	2:09
54	April 28th, Sunday	4:10
55	Another thing that annoyed me at dinner...	4:22
56	Chapter 20 May 10th	4:53
57	The effect was electrical.	3:22
58	Franching several times suggested that the wine...	4:07
59	Chapter 21 May 13th	4:49
60	I could not help thinking what a noble gentleman...	4:39
61	May 15th	4:18
62	Chapter 22 May 26th, Sunday	3:48
63	Mrs. James arrived and, as usual, in the evening...	5:14
64	June 1st	4:36
65	The table began to move again, and we might have had...	3:19
66	June 4th	4:19
67	Chapter 23 July 1st	2:55
68	July 3rd, Sunday	5:24
69	During the evening I had an opportunity to speak...	4:38
70	Chapter The Last	3:45

Total time: 4:52:35

George and Weedon Grossmith

The Diary of a Nobody

Although they are now principally remembered for *The Diary of a Nobody*, one of the classic English comic texts, George (1847–1912) and Weedon (1854–1919) Grossmith spent much of their working life in the theatre.

George began in more prosaic style as a police court reporter for *The Times* at Bow Street Magistrates Court with his father (also named George), but his natural affinity for comedy drew him inexorably to the stage. He developed a reputation for comic turns at private parties where he would entertain with sketches performed to his own piano accompaniment, especially satirising the business world. His great strength was his ability to improvise at will (a talent which later, when employed on stage, was to cause some of his fellow actors anxious moments as he took the scripts into uncharted territories).

His association with Richard D'Oyly Carte's Savoy Theatre in the 1870s changed his life. He was noticed by W.S. Gilbert, who offered him the role of John Wellington Wells in *The Sorcerer*. He took it, though with some misgivings, still unsure whether this kind of formal theatre was something he could do. He regarded himself as more an entertainer

than an actor. However, he won the part by his exuberance and natural ability to charm an audience, and he became a star performer within the D'Oyly Carte company (despite the initial reluctance of D'Oyly Carte himself).

During a six-month run of *The Sorcerer*, Sullivan offered him the part of the Judge in *Trial by Jury*. This role confirmed George's position in the company and his star status as a performer in the eyes of the public.

Gilbert and Sullivan went on to create many of their principal *buffo* roles for George Grossmith, including Sir Joseph Porter in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, Major General Stanley in *The Pirates of Penzance*, Reginald Bunthorne (the Oscar Wilde character) in *Patience*, the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, King Gama in *Princess Ida*, Ko-Ko in *The Mikado* and Robin Oakapple in *Ruddigore*. These came to be called 'Grossmith roles'. Thus, as Gilbert and Sullivan would have written to his personal strengths, we now have a living tradition of what George Grossmith must have been like both on stage and as a person.

Interestingly, George's own creative talents were not ignored by the company. His *Cups and Saucers*, a collection of musical sketches, was included in the D'Oyly Carte

touring programmes; and he wrote the music for Arthur Law's *Uncle Samuel*, the one-act curtain raiser that preceded *Patience*.

He was with D'Oyly Carte for two decades. However, illness intervened a week after the first performance of *Ruddigore* and he formally retired from the company in 1891. But after 20 years in the limelight, the lure of performance was too much. After recovering his health, George went on the road with his own show, which proved hugely popular. He even performed for Queen Victoria at Balmoral Castle. He came back to D'Oyly Carte in 1897 for the new role of King Ferdinand V of Vingolia in Alexander Mackenzie's *His Majesty*, but he was not happy with the part and left after a handful of performances.

His son, George Grossmith junior, followed in his father's footsteps as a popular entertainer, making his debut in *Haste to a Wedding* written by W.S. Gilbert with music by his father – though the show itself closed after 22 performances.

George Grossmith was a prolific entertainer, and wrote numerous operettas, nearly 100 musical sketches, and some 600 songs and piano pieces. He wrote two volumes of memoirs, *The Reminiscences of a Society Clown* (1888) and *Piano and I* (1910). Yet he is now principally remembered as the creator (with his brother Weedon) of one of

the great characters of English comic fiction: Charles Pooter.

While George was developing his career with the Savoy Theatre, his younger brother Weedon was also demonstrating his talent on stage. He trained at the West London School of Art but had little commercial success. Like his brother, he had a natural ability as a humorist and developed a stage career, even playing with Sir Henry Irving. Also like his brother, he wrote several plays, including *The Night of the Party* and *The Duffer*. He eventually became manager of Terry's Theatre. His irrepressible sense of careless humour is demonstrated by an existing photograph of himself sitting in a chair with a rather large lion cub on his lap. It was taken in an attempt to cheer up a friend who was ill – but it was certainly not without its dangers.

Pooter first appeared in the pages of Punch, and his Diary was expanded into book length for the first publication in 1892. It has never been out of print. Its many period references – the fashion for bicycling, the performance style of Henry Irving – are enlivened and coloured by the unforgettable characters, including Carrie, Lupin, Padge, Mr Gowing and, of course, the inimitable, accident-prone Mr Pooter himself.

Notes by Nicolas Soames

**The music on this recording is taken
from the NAXOS catalogue**

HOLST ST PAUL'S SUITE Bournemouth Sinfonietta / Richard Studt	8.550823
PARRY AN ENGLISH SUITE Capella Istropolitana / Adrian Leaper	8.550331
PARRY LADY RADNOR'S SUITE Capella Istropolitana / Adrian Leaper	8.550331

Music programmed by **Sarah Butcher**



Martin Jarvis starred as Jeeves in *By Jeeves* on Broadway in 2001. His films include the Oscar-winning *Titanic* and *Mrs Caldicot's Cabbage War*. Countless television appearances in Britain and America include *The Inspector Lynley Mysteries*, *Lorna Doone*, *A Touch of Frost*, *Murder She Wrote*, *Space*, *Inspector Morse* and *David Copperfield*. He is, uniquely, recipient of the British Talkie award and the U.S. Audie award. His continuing series of BBC *Just William* recordings are audio classics. He received the OBE in 2000 for his services to drama. He has also read *The Wind in the Willows*, *Metamorphosis* and *Three Men in a Boat* for Naxos AudioBooks.

George & Weedon Grossmith
**The Diary
of a Nobody**

THE
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CLASSICS
UNABRIDGED

Read by **Martin Jarvis**

This delightful Victorian comic diary is a classic of English humour which has never been out of print since its first publication in 1892. City clerk Charles Pooter asks: 'Why should I not publish my diary...because I do not happen to be a "somebody"'? He proceeds to catalogue all the social clangers he makes unwittingly as he bumbles his way through life, with his son Lupin, his wife Carrie, and his bicycling friends Cummings and Gowing and a host of other delightful characters. Despite this, we find we develop an affectionate sympathy for Pooter in the face of it all.

The Diary of a Nobody is an ideal text for the character talents of Martin Jarvis.

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Produced by John Tydeman
Recorded by Daryl Chapman at RMB Talking Book
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Edited by Sarah Butcher

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Total time
4:52:35