

(Vol. 4) No. 46

Sept 1930

Collector's

THE COLLECTOR'S

File

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SEPTEMBER 1950

Editor, Miscellaneous Section
Herbert Lockenby, Telephone Exchange,
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FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Another "Boys' Leader" Coincidence. You'll recall the amazing coincidence I related a few months ago, I guess. Well, another one has cropped up concerning that paper which died 45 years ago. On July 27th Arthur Harris rang me up from Ilendudno and drew my attention to a letter in the "Daily Mail" of that day. As soon as I saw the letter I said to myself, "Ah, here's a chance to do a good deed."

STOP PRESS:

Next Meeting, Northern Section O.B.B.C., Sat.,
30th September, 239, Hyde Park Road, Leeds, 6 p.m.
Make a day of it. Exhibition afternoon, Meeting
evening. Non-Members invited. You'll enjoy it. The
Exhibition is to be held in the Statuary Room of
the Leeds Public Library.

ED.

Have you ordered your C.D. Annual yet?

Now on investigating we found that although Arthur Harris possesses one volume of the Boys' Leader, and I have two, out of the four published, the information required must be in the other one. We knew someone, however, who would be sure to possess that volume, John Medcraft. So Arthur Harris wrote to Mr. Dagwell. I did also, but a day later. Now here comes the coincidence. Mr. Dagwell received Arthur's letter just as he was setting off for a holiday at Llandudno! How's that for the long arm? Needless to say, the two met and Mr. Dagwell had a happy time browsing over Vol. 1 of the "Boys' Leader".

Later, John Medcraft supplied the answer, as I knew he would, and Mr. Dagwell's curiosity was satisfied - after 46 years, even though the fate of his hero was rather vague.

As will be seen from the cuttings on another page, the "Daily Mail" took quite a lot of interest in the matter, and I'd venture to say that many of its readers would say when they saw Mr. Dagwell's letter, "Some hopes of getting a reply to that one." Those who did wouldn't know of this fraternity of ours.

=====

"Annual" Progress. Since I last wrote you I've received Eric Payne's contribution, The Populer "Populer". Close on its heels came Bill Gender's "Rookwood Review". You know what these two stalwarts can do, so it's really unnecessary to say their articles are just the thing.

Then Jack Wood weighed in with "How They Arrived", worthily carrying on from where Bob Blythe left off last year. Bob, unfortunately, is still ill, and at his request Jack took over. The result is that between them you will have the most complete history of St. Franks ever attempted.

Jack is now busy on a record of the St. Franks "Holiday" series. Lee fans will have something to ponder over in the Annual, I assure you.

And by the same mail as brought Jack Wood's packet, there came from Peard Sutherland several crisp, informative biographies for the "Artists' Who's Who" feature.

I feel confident now we shall carry out our slogan "As good if not better than last year's."

Have you ordered your copy yet?

There's just one thing. I'm a little worried about adverts. So far we haven't got many, and they're really necessary. You get a free one in the "Who's Who" if you wish,

but don't let that stop you sending one along at 2d word. It's in a good cause.

=====

The Leeds Exhibition. This big event draws near, September 25th being the opening day. We may require some "caretakers" just to keep an eye on things, so we should be grateful if any of the local members who could give a hand would get in touch with Bill Sawyer.

=====

Another Favourite Author has Passed on. Talking of press cuttings, you will see another one, sent to me by Herbert Smith (who apologises for not sending it earlier) concerning the death of still another of our boyhood favourites. David Harry Parry was, of course, also Morton Pike, well remembered for his thrilling Robin Hood serials in the "Boys' Friend" and "Boys' Herald". Each time we hear of the passing of an old time author we feel we have lost a beloved friend.

=====

Happy Journey. I have just had a 'phone chat with Harry Dowler, and he has told me about ten delightful days spent in London. He met among others Dick Whorwell, Len Packman, and Tom Strype. He spent happy evenings at the homes of Jimmy Stewart Hunter, Frank Pettingell, and Charlie Wright. There was one very interesting incident, for it came out that Harry and Frank Pettingell had gone to the same school. Although there's only about a year between them they had been quite unaware of it.

There have been a great many of these "collector meets collector" events during the month. The news of them brings a feeling of great satisfaction to

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT LECKENBY.

P.S. I trust before I write this column again I, too, shall have travelled through many of the streets of London town, something I have been looking forward to ever since I said good-bye at Euston just upon a year ago.

WANTED: Union Jacks (in good condition), issues during years 1920-1924 inclusive. Josephine Packman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR ANNUAL YET?

"JACK OF ALL TRADES"

Author, Frank Richards. Published by Mandeville.

As a juvenile publication this book should prove to be a "best seller". The story - presumably the first of a series - concerning the adventures of "Jack Nobody" contains that skilful blending of ingredients such as only Frank Richards can supply. I must, however, confess to feeling a keen disappointment on finding the end is not complete, thus making the book to all intents and purposes part one of a serial.

I can certainly visualise boys and girls emulating Oliver Twist by "asking for more", and it is to be sincerely hoped that this will be forthcoming.

LEONARD PACKMAN.

POPULAR PAPERS OF THE PAST

No.10. NUGGETS. May 7th, 1892 to March 10th, 1906

by John Medcraft

For 20 years the publishing firm of James Henderson & Son had successfully catered for Victorian boys and girls with that grand story paper "Young Folks' Budget", but by 1891 the paper began to lose its appeal and editorial policy deemed a change necessary. There is evidence that this change was hurried, for the Giantland reprints which had been running since Vol.34 were terminated abruptly in Vol.38 and the last of the series, "The Golden Pheasant", was condensed into a couple of chapters. From Vol.39, when the paper was renamed "Old and Young", onwards to the end at Vol.49, its character became gradually more adult and youthful interest waned.

But not for long were the youthful Henderson's readers left without a paper of their own, for on May 7th, 1892, "Nuggets" was launched to fill the breach and soon became an established favourite. It first appeared as "Comic Pictorial Nuggets", 16 quarto pages containing 13 pages of comic pictures plus a serial and complete stories, price one halfpenny. From No.30 the title was condensed into its well known form and the contents split into two sections of 16 pages each, "Story Nuggets" and "Pictorial Nuggets", grand value for a penny in both quality and quantity, and this format remained unchanged for 12 years.

In effect, "Story Nuggets" was a second edition of

"Young Folks", for in it were reprinted the best of the boys' serials with all the grand illustrations by John Proctor (Puck) and W. Boucher that had appeared originally years before in the older paper. These reprints predominated during the first eight years and really some within the province of "Young Folks" so it will be unnecessary to enumerate here more than a few outstanding titles. Pride of place must be given to the well remembered "Giantland" series together with "Jack the Valiant" and "Tor" by Roland Quiz (R.M.H. Quittenton) all of which reappeared with undiminished success in "Nuggets". The "Silver-spear" series by Walter Villiers (Walter Viles) and the many fine historical stories by Alfred R. Phillips, notably "Desdichado", "Thundersleigh", "Kairon" and "Ralpho" were all greeted rapturously by a new generation of Henderson's readers. Also reprinted were the fine classical stories of that eminent scholar, Charles A. Reede, "Odysseus" and "Achilles" with the original Heroic type of illustrations, but in "Jason" and "Hercules" new and far less suitable illustrations replaced the grand originals.

"Pictorial Nuggets" contained a proportion of comic drawings reprinted from the American papers, "Life", "Judge" and "Fun", but the majority were contributed by British humorous artists. The chief attraction in the comic section was Hooligen and the humorous fertility of this inventive Irishman and his family adorned the front page for many years. The artist, Charles Shaw Baker, was probably inspired by the Sloper family in the use of topical subjects as a basis for humour, but there the comparison ended. Hooligen's many ludicrous exploits ranged from adventuring forth in his own fashion during the Klondyke gold rush to running private fairs and exhibitions in his back garden, and his name brings a flood of happy memories to many of us.

Running concurrently with "Nuggets" for over six years was "Varieties" later renamed "The Garland", a companion paper with a similar reprint policy and in the same format, and with two papers pursuing the same course the flood of reprints from "Young Folks" and the "Weekly Budget" began to diminish. Inevitably and in reversal to the usual procedure amongst Victorian boys' papers, Hendersons began to introduce fresh stories by new authors and thus rejuvenated "Nuggets" before any apparent rot had set in. One of the first original stories to appear was the "Prince of Giantland", a belated sequel to "Giantland" by Roland Quiz and ably illustrated by W. Boucher.

To the older readers who remembered his many fine stories penned with youthful fire and zest over 25 years previously, the sequel was rather disappointing, but judged on its own merits I think it was quite good. For many years past Roland Quiz had been more concerned with editorial matters than authorship and, inevitably writing style changes, for better or worse, over a long period.

In 1900, "The Garland", after a creditable run of 325 numbers, fell by the wayside and "Nuggets" was left to carry on alone. Fresh stories were now coming along frequently and amongst the first were "In Forbidden Nepal", "Under the White Terror", "The Land of the Dragon" and "Amongst Freebooters and Redskins" by that grand writer W. Murray Graydon who could turn out adventure stories in infinite variety, anything except perhaps school stories. Another new Henderson author very similar to Graydon in ability and scope was John G. Rowe whose first of many fine stories was "Gentleman George", a tale of the Australian Mounted Police. Then came talented Derwent Miall whose first story, "The Pride of the Troop" told of daring deeds in the South African War then at its height. This was followed by "In the Days of Drake", a first class story set in one of the most adventurous periods of British history. Later the author of "The Wreck of the Grosvenor" and other epics of the sea, W. Clarke Russell, contributed "The Frozen Pirate" and "The Rival Pirates". Although a reprint, it is impossible to omit mention of "The Black Arrow" by famous Robert Louis Stevenson which reappeared in "Nuggets" at this stage.

No. 638, July 16th 1904, heralded a change in the format of "Nuggets", slight but significant for surely change was unnecessary in a paper of its standing and popularity. The segregation into Story and Pictorial sections was abandoned, instead the comic pictures were distributed throughout the 32 pages and story matter increased. In this number the first of Derwent Miall's many fine school stories commenced and I have vivid recollections of my first acquaintance with "The Fifth Form Rebels" and the Ship Aloft to which they retired in the rebellion against the school authorities. Then came "The Armordale College Mystery" which I rate was one of Derwent Miall's best. Armordale College, situated on a rocky coast and once the home, a century earlier, of impecunious Geoffrey Armordale, has a suspected but forgotten secret passage once used by smugglers with the connivance of the owner. Two parties, one inside and

the other outside the school, stumble upon the secret and liveliness ensues. The smugglers' hoard turns out to be ancient junk and a fall of the passage roof complicates matters further. Only Carteret and his friends are gainers in excitement and missed lessons. The ever fascinating theme of treasure hunting is again to the fore in a fine story by Weatherby Chesney entitled "Hidden Gold" and the scene is set in that traditional haunt of pirates, the Caribbean. Also running about this time was Edmund Mitchell's first story, "The Underground Temple; or, the Mysterious Caves of Yama" illustrated by Fritz Braun.

The familiar 32 page "Nuggets" ended at No.666, January 28th, 1905, and with the following number the format was changed to 24 pages of larger size, the comic pictures reduced and serial matter proportionately increased. The front page serial in No.667 was a grand school story by Derwent Miall entitled "Schoolboys Three" and tells of the adventures of Bohun, Hopwood and Bunter (yes, ye Hamilton addicts, yet another Bunter and in 1905) who start their school holidays with a walking tour but are forced by torrential rain to shelter in the nearby ruined castle. There they are besieged by the mortal enemies of the school, the town boys, and take refuge in the archer's room at the top of the old keep. Fierce battles ensue, equal in intensity if not in bloodshed to the many waged in the shadow of the castle in days of yore. For three days the town boys besiege their rivals and, just when the food position becomes acute, relief comes from an unexpected source and the three schoolboys resume their tour after an exciting interlude. Cresswell & Co. by the same author centres around the strange disappearance of the two hares during a paper chase and the normal routine of Redminster School is temporarily disorganised until the mystery of their absence is solved. Three reprints followed at this stage, the first being "The Hunted Man", a tale of adventure in the Andes by William Westall reprinted from "Young Folks" and next, Derwent Miall's "Wrecked in the Pacific" and the sequel, "The Cruise of the Ice Queen", both of which had previously appeared in the "Boys' Champion Story Paper". Two American Nick Carter stories followed, the first being "On the Track of the Counterfeiters" and the second "Weaving the Web", neither proved very popular and the experiment was not repeated. More to the liking of "Nuggets" readers was W. Murray Graydon's tale of Siberia, "The Chief of the Third Section" and a story of Spain in the grim days of the Inquisition entitled "The Spy of the Secret Three" both of which were reprinted in other Henderson papers. At this stage "Nuggets" underwent another and far more

drastic change and it was obvious that all was not well for, commencing with No.692, it became a comic paper of the orthodox type. No longer the familiar pale green paper with Hooligen performing on the front page greeted the startled purchaser of this number but a 16 pink paged comic paper. Once one got accustomed to the new format it wasn't so bad, for serials were up to the "Nuggets" standard, and the first of note was "The Brigands of the Black Car" by Derwent Miell, an original story of lawless enterprise in the early days of motoring. Two imported American serials came next, "Rafael the Rover" and "The Cavalier Corsair", both rousing stories of the Spanish Main and the Jolly Roger in its heyday. Then followed one of Derwent Miell's best stories, "The Secret of Galloping Jack's Cave" in which three bored schoolboys, holidaying with their respective parents in a dull Midland Spa town, seek distraction and excitement and discover both in good measure. A chance discovery leads to the solution of a 150 year old local mystery - the unaccountable disappearance of Galloping Jack the highwayman after negotiating a very successful business deal with the aid of pistols and persuasion. In their turn the boys are discovered by a gang of more modern outlaws who use the cave as a headquarters and narrowly escape sharing the fate of the highwaymen of old.

The last serial of note was "Our Sickle Club", a boisterously funny story of the misadventures of a boys' cycling club, which had previously appeared in "Comic Life" a few years earlier under the title of "The Waltham Wobblers". The author, R. Andom (A.W.Berrett), better known for his broadly humorous "Troddles" series, probably derived inspiration from Jerome K. Jerome's famous story "Three Men in a Boat", but of the two I greatly prefer the tonic qualities of R.Andom and the mirth provoking antics of Troddles and his friends.

"Nuggets" was now on the way out and in No.724 came the sad news that the old paper was finished and that subscribers were advised to buy No.1 of its successor, "Lot-o-Fun", in which all unfinished serials would be carried on. So after an unbroken run of 14 years ended "Nuggets", one of the finest papers of the Golden Age of boys' literature.

(Note.- I read this article with real enjoyment, for "Nuggets" was second only to the "Boys' Friend" in my boyhood. And I am sure even if you have never seen a copy of "Nuggets", you will like it too, for it will add to your knowledge of the golden age of boys' papers. - H.L.)

Nelson Lee Column

— Conducted by Robert Blythe —

(All communications temporarily to Leonard Packman,
27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22)

First of all I have some very good news for Lee-ites. I am sure that a number of you who are wanting many issues of all series will be pleased to hear that our good friend Bill Martin is in a position to help considerably. I was at his place a few days ago and saw about 1500 or so copies, the majority being in a very nice condition. As you know, Bill's prices are very reasonable and I advise you to "step in" straight away, and close some of those gaps in your collections.

Next month I hope to have some very interesting information pertaining to our paper and its main author, E.S. Brooks.

By the way, I shall probably "start something", but it is a fact when I say that, judging by my correspondence these past few weeks, the popularity of the good old "Nelly" will soon equal that of the Magnet.

Now to polish off some more titles of St. Frank's stories published in the Boys' Realm. Here they are:—
111, Rebels of the River; 112, The Battle of the Boats; 113, Scorned by their Rivals; 114, Rivals at the Regatta; 115, On Level Terms; 116, Champions of the River; 117, The Dartnell Mystery; 118, The Night of Adventure; 119, The Boy from the East; 120, The Mystery of the Jewelled Sword; 121, His Chums Against Him; 122, The Hindu's Triumph; 123, Dick Desmond's Disgrace; 124, The Split in the Remove; 125, His Chum to the End; 126, Sacked from St. Frank's; 127, The Mystery of the Porter's Lodge; 128, Detective Handforth; 129, Hoodwinking the School; 130, The Triumph of Nipper & Co; 131, The Motor-Scooterists; 132, The New Games-Master; 133, Cheated of Victory.

And finally, the usual basin of Nelson Lee (O.S.) titles.
511, The Siege of Most Hollow; 512, Freed from Bondage; 513, Fooling the School; 514, Archie's Easter Picnic; 515 The Return of Nelson Lee and Nipper; 516, Fenton's Cricket Sensation; 517, The St. Frank's Test Match; 518, Playing for the First; 519, Out for their Colours; 520, The Three Substitutes; 521, Buried Alive; 522, "Wembling" at Wembley; 523, The Scouts

of St. Frank's; 524, The "Tiger" Patrol; 525, the Spectre of the Sea; 526, The Lost Patrol; 527, The Lighthouse Scouts; 528, Saved from the Sea; 529, Adventure Bound; 530, The Wanderer's Quest; 531, The Isle of Coral; 532, The Pearl Hunters; 533, The Secret of the Lagoon; 534, Beset by Cannibals; 535, The Demon of the Reef; 536, The Terror of the Pacific; 537, The New Houses at St. Frank's; 538, The Rival House Captains; 539, The Prisoner of the Priory; 540, Fullwood's Uphill Fight; 541, His Cousin's Dishonour; 542, The Schoolboy Magician; 543, The Mystery of Study 20; 544, The 13 Club; 545, The Unknown Hend; 546, The Haunted Form-room; 547, The Celler of Secrets; 548, The Schoolboy Conspirators; 549, The Broken Spell; 550, The Uninvited Guests.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

Modern School Meeting July 30th, 1950.

Previous meetings at the sanctum of that keen Hamiltonian Eric Fayne have always been marked with success, and the latest to date was no exception. A jolly party of 23 enthusiasts comprising of Eric Fayne (Host), Len & Jösie Packman & R.&M. Deacon, Charlie and Olive Wright, Bob Mortimer and daughter, Mr. Lewson, Bernard Prime, Roger Southwood, Cliff Wallis, Tony Blunden, Ien Whitmore, Vincent Page, E. Reynolds, Mr. Stewart, John Geel, Mr. Willett, Hilton Flatman, Roger Jenkins, and Bob Whiter, set down soon after five o'clock to a jolly feed reminiscent of one of the feeds in the Remove Rag. The meeting opened after everyone had satisfied the inner man, and after signing the reading of the minutes, our worthy chairman thanked our host for the very fine welcome thus received. It was then agreed to postpone the discussion on the merits of the various papers until the August meeting. Quite a lengthy but interesting sheaf of correspondence was then read out, followed by a distribution of copies of "Feathered Friends" containing the brief write-up on the club. A few copies are still available; collectors requiring some are asked to get in touch with the Secretary. The Chairmen then spoke on the difficulty of obtaining duplicates of the popular periodicals and stressed the value of the C.D. as an advertising medium, ending with a brief summary of the collection to be advertised in the August C.D. belonging to Mr. Hinton, son of the once famous Editor of the

Magnet, Pluck, etc. etc. Mr. Lockenby then had his usual chat with some of the collectors, Herbert telephoning, of course, from York. September 17th was then fixed for the Hove meeting, at the home of our old friend Robby, making this our annual club day out. Members wishing to participate should get in touch with the chairman, allowing him to obtain the necessary voucher. The next meeting was then decided upon, the date being August 27th, the venue being Hume House, East Dulwich. Members may arrive any time after 3.30.

The letter quiz, code word being the Gem, was won by Bob Whiter with 7 points, Len Packmen coming second with 5, Eric Feyne, Charlie Wright, Tony Blunden, C. Wellis and Ian Whitmore getting 4 each. Second quiz was sponsored by Eric Feyne, our worthy host asking 20 questions on the Magnet and Gem lore, Bob Whiter coming first with 12½ points, Charlie Wright, John Geal, Ian Whitmore and Tony Blunden coming next, all with eight points. With this result came the donning of hats and coats; thus ended a very jolly meeting - Excelsior.

ROBERT H. WHITER

(Acting Secretary)

WANTED: Marvel (1d) No.393. Boys' Friend Libraries (1st Series) No's 1, 2, 76, 109, 119, 122, 130, 142, 154, 159, 169, 182, 184, 188, 196, 203, 208, 225, 245, 293, 395, 595. Also Cheer Boys Cheer. 1d. Weekly, all numbers. E. Blight, "Sandhills", Constantine Bay, St. Merryn, Cornwall.

WANTED: Magnets, Nelson Lee's and Union Jacks. Any year or numbers. Just started collecting. George Ramsbottom, 15 Ash Street, Fleetwood, Lancs.

FOR SALE: 10 Magnets dates between 1925 to 1929 13/- the Lot! Five Vols. Captains Nos.1, 16, 25, 26, 34, 5/9 each! Chums Vol.13, 5/- . Two Greyfriars Holiday Annuals 1921, 1929, 10/6 each. All above Post Free! Wm. Jameson, Lisnacree, Co. Down, N. Ireland.

WANTED: Fantasy fiction in old boys' books and otherwise. Will exchange. Henry J. H. Bertlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

WANTED URGENTLY: Gems No's 819 and 946. Josephine Packmen, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.12.

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR ANNUAL YET?

Flashback

COULD any reader of *The Boys' Leader*, now 40 years defunct, inform me what happened to Koppalonga, the Australian Aborigine? I missed the ending as a juvenile punishment, and have a recurrent but insatiable curiosity.

F. S. Dagwell, B.A., L.C.P.
(Headmaster)
School House, Selborne,
Hampshire.

Daily Eastern Press

LITTERATEUR
AND ARTIST

The Late D. H. Parry: An Appreciation

Mr. Cecil Henry Bullivant, of Minehead, has sent the following appreciation of Mr. David Harry Parry, whose death at his Overstrand home at the age of 82 was reported in our issue of January 21st.—

I met him first as an editor newly joined to the growing staff of the already famous *Admiral*. Harmsworth, later the more renowned Lord Northcliffe. Parry's feet were even then set on the rungs of the ladder to literary fame. Of a long and distinguished line of painters—his father and uncle were both well-known artists of the Manchester School—D.H.P. had studied in London under Calderon and Julian and later in Paris. To the last painting was his great love.

But fate, in the form of his early friend Max Pemberton, drew him into the paths of popular literature; he was the very man we needed at *Camelot* House for boys' stories and historical novels, and for close on 40 years a steady stream of columns flowed from

Koppalonga is still To be continued

NEARLY half a century ago a schoolboy, Frank Dagwell, followed with avid interest the career of Koppalonga, Australian aborigine, whose health-taking adventures were recounted weekly in *The Boys' Leader*.

Young Dagwell committed a boyish prank which resulted in the direct penalty he could imagine—the banning of the *Boys' Leader* and the disappearance from his life of Koppalonga.

At intervals throughout his school days, college days and university life, young Dagwell wondered what mystery was hidden by the last tantalising words he had read. To be continued next Tuesday.

That was on March 15, 1904. More than 2,400 Tuesdays passed, and still Koppalonga's admirer wondered

COLLECTION

Mr. F. S. Dagwell, now a headmaster of Selborne, Hampshire, wrote last Thursday to *The Daily Mail* asking any reader's help. Mr. Arthur Harris of Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno, invited inspection of his collection of 2,000 "comics" which date back to 1873. Headmaster Dagwell, who had already planned a holiday in Llandudno yesterday, pored over the old *Boys' Leaders*.

He came to the last copy possessed by Mr. Harris. Koppalonga was pre-arranged to raise his

Koppalonga lives on In last story

MR. Fred Dagwell, of Selborne, Hampshire, who wrote to *The Daily Mail* asking readers to help him trace the final instalment of Koppalonga, the Australian aborigine, whose adventures were described weekly in the *Boys' Leader*, now knows, after 46 years, what happened to his hero in the final instalment.

But the author Donovan Martin is tantalisingly vague about the fate of his hero. In the issue dated March 22, 1904, he concludes: "I do not know the present whereabouts of Koppalonga. But he should be alive for this tough old savage is hard to kill."

London Evening News
14-7-50

But No Swell of St. Jim's at Lord's

By GWEN ROBYNS

IT was sisters' day at Lord's cricket ground to-day when Eton and Harrow opened their first day of play in the annual match.

There were big sisters, little sisters, and pig-tailed sisters—

the Napoleonic wars—a man that he was definitely of the opinion that he was the greatest living authority on Napoleon and his campaigns. As a literary artist I should place Fanny well to the forefront with such masters of the romantic as Talbot Baines Reade, George Manville Fenn and G. A. Henty.

Norfolk he always referred to as "his spiritual home." From the quiet seclusion of Ben Gunn's humble cottage on Instead Staithe by Barton Broad, he turned out some of his best romances and historical novels, the latter published in book form mostly by Messrs. Cassell & Co. His history of "The Victoria Cross" is a well-known classic.

A short sojourn in Essex, his pen still as virile and telling as ever (in seven years he wrote over two million words on the subject of Robin Hood) and his steps and heart turned once more to the Norfolk countryside he loved and painted so well. This period saw the production of his great pictorial work—which occupied him to the end—on the "History and Costumes of the Regiments of the British Army." Soldiering was in his blood, his great ambition to serve in both wars being denied him by a leg injury in early days; but his love and attention to "matters military" never deserted him.

Now the full life in which his pleasing personality and modest charm which endeared him to so many has come to its natural close, he rests quite near to his beloved Garden of Sleep, where the red poppies grow and always with him will be that soft surge of the grey North Sea to which he so often referred as "sweet music to my ears."

He will be long remembered.

Bob Cherry for England

A Slip in a Liverpool Newspaper!!

ROBERTS RETURNS

Mr. C. W. Roberts, who has been in the news for some time, has just returned from a tour of the world. He is now in the city and is expected to be in the city for some time.

Tuesday"

Mr. Harris, enthusiasm also aroused, has written to friends who collect old magazines and feels sure he will track down the final fate of Koppalaona.

News Chronicle

Baldwin's visit

Mr. Baldwin visited Vachell here when he was Prime Minister, and was told that while he might be head of the nation outside, he must remember when he was in Mr Vachell's house that he was his junior at Harrow. Baldwin loved that.

When we got on to the other old writers still alive I suggested it would be a grand thing if he invited some of them to dinner at Widcombe Manor while the Bath Assembly is on.

Here are the guests I proposed with their ages: Shaw 94, Eden Phillpotts 89, H. de Vere Stacpoole 86, Robert Michens 86, Gilbert Murray 84, W. Riley—"Windyrivage"—84, Norman Douglas 82, Algernon Blackwood 81, Belloc 80, Max Beerbohm 78, Bertrand Russell 78, de la Mare 77, Somerset Maugham 76, E. C. Bentley 75 and last but not least, Charles Hamilton, the creator of Billy Smart, 74.

Average—82

Their combined ages are 1,225 years, an average of 82. Where in the world would you find a table like that?

STARBUCKE SIGN

Envy of all the girls was pieced by Evadne Gibbs, who was escorted by two tall dashing brothers, Michael and Peter. When I questioned their choice of a red carnation in their buttonhole, instead of Eton's light blue, they replied: "We don't go for that school colourful thing."

I was glad that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "the swell of St. Jim's," was not present. He would have been shocked at the sartorial sights. Though a few of the young men were in frock coats and topers the majority chose tweeds and stetsons.

Strangest sight was an incredibly tall father with the smallest son manfully promenading at his side and swinging a large umbrella in time with his father.

Sport

23-6-50

Prefects Strike

THE match, incidentally, was responsible for creating what must be, I'm sure, a record of an entirely new kind. It indirectly caused a strike of school prefects, an event which has not happened since Harry Wharton and co. held us spellbound at Greyfriars.

This was the way of it. Peter Stansfield, who is 18 and still at school, was selected to play for Burnley in this match. This, of course, is a regular occurrence, but as the match was played on a Tuesday, it was a case of lacrosse versus cricket, and cricket won.

Disaffection had been taken by Peter's headmaster, and Peter was "demoted" from his preferential position, along with some other boys. As a result, the rest of the prefects handed in their badges of office and said they were unwilling to continue their duties!

Hamiltonia

Conducted by Herbert Leckenby

A few weeks ago a loyal Gem fan wrote to me with a proposal. Here it is in his own words: "I think the C.D. should go ahead with a genuine, dignified "fund" for a suitable presentation to Frank Richards, just to show our appreciation by something really tangible."

Well, the C.D. would be delighted to sponsor such a happy idea and I promptly got in touch with the London Club, the Northern section and others. Everyone was in favour, but it was felt that nothing could be done without first getting Mr. Richards' consent, so I wrote to him. You will see his reply in the correspondence columns. Whilst feeling disappointed, I am sure all his admirers will appreciate his reasons for asking us not to, and the nice way he puts them.

I thought it best to make the matter clear through the columns of the C.D., for this is by no means the first time such a suggestion has been raised. Anyway, we know that if we still derive pleasure in the stories he has written for half a century, it brings happiness to him, too, and that is all he asks for in his years beyond the allotted span. May those years be many yet.

+ + + +

"Through England with the Famous Five" in last month's issue has brought James Welsh many pets on the back. It got right home. More please, J.W.

+ + + +

Now here's a tribute to the "Gem". In sending it, Mr. Harris suggests it should be the first of a series. It's a good idea. His appears, appropriately, in the Hamilton section, but don't let the Hamiltonians have it all their own way, those of you who have other ideas. A Lee-ite should get to work. And those who have fond memories of schooldays linked with the Boys' Friend, the Marvel, Bullseye, Boys of England, Boys' Standard, and, yes, the Hotspur if you like.

+ + + +

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR ANNUAL YET?

MY FAVOURITE - AND WHY?The Mighty "Gem"by A.K.Harris (Worcester)

Like so many parents of the early George V era, my father (a great intellect) was definitely allergic to anything in the nature of "trash" reading and the horror of the "penny blood" epoch. So much so, indeed, that when "The Gem" was first introduced to me by a schoolboy chum, I feared the worst - and met it! Certainly a good deal of persuasion and argument was needed to assure Dad of the finer qualities of "Martin Clifford's" style!

The objections of our fathers, let it be admitted, were not entirely without foundation - any more than are the fears of present-day parents! For I must confess that I can, even now, well remember eagerly scanning through copies of my elder brother's issues of the "Union Jack", fascinated by the vividly life-like illustrations, and waking suddenly in the night, screaming from the effects of a nightmare, stimulated by such excitement, enjoyed on the eve of going to bed!

Small wonder, therefore, that, like the unfortunate dog with a bad name, "The Gem" was instantly classed among the schoolboys' "trash" literature of that day!

However, like the cream in the milk bottle that always comes to the top, the delightful yarns of the clean honest-to-goodness life at St. Jim's, soon buoyantly floated with comparative ease o'er the parental storm! Perhaps, by the way, that's why "The Magnet" - which was clothed in a somewhat sinister-looking rusty-coloured jacket in those days, and carried "sketchier" types of illustrations, and (forgive me!) slangier expressions attributed to its "characters" - to my somewhat biased and sensitive outlook, did not appeal to me like "The Gem" - and does not even in these more mature days!

Dear old Charles Hamilton is ever faithful to his Rookwood crowd - but, deep down within his honest, gallant heart, St. Jim's, I vow, is written boldly with deep affection.

As the youthful years went by, so I continued to enjoy "The Gem"; and even had a number bound; but, so fickle is youth, I parted company with them as I "put away childish things" - only to realise too late (through the aid of a child of mine own) the utter folly of such parting!

My daughter revelled with me in the joyous exploits of

"Tom Merry & Co" which we bought - even developing a similar dislike to mine for "The Magnet"! - and so the years went by.

During the second world war, with "The Gem" defunct and a distant memory only - we both yearned for the real literature of our youth. Thus it was that we searched afresh for copies, and so "re clothed us in a more rightful mind", as it were, during those dark, soul-destroying war days of 1944.

"Greyfriars Herald" ($\frac{1}{2}$ d); "Nelson Lee Library", "Chips" or "Rainbow", are also affectionate memories of those late school and early work-days - but the real, lasting favourite has always been my "first love" - the "Gem".

Thank you, most sincerely, Mr. Hamilton!

And now, Bernard Prime, member of the London Old Boys' Book Club, makes his bow in our columns. He's made a good choice for his first article.

PAUL PONTIFEX PROUT

by Bernard W. Prime

Surely, all readers must love, enjoy, and chuckle over this great creation of Mr. Charles Hamilton's. It may be because I am an adult, but I think it is safe to say that this entertaining, pompous, slow, and talkative man is my favourite on the great Greyfriars stage. No doubt such a man would be a bore to most of us in real life, but it is perhaps interesting to note that the late Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who occasionally had the knack of hitting the nail on the head in his observations on things, once remarked that the very people we rush away from in real life are the very people we rush to in fiction. It is profoundly true.

Paul Pontifex Prout is indeed a Magnet "masterpiece". Some of us have probably seen (and heard) his counterpart in real life, though the portly person we have seen and heard probably in nowise approached the Fifth-Form Master in girth, weight, and booming voice, not to mention "fruitiness" of countenance! It is interesting to note, too, that certain qualities he shares with Bunter - i.e. physical qualities.

I do not remember a single holiday series in which the Famous Five came across him, as they did sometimes Horace Coker. I must admit I sincerely regret this! After all, one could

always rely on Horace Coker to give a kind of fillip to the situation, so why not Prout, too, who, in my opinion, easily ranks with Coker as a comic character. Perhaps the juvenile readers might have thought it was just too bad for a "Beak" to show up in the "hols", but after all, was Prout quite like the other "beaks?"

Nothing is better, or more "refreshing" and entertaining than the sort of dialogues we are treated to from time to time in the Magnet, between Coker and his Form-Master. Indeed, where else in all light fiction can we be so vastly entertained! It must have been great fun to write about Prout besides the fun of the "fan" in reading about him.

Then, too, he was a kind-hearted man, our beloved author impresses upon us. And he believed, too, in having those little heart-to-heart talks with boys! As regards his shooting days, I, for one always feel that those thrilling days of his in the Rockies were simply the result of several particularly heavy suppers, and - as sometimes can happen - he had the same dream several times in succession.

Certainly, we can imagine his appetite as being big! And he was not the man to tell deliberate falsehoods as was Bunter. However, there was nothing at all imaginary about his famous Winchester Repeater!

There was nothing unpleasant about Prout. True, he was no success as Headmaster on the unfortunate occasion when the good Doctor was in hospital owing to a motoring accident, but he certainly made a better job of it, I think, than Hecker did a few years later.

He reminds us, too, at times, of Dickens' immortal Mr. Samuel Pickwick. Both wore glasses. Both were fat. Both were essentially kind-hearted men, and both were slow on the uptake!

In conclusion might I dare to hope that this little contribution of mine will give pleasure to C.D. readers and to Prout-lovers generally who, I hope will feel as I do:-

"Long live Prout!

And may he long reign at Greyfriars!"

Magnet Titles crowded out, sorry. Ed.

Have you ordered your C.D. Annual yet?

Letter Box

Frank Richards' Regrets -
You'll Understand, Won't you?

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

August 9th, 1950.

Very many thanks for your letter of the 2nd, and for the extremely flattering proposition contained therein. It is so very flattering that I have taken time to ponder before replying like Mr. Molotoff!

Do please understand, and let all my kind friends have no doubt, that I appreciate this very deeply and sincerely, and that I would not for any consideration like to appear ungracious or ungrateful. It is a real pleasure to me to know that so many kind friends think of me so kindly. When they tell me that they like reading my books, it makes me very happy: for it is very much to one who has so far exceeded the Psalmist's allotted span, to feel that he is still of some use in the world. But I don't think that I ought, or could, accept anything in the nature of a presentation. I should prefer to take the will for the deed: and while thanking all concerned most sincerely, I am content with their kind thoughts and good wishes.

Always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

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It Touched the Spot

Reby Cottage,

Reby Park, Neston,

Wirral, Cheshire.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

August 5, 1950.

This August edition of C.D. is one I shall prize greatly, for it contains an article by member James Welsh which I think is the best of all the contributions so far, and that's saying a lot, for all of them are most interesting. I must say (and I am not ashamed to say it) it brought a lump into my throat as I read the closing paragraph - so beautifully worded and full of genuine and sincere appreciation of those happy bygone days. I wonder if you could print this little appreciation of mine in a later issue, for I feel that such a

writer should be congratulated on his fine effort. I know there will be many more congratulatory letters other than mine, but I want the author to know that at least one member thought very highly of his article and the sentiments expressed within it.

Thanks a lot, Mr. Walsh, for your memories of the past so beautifully expressed in words. This, indeed, is a genuine and sincere tribute to our beloved master of schoolboy stories.

Cheerio, Yours sincerely,

T. A. JOHNSON.

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Here's an Idea! All in Favour, Please Report.

63 Thoresby Street, Hull.

July 23rd, 1950.

Dear Editor,

When I first took the C.D. my Magnet collection was nil -- now it stands at just over 900. In mentioning this I might suggest a novel feature to you to incorporate in the C.D. -- a sort of league table of collectors. "Magnets", "Gems", "Sexton Blakes" and so forth. The collector holding the most "Magnets" would be at the head of the "Magnet" table and so on downwards. It would be interesting to see where one stood in relation to other collectors. It would also add a bit of "spice" to the collecting. No? Anyway, some day you might be at a loose end for a novel feature and can bear it in mind.

Very sincerely yours

LESLIE BRANTON.

WANTED: About 150 Nos. "Hotspur" between No.5 and 212 and 375. Sixpence each paid or Exchange. D.Mc-Greevy, 13 Edward St., Lurgan, Co.Armagh, N.Ireland.

OFFERS INVITED FOR: S.O.L's - 286, 322, 323, 325, 328, 334, 376, 406. B.F.L's - 649 "The Green Triangle", 656 "The Return of Zingruve", 657 "The Wonder Craft"; Chums Annual 1937/38. J.Hepburn, 1 Sixth Ave., Blyth, Northumberland.

SALE OR EXCHANGE: Boys Friend (2nd Ser). Nos.497, 513, 657, 626, 702 1/- each. Nos.624, 632, 654, 663 (bound) 5/-.

WANTED: Nelson Lees 452, 453, Captains 9.30. L.M.Allen, 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield 7.

FOR SALE: 112 Det.Weeklies Nos.23 - 139. Only 5 copies missing to complete run. 2 Greyfriars Holiday Annuals.1925-26. 2 Chums Ann.1938-39.Offers. C.Baker, 7, Marine Terrace, Waterloo, Caernarvon.

BLAKIANA. presents:-

BLAKE THROUGH THE YEARS.

Part 1. The Victorian Era.

by Walter Webb.

Note: Part 1 describes the gradual rise to popularity of the great detective, his most notable cases, and pen pictures of the men, both authors and editors, who were responsible in those far off days in making him the popular character he has become.

NOT at first in the pages of the "Union Jack" did Sexton Blake hold complete sway; he had to share the limelight with other heroes, and his authors to take their turn amongst the creators of those heroes, each of whom desired, and fought for, a share of the very crowded stage. Stern opposition confronted Blake in those days, for he found himself pitted against established favourites such as Buffalo Bill, Dick Turpin, Robin Hood and others. Nelson Lee, with whom he was in later years to work occasionally in double harness, was a rival who figured in some very well written stories, and might easily have become a serious contestant to Blake's place in the "U.J.". Harry Blythe began the Blake stories; a fine writer who, unfortunately died when the "U.J." was in its infancy. He was responsible for the first Blake story which appeared in No. 2 of that paper. A most interesting statement appeared in the editorial columns of a 1904 issue (No. 39). In a special message to his readers in Scotland the then editor stated that he thought they might be interested to know that the first editor of the U.J. was the distinguished Mr. R. M. Ballantyne. Whether this be true or not the latter's stay in office was of very brief duration for in 1895, one year later, the paper was in the capable hands of Ernest Goddard, brother of the better known Norman Goddard who, of course, was better known still as "Mark Darran".

AS those hands were to be responsible for the shaping of Blake's destiny, Ernest Goddard deserves more than just a brief mention here. Were it possible to see back into those early days and pay a visit to 24, Tudor Street, in which thoroughfare the U.J. offices were situated, one might have seen Goddard, otherwise "The Skipper", preparing one of his weekly editorial pages, which he headed "From The Quarter Deck". Of medium height, with dark curly hair, he was both handsome and studious in appearance, and possessed of a kindly and welcoming manner, would often offer helpful suggestions to his contributors regarding the kind of yarns he wished to receive from them for his paper. Some of the popular authors Goddard had writing for him then included S. Clarke Hook, Alec G. Pearson, Henry St. John Cooper, Paul Herring, Sidney Drev, Herbert Lomax, Arthur S. Hardy, Maxwell Scott, Ernest Treeton, John G. Rowe, Charles Hamilton and several others of whom mention will be made later. Eleven good men and true! The veterans of a team nicely blended with youth and experience being S. Clarke Hook and Alec G. Pearson both of whom were even then writing at a ripe old age. All but two members of this eleven were destined to become occasional Blake writers, the exceptions being Charles and Hamilton and John G. Rowe, the two youngest "players", who might aptly be described as the "colts".

THAT Mr. Rowe was not commissioned to write of Blake seems surprising, for he could turn out a good 'tec yarn and was amongst the best writers of the day; whilst in the case of Charles Hamilton, despite the fact that he was then unrecognisable as the author he is to-day, could, in spite of his immaturity, have turned out a quite useful Blake story instead of the piracy at sea type which seemed to be his favourite theme in those days. If it occasions surprise that I include S. Clarke Hook as a Blake writer this is because of a certainty that I recognise his style in some of the Blake stories of a little later period. Upon reflection it would seem surprising, indeed, for a writer of Mr. Hook's tremendous output not to have turned out, at some time or other, a yarn featuring the great character. Before taking leave of Clarke Hook, and at the risk of being accused of wandering from my subject, I would like to record an interesting little incident in which the author figured,

and in which Ernest Goddard was also connected. On one occasion when the author submitted to the latter a story for publication in the U.J. Ernest, after reading it, rejected it as unsuitable for insertion in his paper, and this so greatly offended the veteran author that he refused to contribute further stories, and Ernest Goddard was faced with the disconcerting knowledge that he was about to lose one of his most popular and prolific contributors. Diplomacy was needed here, and, fortunately, in this art Goddard was a pastmaster. It meant taking humble pie, but, like a true gentleman Ernest ate it and asked the author if he would again write for his paper. It was pleasant news to him when Clarke Hook readily agreed to do so. In fairness to the editor, however, it must be recorded that some of his stories in the U.J. were slipshod efforts and hardly deserved insertion in the paper. Nor was Clarke Hook alone in this respect.

BUT to get back to matters more closely connected with Blake. Two authors I have not included in the eleven were Norman Goddard and Patrick Morris, both young men and chroniclers of Blake's exploits, and, in the case of the former, a very prolific one, for he came to specialise on the character. Norman did not resemble his brother at all. He was fairer and taller and lacked Ernest's good looks; but while Norman excelled as a writer Ernest had nothing on his brother, for if competent to do so, did no story writing. It would be an injustice perhaps to describe Norman as an "aggressive" type, maybe an exaggeration to say he was "impulsive", yet there were times when his attitude towards Hamilton Edwards, editor of "The Boy's Friend" was quite antagonistic. It has been said that, on his own admission, Norman Goddard actually came to blows with Edwards on one occasion, the result of which encounter is not known, and must be a matter for conjecture only. But again I am wandering from the main issue so will turn the spotlight on that practically unknown author Patrick Morris. It was early in the year 1895 when the Editor of "Chips" and "Comic Cuts", a gentleman named Gentle, commenced in the former comic paper a Sexton Blake serial entitled "The Lamp Of Death". The author was the then 23 year old Morris, and, as his name implies, he was an Irishman. But he was something more than that, for his name

concealed the identity of an Irish Peer, William Geoffrey Bouchard de Montmorency, whose title was Viscount Mount Morris.

Viscount Mount Morris, or Patrick Morris, as we will continue to call him since under his pen name he is better known was an extensive traveller in his younger days. He saw life in America, the West Indies, Egypt, Morocco, the Sahara, Asia Minor and also covered some 10,000 miles in West and Central Africa and the Congo Free State. At the time of the Kingston earthquake in 1907 he was acting as Hon. Aide-de-camp to the Governor of Jamaica and received the thanks of the Jamaican Govt for the services he rendered during that catastrophe. At the outbreak of World War I he became assistant curate of All Saints in Ryde, I.O.W, and at this point gave up writing in order to devote his entire attention to the Church. In 1935 he was Rector Of Wokingham, a post he held but briefly for, on 2nd December 1936 he passed on. Born on 23rd September 1872 Morris died at the age of 64.

One of the best Blake stories written in the Victorian period was "Shadows and Haunted" which ran in the U.J. as a serial in 1896. So proud was he to publish this in his paper that Ernest Goddard invited his readers to turn amateur detectives and try their hands at solving the mystery of the death of one of the central characters in the plot. "Read this story and see if you can discover Hosbach's murderer", wrote Ernest Goddard after an early instalment and nothing loth quite a few enthusiastic readers wrote in giving their versions of how the crime was committed, and who, in their opinions did the foul deed. When a reader from Stourbridge wrote asking whether he was anywhere near the mark, Goddard replied through the columns of his page "From the Quarter Deck" that he was pleased to say he was not. Pleased because his reader's failure proved that the plot of "Shadows and Haunted" was no ordinary one. One of the most ambitious Blake stories of the period it got away to a brisk and thrilling start. When an analyst named Hosbach is found murdered at the establishment of Chadley House, Blake receives an anonymous offer of Five Hundred Pounds to track down the assassin. Suspicion falls on a young engineer, Dick Harmony, whom Blake has known since boyhood, and who was in Chadley House on the night of the crime with his sweetheart, Jenny Stopfast, the proprietor's daughter. Blake is also asked to try and track down the perpetrators of a daring jewel robbery

and follow up the clue of a white glove left behind by one of the thieves. On information supplied by an ex-convict, Blake trails a noted jewel thief, Captain Jim Mortimer, to a small hotel. Blake recovers the jewels but fails in his attempt to capture Mortimer. Contriving to wriggle out of one ticklish situation after another, he defies all the efforts of Captain Jim and his gang to kill him. The detective finds himself engaged on the two-fold task of keeping Dick Harmony, of whose innocence he is convinced, out of the clutches of the police, and of seizing Captain Jim and bringing him to justice. When Blake arrives at a residence called Dauntsey House, in Wiltshire in order to foil Mortimer's attempts to lift some very valuable pictures, the normal peacefulness of the place is disturbed when one again detective and crook come into conflict. Blake's difficulties are increased when Stephen Drew, a private 'tec like himself arrives at the house to arrest Harmony whom whom he (Blake) has secreted in the cellars of the building. But he foils both parties' attempts to get the upper hand and we then move back to London where good fortune leaves him temporarily. He falls foul of Mortimer and is taken to a house in Westminster where he finds himself in a terrifying position. He is gagged, bound and placed on a contrivance Mortimer calls a rending machine. This comprised a tank (in which Blake was placed) with, above it, arranged in an angular line, a series of knives which could be set revolving when necessary. Faced with a horrible death Blake contrives to keep his nerve even when Harmony is brought in and similarly treated. Blake's career would have ended rather abruptly there and then had not Dick's bonds were not secure and they were able to escape. Follows many thrilling incidents as Blake, risking his life time and time again, tries to bring Mortimer to justice. We see Blake threatened by drowning, fire, and a bomb by which he was nearly blown sky high. But at the end he does get his man and it is hardly surprising when he denounces Mortimer as the murderer of Hesbach. Captain Jim, who, in his younger days was known as Sir. James Mortimer Kloudersby, a baronet, ran through a fortune and was finally compelled to live on his wits. He conceived a scheme to make him master of millions. He planned to forge Bank of England notes. He found a man to make the necessary machinery to make the paper and another to create the water mark. He had a varied band of scoundrels in his "gang"

some of whom proved very useful technically. Then Hesbach was one day visited by his brother Anthony who persuaded him not to continue association with Lortinger who was murdered by the latter who had overheard the conversation. Anthony was told to leave the country or suffer a similar fate, which he did with alacrity. The author writes of Blake's summing up of the case very well. I do not know his name though, I regret to say.

We now move the spotlight back to other authors of Blake stories of that period, and consider some of the others who, very probably helped, anonymously, and under pseudonyms to chronicle his adventures. First then let us consider Mr. G.J.B. Anderson who had a big output and contributed a lot to the U.J. "Pluck" and "Larvel". He died many years ago and was, I have discovered, an art photographer. His work appears under many pen-names. He was best known as Melton Lytle to the Harmsworth papers and it is quite likely that he wrote some Blake stories. This is only probable though. On the other hand Edgar Joyce Murray certainly did write of Blake. A graduate of Glasgow University, Murray wrote mostly as Sydney Drew. Above average height and well-built, he had a keen, humorous face. He believed in looking on the bright side of things. He loved his life and tried to make others do the same. His last story of Blake was in 1922 (in the U.J.) but another appeared in the S.B.L. under his name in 1932. Paul Herring was a charming man. He was librarian at Nottingham. He did not write so much about Blake but those stories he did contribute were good. He died before the outbreak of the 1914 war. As another of his early chroniclers Blake may point with pride to Henry St. John Cooper. One of the finest of all the Victorian writers it is likely that he caused some people a headache by his very untidy manuscripts. The material was excellent though. He was a relative of Gladys Cooper. He was also a member of a talented family for his father Henry Russell, composer of "Choir Boys, Choir" and others achieved fame when quite young and his son, William Clarke Russell was a famous writer of sea stories. Educated in France and this country he started out by being an artist. At 15 he took a studio in Richmond where he painted many sketches. But the literary germ was active in his veins and finally became predominant and resulted in his becoming sub-editor of a new boys paper called "Pleasure" two or three years later. The venture

had a short and unhappy existence owing to lack of capital. But young St. John bought illustrations from an agency that supplied drawings, or blacks, that had already seen service, after which from the pages agent he would select pictures and then write short stories around them. After several setbacks he joined Harnerworth and contributed some of the best serials and stories ever to appear in the U.S. and others. He was a man with many girls and was thorough in everything he did amongst which painting, photography, wood carving, hammered brass and making gramophones were sure to name a few. Imagine Henry St. John seated in his old Queen Anne House at Sunbury, a big heavy man of charming personality and with thick wavy hair, a kind smile and with a humorous twinkle in his eye. He passed away on the 9th September 1923, and it is to be imagined that Sexton Blake sighs with regret when he thinks of this grand chronicle of his.

Early in 1898 Blake was nearly crowded out of the U.S. when Goddard decided to present so-called masterpieces of boys' literature by such authors as Capt. Harryat, Harrison Ainsworth and Fenimore Cooper. But Blake overcame this setback and by the end of the year had regained his former footing, which was never lost again until the end of the U.S. It was the Mass No. of 1896 which introduced "Beave Blake" describing his adventures at Ashleigh School and no doubt the detective is reminded of his happy stay there. An Ashleigh one morning..... But that is another story to be told later.

END OF PART ONE.

Editor's Note

Owing to the extreme length of this feature we have had to postpone all other features of Blackana for this month and it is hoped that this will meet with your approval. I would like to apologise to Walter Webb for some slight alterations to his original manuscript. This was necessary in order that the feature might be published in one issue and I do not think the alterations here in any way spoiled the continuity.

Hall Bond.

ALL THE USUAL FEATURES WILL APPEAR NEXT MONTH