

The

Collector's

Digest

Vol. 6. No. 69 - September 1952 - 72 pages
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The Amazing Adventures of Captain Pohadilla.

AS RELATED BY
CHARLES HAMILTON.

NO. 2
AT THE
SWORD'S POINT.

Charles Hamilton's First Character. See Page 266

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SEPTEMBER 1952

Editor, Miscellaneous Section
Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,
C/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Oh! Those Prices! Some time ago a Mr. J. Beck, 4 Waldenshaw Road, Forest Hill, London, S.E.23, advertised some books for sale in Exchange & Mart. Don Webster wrote to him and got a reply in which Mr. Beck stated he had sold a Holiday Annual but still had a "Chums" 1922 which he had apparently bought when published. For this Mr. Beck - prepare to gasp - said, "I suggest £6." Six pounds! I'll spell it out, so that there will be no mistake. I'm very much afraid Mr. Beck will have had to come down to earth and talk shillings instead of pounds, for as most of our members know, "Chums" of almost any year are frequently offered in Foyle's in mint condition for no more than 10/- and they have been bought in other second-hand bookshops for much less.

All the same, let us be fair to Mr. Beck. He is not a member of our circle, and it is possible he is not acquainted with the prices old boys' books can command at the present time, (though one can't help wondering what happened to that Holiday Annual). However, supposing one single copy of a red Magnet and a massive scarlet-cled Chums volume of

800 odd pages packed with stories by popular authors were placed before a stranger and he was told that the Chums was worth no more, if as much, as the one copy of the Magnet, he would probably be bewildered, wouldn't he?

We know the reason, of course, even so, it's remarkable.

"Annual" News. Since last writing I have received a superb article from Eric Feyne entitled, "The Roamings of the Rio Kid". It's honestly Eric at his very best and you know what that means. If you have never read any of these yarns you will want to after digesting this.

Further, several members of the Sexton Blake Circle are hard at work with the object of making the Blakiana section full of interesting and valuable information. And I've just finished "There Were Other Schools". It's been done in snatches but I think it will have its appeal.

More news next month. Meanwhile, have you ordered your copy yet? And may I appeal for a few adverts? These help when the reckoning day comes.

That Loss. I am extremely grateful for the numerous expressions of sympathy I have received over the loss of the "Annual" subs. I mentioned last month. I sincerely thank those too who promptly took action over the cheques. I have good reason to believe the money was stolen, but proving it would be difficult. 'Tis pity that not all walk in the steps of our fraternity.

1951 Annual. I urgently require two copies of last year's Annual for a couple of overseas members who did not get their copies. Can anyone help?

Another Annual. By the time these lines are in print the popular Tom Merry's Own (Mandeville Publications) will be out. As usual it will contain long complete stories of St. Jim's, Greyfriars and Carcroft, together with other stories and special features. A feast of reading in 200 pages. Price 10/6.

In Reminiscent Mood. "The Daily Mail" August 13th contained two letters of interest especially to older members of our circle. Mr. Arthur Ord-Hume, of Pinner, said:

"A floating wharf, towed across the Channel for landing troops and guns on the coast of France, was featured in a sensational story for boys in the year 1900. This idea became a very important reality in the last war."

I venture to suggest I know the story he referred to - "Britain in Arms" by Hamilton Edwards, which appeared in the "Boys' Friend".

And Mr. Percy C. Brown, M.A., Gravelly Hill College, Birmingham, remarked:

"When I was 12 (in the Naughty Nineties) we read the real thing - four full-length serials in addition to practical articles. Those were the days of reading (no picture "strips") often surreptitiously under the desk. We stored our "bloods" for re-reading, instead of leaving them as litter on the classroom floor."

My word! we ought to try and get Messrs. Ord-Hume and Brown into our fraternity, for surely we have something in common.

Next Month's C.D. Should the October number be a day or two late I am sure I shall be forgiven, for it will be due to that long awaited holiday.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

WANTED: Magnets between 700 and 900 or Bound Copies. Pre-war Hotspurs, Triumphs, Skippers, Adventures, Wizards, Rovers also collected. Lists to Church Cottage, Laleham, Nr. Steines, Middlesex.

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Union Jacks No's 656, 770, 872 (Pink) 1062, 1140, 1217, 1247, 1344, R. A. Nicholls, The Grey House, Whitchurch, Bristol.

SALE: "Collectors' Digest, No's 58 to 68; Old Boys Book Collector, No.1. Offers, 6 Crecroft Chronicles. T.A. Johnson, Raby Cottage, Raby Park, Neston, Wirral, Cheshire.

MELL, 4 Milbank Crescent, Darlington, wants Magnets, S.P.C's, Collectors' Miscellanies. Offers Magnets, Gems, Boys' Friends, Nelson Lees, Boys' Realms, Populars.

POPULAR PAPERS OF THE PAST

No. 19 - The "Modern Boy".

By Neil C. Gourley

(Note.- We welcome a new-comer to our pages. Judging by letters I have received from Neil, he has a real knowledge of many of the old papers and I have an idea you will be hearing from him again. - H.L.)

The other day I was reading "Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals". This is not the best of the Bunter series, being I believe spoilt by the undue attention given to the fat boy as compared with those far more interesting characters - The Famous Five.

However, it was not the Greyfriars characters that inspired this article but the mention of King of the Islands in this particular Bunter Book. Reading the names of Ken King and his mate Kit Hudson, owners of the ketch "Dawn", my mind was turned back to the days before I knew of any connection between Mr. Charles Hamilton and Frank Richards or Martin Clifford.

In the late thirties, as far as I was concerned, Charles Hamilton was one of the top writers of "Modern Boy" and creator of one of my favourite heroes from that magazine - King of the Islands. I don't know whether it was due to his days of travel but the background to those tales of copre traders and piracy in the South Seas seemed very realistic, and years later, when I discovered W. Somerset Maugham's South Seas stories, I felt quite nostalgic.

I was quite surprised to find that Charles Hamilton could run a very original school story when I first read his "School for Slackers". This very ironic, humorous tale was somehow different from his Greyfriars or St. Jims yarns, probably because it had a greater unity of theme and paid more attention to the plot than the various characters. It dealt with the reforms in class and games made by a keen young headmaster when he took charge of a school where the prefects lay in bed till 9 o'clock in the morning and the first eleven cricket teams had never been known to win a match. The most amusing development was when the new headmaster made one of the fags new school cricket captain and

gave him authority over the prefects. This serial was later reprinted in the Schoolboys' Own Library.

In my adult years I became interested in American history and the story of the development of that great continent. Yet I first came across the Pan Handle of Texas and heard about the Wild West in those engrossing stories of the Rio Kid - Texan Outlaw told in Texan dialect by Ralph Redway, which was yet another Charles Hamilton pen-name.

The Modern Boy could thus almost claim to be as much Charles Hamilton's magazine as the Magnet and the Gem.

Almost but not quite for, among the non-Hamilton authors were such names as John Beresford, W. E. Johns, George E. Rochester and Percy F. Westermen.

Beresford wrote what I think were the funniest farces of boys' fiction - the "Told In The Tuckshop" stories. These were verious "tall tales" told by a schoolboy in the school tuckshop. They concerned such fantastic happenings as a man whose mind was exchanged with that of a horse, a drug which made a boy grow whiskers, etc. etc. Each tale was complete in itself but usually concerned one or other of the relatives of the story-teller. A selection of these stories was reprinted in the Schoolboys' Own Library.

To boys of today "Biggles" is a No.1 flying hero. From the books I see in the shops he appears to be really up to date - of 1952 era. I am never tempted to read one of these modern Biggles stories for to me Biggles is the same Lieutenant Bigglesworth of the Royal Flying Corps whose adventures in what was then "The Great War" I lapped up in "Modern Boy". These stories of the first serial dog fights against the "air circuses" of Imperial Germany had more developed characters than the modern stories. Today it is the aeroplanes themselves which seem more important than the characters. In these World War I stories one seemed to re-live the feeling of tension within the aerodrome as the planes returned and they counted the missing. The German armies were treated not as Nazi thugs but as men of honour. Perhaps this treatment was unrealistic but it made an impression on the boy readers at the time.

George E. Rochester also told many a good World War I air story in "Modern Boy". His Scotty of the Secret Squadron yarns were only equalled by his Gray Shadow Spy adventures.

Many Modern Boy series concerned Motor Racing. I am afraid I was not very fond of these particular stories but

no doubt someone will have many happy recollections of them.

To me, however, the main reason for getting "Modern Boy" was to read of "Captain Justice". I believe Captain Justice started his adventures in early issues of "Modern Boy". I never read them myself but I think he was originally a "modern outlaw" avenging some injustice to his father. By the time I started to follow his adventures he was a scientific adventurer out to right wrongs anywhere in the world. He and his comrades had two bases - Justice Island and Titantes Tower, a metal structure erected in the middle of the ocean by Professor Flaznagel, the white-haired scientific genius. They also had a squadron of up-to-date aircraft and a huge air-ship. Equipped with all the inventions of the Professor, Captain Justice & Co. had some very amazing adventures.

They encountered strange wild men in the Sargossa Sea or plumbed the depths of the ocean in an underseas crawler. They went to South America in a huge Robot walking along the ocean bed and fought a battle with a rival robot created by a crooked scientist.

I can remember several vivid incidents. Captain Justice & Co. creeping via the sewers into the Robot City up the Amazon where a scientific criminal held the Professor and other world famous scientists as helpless slaves under the influence of a strange drug.

Another episode which lingers in my mind is the one where Captain Justice & Co. voyaged to an alien planet approaching the Earth and then had to escape quickly when the planet began to break up under the influence of gravity.

But whether it was fighting Giant Ants in an arena in the Sahara desert, escaping from pre-historic monsters in a lost valley, or saving a paralysed London from the plundering of a Master Criminal, Captain Justice and his friends were always cheerful. There was O'Malley the rotund Irish doctor always having tricks played upon him by Radio Operator Len Connor and Midge the irrepressible urchin with a nickname for everything and everybody. Professor Flaznagel with his wisp of white beard and endless courage was probably the only old man to be a hero in a boys' magazine.

Justice himself, peaked cap askew, jutting red beard, with a twinkle in his eye was worth a thousand Dan Drees, because one felt he was human.

Unlike the "fairy story" heroes of American cartoon

magazines, Justice & Co. could make mistakes - and they could get along without any scientific gadgets too.

I rank with Robinson Crusoe and the Jules Verne "Dropped from the Clouds" series, the powerful "Justice" story in which the comrades were kidnapped by an enemy and marooned in the Amazon jungle with only their bare hands to help them fight their way out.

Most of the Captain Justice yarns were also reprinted as novels in the "Boys' Friend Library". The author was Murray Roberts - who he was I wish readers of C.D. could enlighten me - Was he a pen name, or did he only write Justice yarns?

The end of the Modern Boy came as almost an insult. It was the first A.P. magazine to be hit by the war when in autumn of 1939 it was combined with - of all papers - the Boys' Cinema.

WANTED Magnets, Gems, Poplers, Boys' Friends, Schoolboys' Own Libraries before 1921, Greyfriars Holiday Annuals and Heralds after 1921. Offers several volumes Boys' Own Papers from 1886-1917, Scouts and Chums in exchange. David Stacey, "The Beeches", Southend Road, Wickford, Essex.

FOR SALE: Back numbers "Collectors' Digest", or will exchange for Union Jacks, Nelson Lees or other papers. W. Darwin, 76 Western Road, East Dene, Rotherham, Yorkshire.

WANTED: Magnet 897, Schoolboys' Own 236, 219. Will exchange Schoolboys Owns 246, 274, 293, 326, 356, 386, 395, 401 and Magnets 802, 806, 808, 814, 848, for Greyfriars and Rookwood Schoolboys' Owns before 300. Gordon Thompson, 53 Wallasey Park, Belfast.

WANTED: Old copies of Magnet, Gen, 1d Popular, &c. Good prices paid. J.F. Bellfield, 24 Grainger Lane, Cradley Heath, Staffs.

FOR SALE: Magnets, Gems, (many prev. 1915) Sch'boy Owns, Lees, Monsters, Chums Annuals 1920-23. Offers S.A.E. Lowes, 15 Edith St., Tynemouth, Northumbld.

LATE NEWS:

The "Bunter Books" are to be published in future by Messrs. Cassell & Company, Limited. H.L.

+++++
HAMILTONIA
+++++

Conducted by Herbert Leckenby

My comments on "The Heart of Africa" serial two months ago has brought a lot of requests for more information about the early stories by Charles Hamilton. One enthusiast, in fact, has suggested a publication giving a record of all his stories, a kind of "History of Hamiltonia". That would be a formidable task, one I doubt the master could achieve himself. It would certainly be an interesting and a remarkable document if it ever did see the light of day. All I say for the moment is that I will do my best to help towards it by ferreting out some stories which though written round about 50 years ago will be new to most, if not all of you.

Well, for a start, Harry Stables, of Bradford, has kindly loaned me Nos. 1-12 "Best Budget" and 1-25 "Lerks". These two papers between them contain the run of that serial "The Heart of Africa". 37 instalments was quite a nice run. In addition to this there are several complete stories written under Charles Hamilton's real name. They are as follows:-

Best Budget No.8, 3/5/02: "The Schooldays of Jack Jingle";
or, "The Boys of Redcliffe".

Best Budget No.11, 24/5/02: "A Terrible Temptation";
- a Thrilling Whitsuntide Romance.

"Lerks" No.4, 28/6/02. "The New Boy at Redcliffe".

" No.9, 2/8/02: "The Perils of the Pampas".

" No.14, 6/9/02: "Luchmee the Avenger".

Then there started, after a good deal of advertising, a new series of stories under the heading "The Amazing Adventures of Captain Popadilla". Four I have note of were:

Lerks, No.17, 27/9/02: "Captain Popadilla's Luck".

" No.20, 18/10/02: "At The Sword's Point".

" No.23, 8/11/02: "How Capt. Pop. Saves the Emperor".

" No.26, 29/11/02, "The Conspirators of the Chateau Rouge".

Captain Popadilla was described as the fighting Irishman and the period was the Peninsular War. The stories would appear to have caught on, for in "Lerks" No.25 it was announced that a serial concerning Capt. Popadilla would start

shortly. These details are particularly interesting, for it is possible that Captain Popadilla of 50 years ago was the first of all Charles Hamilton's "characters". He deserves a place in the records for that reason alone.

Next month I hope to say something about the Jack Talbot Circus stories which appeared in Pluck and for which the pen-name Harry Dorrian was used.

RESULT OF "GREYFRIARS CHARACTERS" CONTEST

There was a very heavy entry for this popular contest, and the adjudicators found their clerical work both exciting and intriguing as the various characters in the list changed places time after time as the votes poured in to the Editor's office. The following is the final order of popularity as determined by the popular vote.

- 1st. H. HARRY WHARTON.
- 2nd. A. Billy Bunter.
- 3rd. B. Bob Cherry.
- 4th. G. Vernon-Smith.
- 5th. D. Mr. Quelch.
- 6th. C. Horace Coker.
- 7th. F. Lord Mauleverer.
- 8th. E. Horree Singh.

The Prize of One Pound has been sent to
W. L. Williamson,
410, Oakwood Lane,

Roundhay, Leeds 8,

who placed no less than 5 of the characters in their correct positions, and thereby obtained 26 points in the contest.

The result of the voting is extremely interesting. There was never any doubt, after the first 40 or so votes had been registered, that Harry Wharton would come first. He took the lead from the beginning and held it easily till the finish. The views on Bunter were intriguing. He had most firsts, but there were so many who had no time for him at all placing him last or seventh that, on points, he could only gain second place.

Horree Singh came in a very poor last. There were very few voters who did not place him at the tail of the list. The most surprising, perhaps, was that Horace Coker beat Lord Mauleverer, for, while a reader either likes or loathes Horace, surely everybody must like Mauly.

One or two readers asked why such popular characters as Nugent, Redwing, and Wibley were not included in the list. The answer is that 8 seems to be the ideal number of characters to include in a contest, and the 8 selected seemed to be the most representative of Greyfriars. Maybe, at a later date, the COLLECTORS' DIGEST will run a similar contest, and include 8 of the lesser lights who all have their many supporters.

CHUMS ACROSS THE CHANNEL

By Jim Walsh

It is my pleasure once again - for the third year running in fact - to revive for you some of the pleasant memories associated with the holiday trips of our much-travelled chums.

For the past two years we have been afoot in our own country and while I find the call of our own dusty lanes and green fields as strong as ever, perhaps a change of scene and atmosphere will do us all good.

So what say if we "do" the continent this year?

Right! get your passports ready and join us on the Channel boat at Folkestone.

Incidentally, I have some specially good news for you.

You see, some of the chaps to whom the idea of this trip had been mooted had heard that both Greyfriars and St.Jims were "going over" this year and opinions were a bit divided as to which school should, unknowingly, be honoured with our company.

In fact, during the course of a slightly heated argument between two of the chaps in our party I overheard a remark to the effect that "they're a bit too juvenile for me" though to whom exactly he was referring I couldn't quite gather (which is just as well because it will save further correspondence on the subject!)

Well, doubts and fears can be set at rest because, as stated, I have some good news which is that this year the parties from both schools will be travelling together.

In other words, it will be a strictly Hamilton "do" and dual personalities will not enter into it if you know what I mean.

Well, here we are on board at last. Disposing ourselves

on deck as best as the bustle and baggage allow, we are at length able to take stock of our fellow passengers. Most do not merit a second glance and then - our eyes become fixed; glued to the row of youthful figures who line the rail. We marvel at the fresh, eager faces; as if they, who have crossed this Channel so many times were now seeing it all for the first time.

We try to single out familiar figures and faces in the two groups, each a little apart, but the bustle of passengers and crew make it difficult. We do notice that one group is accompanied by a barrel - no, sorry, its human for barrels do not, presumably, stuff jam tarts into their interior!

A clue to the identity of the other is given by a remark of the stout lady at our side.

"'As that young gent 'ad a haxident with his specs, George?"

"Don't be silly, m'rtha," replied George, an equally stout gent in a loud check suit, "that's a heyeglass 'e's wearin'".

However, our observations are cut short by the gangway being pulled in, the propellers churning and the boat nosing out into the open channel.

Although the day is bright and clear, a rather stiff breeze is getting up and the waves begin to look a bit choppy. Meanwhile we have edged nearer the group we now know to be the Greyfriars fellows and we overhear the fat youth making some remarks to his companions: the burden of which is that Nugent looks a bit ghastly, Cherry a bit green round the gills and the other fellows in similar poor shape. These remarks not, we gather, intended to be sympathetic, each being interspersed with that familiar cachination likened to an alarm clock going off.

We had not long to wait for the sequel for we had observed with some alarm that the fat owl's gastronomic exertions had continued unabated. Sure enough, a few minutes later, we watch the porpoise being carried below, no doubt fervently wishing, as on all such previous occasions, that the ship would take the shortest route to firm ground and touch bottom!

But we have no further time to bestow on our fellow passengers, for soon the shores of La Belle France loom ahead. Everyone grabs his baggage and before long we are ashore and passing through the customs.

One or two of our chaps remark on how familiar it all seems although they have not been abroad before. As we shuffle along there are remarks like - "Do you remember when Bunter got stuck in the door of the passport office with a fat French lady?" and "Do you remember when Gussy said to the French porter -" and so on. Yes, it's no wonder it all seems so familiar!

Bunter, having lost his cargo is anxious to restow it at the nearest cafe. D'Arcy, having lost his topper due to an unfortunate accident when he slipped down a companion way and set on it, is anxious to replace it at the nearest hatters.

Here, in each case, a scene is enacted that will be repeated many times before the trip is over and has taken place on every visit since - well, since the time it was worth the trouble of stooping to pick an odd franc off the ground.

Bunter demands the astounded waiter to bring him for his repast an article of diet which, when produced, turns out to be a lump of coal on a plate! His amazement, however, is no greater than that of the hatter who is asked by Gussy to supply a "chateau" in place of the lost "chapeau".

"Whether you regard this oft-repeated theme as screamingly funny or just mildly amusing, it is, on the one hand, a boon to the author who requires an interlude to fill out a chapter between the various appearances of the villain on the scene and, on the other, it provides a painless way of improving our French - if any."

The Continental Crooks

Speaking of villains, my attention has just been drawn to a furtive, shifty-eyed individual who seems more than a little interested in the movements of the juniors' party.

I wonder if he is another of those fascinating characters who dogged the juniors' footsteps on almost every continental excursion - surely the most ubiquitous crooks in all fiction.

There was a fair variety of these gentry, of various colours and nationality; as often as not he was a swarthy Italian, habitually referred to as "the dago".

Unsleeping, he was everywhere at all times.

On leaving our ville in the morning we catch a glimpse of this furtive character, slouched hat pulled well down over his eyes. In the midst of a crowd on the Place de la Concorde or the "Wue de Wivoli" there he is at our elbow to

pick our pocket or snatch from our hand the valuable package or document he seeks so assiduously. If we take a quiet evening walk in the garden up he pops from behind a bush and at night, while we sleep, there he is with one leg over the balcony.

Our crook has, apparently, unlimited resources. A fast car, motor-boat or plane can be acquired at a moment's notice and on the juniors' tail before you can say "Please Book in Advance". To further his nefarious plans, numerous other small-time crooks and bandits, from Apaches in Paris to gondoliers in Venice, are at his beck and call.

He has an intelligence system that would turn M.I.5 or the F.B.I. green with envy.

Here we are soaring up in our plane, having secretly decided to flip over into Italy, leaving the thwarted crook a gibbering speck on the French landscape.

Hark to the fellows then, strolling under the hot Italian sun and complimenting themselves on having at last got rid of the dago. But lo! one of the chaps has dawdled behind and got cut off from the rest. Imagine our - and more so his - horrified surprise to find the point of a sharp knife sticking in his back and to hear that sinister voice hiss in his ear the one word - "Silenzio!"

From my mental survey of this continental Rogues' Gallery my mind and eyes revert again to the slinking figure who had first attracted my notice.

I am startled - but not really surprised - to see him place his hand beneath his rather tattered coat and withdraw an object that momentarily gleams bright in the sun. He draws up close behind Bunter and makes a swift movement. Next moment his knife comes into play - not on Bunter but on the contents of the small parcel he had snatched up when it had fallen from Bunter's stuffed pocket - a pork pie.

I knew he was a crook!

- And Casinos

And now - still in the wake of our Chums - we have reached a scene that, to those of you who have travelled with them through the years, will be as familiar as that of our own Kent and Sussex - the magic Riviera.

I will not try and emulate the gifted pen that drew it so many times - the long coast road, the palms, the white villas and hotels nestling behind luxuriant vegetation and

exotic flowers; looking out over the blue Mediterranean where elegant yachts ride proudly amidst the white sails of countless smaller craft. Over head, the deep blue wky, even more magic at night in its dark velvet cloak, spangled by a myriad gleaming stars.

But the most outstanding feature of this exotic scene was that white building where the rhythmic strains of the orchestra outside was punctuated by the rhythmic click of the balls inside - the Casino.

The Chums, with one or two notable exceptions, being all upright, clean-living youths as we ourselves were, were often given to sermonising on the evils attendant on the urge to amass a pile of unearned wealth by forecasting the ultimate location of that little bouncing ball. But, by reason of necessity or curiosity, they not infrequently found themselves on the wrong side of those shady portals.

Such a case must have been the present, when our ears are assailed by a discordant medley of squeals and yells. We wonder if a pig is being led to the slaughter but it's a porker of another type being led away from it - by a pair of fat ears. Their owner, willy-nilly, follows them, they being in the vice-like grip of a couple of Greyfriars fellows to whom he loudly, but vainly, protests that his very next stake would have laid the foundation of his fortune.

But, amid smiles, we recollect less humorous situations when the desire to observe the foibles and frailties of less strong-willed species than themselves had led the Chums into several dramatic situations.

We recall several of those Jekyll and Hyde characters who sometimes accompanied the schoolboys; in his ordinary duties a man who is urbane, deferential and knows his place - and therefore unsuspected. And there he was, to the juniors' shocked surprise, sitting at the gaming table or stumbling down the steps with the ghastly haggard face of the gambler who has made his last throw - and lost!

Occasionally, on their travels, the Chums ran into old acquaintances so it is not surprising we did likewise. So it was that we observed three youths, taller than fourth formers, strolling along the Promenade des Anglais. The tallest of the three, a beefy fellow of rugged countenance, is talking; though he is not, as we first surmised, using a megaphone. The other two, a little in the rear, pass a

meaning glance to each other - then sidle up a turning and vanish. The fellow in front continues talking - and talking.

"Silly asses," he mutters, "they've got themselves lost again. And we're dining at the Grand Continental at five o'clock. I wonder if the chumps will have sense enough to find their way there in time?"

They had!

Well, now our trip is drawing to its close. We've had lots of fun - and not a little excitement. Though some of our party - to whom the 'teens are only a pleasant memory - are dragging their feet a little, Bob Cherry's energy and spirits are as unbanded as when he started.

So, too, is Bunter's appetite. He did not exactly travel through the continent; it would be more correct to say he ate his way through it.

Of course we had our tribulations. Once, when we wanted to take a train, Manners wanted to take a photograph and the punning Lowther's remark that we would have to wait for another train to "develop" evoked more glares than smiles.

Then Gussy's too-trusting nature sometimes landed us in a fix and, on one occasion, he received a bumping in consequence. As his dignity suffered more than his anatomy he decided to pack his bags and shake the dust of our vicinity from his feet. It was only when Blake drew a harrowing picture of the party wandering round the continent like lost sheep without their shepherd's tact and judgment to guide them that he relented and took us under his noble wing once more.

A few episodes were decidedly grim - when one or other of the Chums sojourned for a while in that notorious valley (more familiar to those to whom Hamilton rather than Cook has been their guide) "the valley of the shadow of death".

You will be gratified to learn that when faced with a prospect the only outcome of which seemed to be a sudden and untimely end, the Chums faced it with that calm, unflinching courage that would be shown by you or I in similar circumstances - perhaps.

And now, once more, we're aboard the channel steamer, this time watching the white cliffs of our own little island loom up through the haze of a summer evening.

And once more we listen, rather wistfully now, to the conversation of the Chums. The host of holiday incidents, vivid as they remain to us, are already receding from their minds and, as is the way of youth, it is the immediate future that mostly occupies their thoughts.

Bunter is enlarging on the necessity for celebrating their return by a whopping study supper; Gussy is debating if the clobber he has brought back from the continent will create the hoped-for impression on his more discerning schoolfellows.

Unheeding both, the heroes of the two schools are speculating by what margin each will lick the other in the first big soccer match of the new season.

We are a little sad to think that, if ever we join our Chums again on a trip to distant climes, the memories of the one now ending will be effaced as if they were the black-board chalk rubbed out by Mr. Quelch's duster - but how can the clear fresh eyes of youth be thrilled by sights and scenes that have crowded the mind for ten - twenty - thirty years?

Ah, well, if memories are the preserve of advancing years - perhaps, also, they are its consolation!

"MAGNET" TITLES (Contd.)

"S" denotes Substitute.

980 (S) Heroes of the Air. 981, Coker on the Warpath. 982, Missing from School. 983, The Prisoner of the Bungalow. 984, Coker's Christmas Party. 985, The Game Kid. 986, The Bruiser of the Remove. 987, Bound by Honour. 988, The Game Kid's Temptation. 989, Loyal to the Last. 990, The Call of the Ring. 991 (S) The Schoolboy Broadcaster. 992, The Footprint in the Sand. 993 (S) Fishy's Travel Agency. 994, Roger of the Remove. 995, Fed up with Greyfriars. 996, Bunter's Brainstorm. 997, The Interloper. 998, The Bounder's Feud. 999, Condemned by his Form. 1000, Paying the Price. 1001, The Hand of an Enemy. 1002, At the End of His Tether. 1004, The Boy Who Found His Father. 1005, Bunter the Bold. 1006, (S) Fish's Burglar Hunt. 1007, The Bounder's Whim. 1008, One Against the School. 1009 Hunted Down. 1010, Taking up Trotter. 1011, Bolsover's Brother. 1012, The Bounder's Good Turn. 1013, Smithy's Way. 1014 (S) Bunter the Bad Lad.

LONDON OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

Cherry Place, Wood Green, August 17th.

Vacation time did not deter the old boys from attending the latest meeting and there were only a few absentees when roll was called. Even Robby, from Hove, answered his name and said that all was planned to have the now annual get-together at his home by the sea. Len soon disposed smoothly the usual first formalities of the meeting. Bob Whiter read a letter from the firm who propose to make the badges and after a discussion it was decided to communicate with the other clubs with a proposition as regards the financial side of the question. After some other business and a good feed, doyen Arthur Lawson read a paper by Hugh Fennell on "Black Bess" or "The Knights of the Road" and the supposed sequel "The Black Highwayman". This was thoroughly enjoyed as was the quiz compiled by Cliff Wallis that followed. First three in order of merit in this quiz were Roger Jenkins, Len Peckman and Bob Whiter. As catering costs have risen it was unanimously agreed to increase the fee accordingly. A four-question quiz about our worthy president's activities was won by Len Peckman with Bob Whiter and Roger Jenkins in the places. Continuing with the map talks Bob Whiter obliged with the Sussex School surroundings on this occasion and a fine map of St. Jim's was described to the delight of all those present. Next map to be described will be Rockwood and then one of a famous journey that our present wrote of.

Next meeting will be the Hove one on Sunday Sept. 21st. Full particulars of the arrangements will be found in the club's newsletter.

The official business now being finished it was good to see the earnest discussion going on by a group of members and afterwards I was told how much this was enjoyed.

And so home again to happy memories and recollections.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

Northern Section Meeting. August 9th, 1952.

Taking the chair in the absence of J. Breeze Bentley on holiday, I had the pleasure of welcoming Jack Wood on his first visit to the Club, and Cyril Banks who had been unable to attend for some months. 16 members present in all.

Following the minutes of the last meeting and an account of the York trip by secretary Norman Smith, came Gerry Allison with his usual healthy report on the library and finance generally. He told of a substantial purchase of Magnets of 30 years or so ago.

"Top of the Bill" for the evening was Jack Wood. His subject was the Nelson Lee Library, aided by Bob Blythe's large map. Jack had also brought with him a lot of his Nelson Lee's small series containing those fine sketches by E. E. Briscoe of places of interest. Jack was asked numerous questions. Inevitably St. Jims and Greyfriars kept rearing their heads, but for once they had to play a lesser part.

Following refreshments came "Twenty Question". Yes, you've guessed rightly, they were prepared by Gerry Allison. Members of the team were Vera Costes, Miss Allison, Bill Williamson and myself. Despite several tough ones we got eleven out of the twelve, but Gerry took it with an un-Harding-like smile. 'Twas a great finish up to another enjoyable evening.

Next meeting September 13th.

H, Leckenby.

Report of Midland Section Meeting, 28th July.

Quite a goodly muster of stalwarts seventeen strong were present, and we had the pleasure of welcoming another new member, (Mr. Ingram from Wolverhampton.)

Formal business included reference to the illuminated address recently presented to Mr. Richards by the London club on behalf of all branches. The text was given in the "Collector's Digest" last month.

A new type of Quiz devised by our Chairman was then tackled. Entitled the "What is your opinion" Quiz, the answers were purely expressions of opinion. For example, one question was, "Which of the three Bunters, (Billy, Bessie, or Sammy), has the best character?" There was quite an animated discussion when the answers were being considered. Congratulations to the winner (Mr. Bellfield.)

Mr. Smallwood then gave us a most interesting talk on his introduction to the "Magnet", and the reasons for its abiding fascination. He spoke with feeling and enthusiasm of these splendid stories and their unique atmosphere and

inspiration. In fact, he dug deeply into the very heart of the reasons why Frank Richards has accomplished work of such enduring merit by stories so skilfully told and with a tremendous sense of humour, yet so full of deep meaning.

All too soon it was refreshment time: then we had another treat when Miss Carol Scott read us a chapter from "Billy Bunter and the Blue Mauritius", which showed a very choice example of Frank Richards' rib tickling humour.

Then we descended eagerly on the library. No meeting seems complete without Albert Clack at the piano, and so we ended with a sing-song (reminiscent of the "Rag"). Sorry, Mr. Quelch, I should say the "Junior Day Room".

E. J. Davey, Hon. Secretary.

O.B.B.C. (Merseyside Section). Meeting, Sunday, 10th Aug./52.

The meeting opened at 8 p.m. to a good attendance, despite the absence of some members on holiday, etc. The chairman started the ball rolling with a report on section affairs; he then read a letter from Edna, recounting her experiences in Canada; all were pleased to know she is having a really nice holiday. He then spoke of a substantial purchase of books during the past month; he was sure the members would be glad to know that a number of Magnets had been obtained to complete certain series. The library now consists of well over two hundred books.

The secretary having read the minutes, and submitted the financial report, refreshments were taken, and the lighter side of the meeting was proceeded with. George Timmins submitted a novel and entertaining quiz, based on nicknames of characters in the Magnet, Gem, etc; this was won by young Peter, with a substantial lead in points at the end. We then "had a go" at a hidden names quiz, previously done by the Northern Section, and kindly sent to us by that "confounder of competitors", Gerry Allison. Once again, the winner was Peter; irrepresible, this lad!

A belated, but welcome, visitor managed to call for a few minutes at the end of the meeting: Jim Walsh, fresh from a holiday on the Continent. We were interested to hear that during the course of his travels he visited the actual locations used by Charles Hamilton in many of his stories; quite a unique experience!

The date of the September meeting has been left in abeyance for the moment, owing to holiday calls, etc.;

members will be notified by post when the actual date has been fixed.

The meeting ended at 10-30 p.m. with the usual library "rush"; the evening had been a very pleasant one indeed.

THE NELSON LEE COLUMN

All communications to Robert Blythe,
46 Carleton Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

Well, I must say that the map seems to have gone down very well, judging from the letters I've received. It has been very encouraging and makes one feel that the effort I've put into it was worth while.

However, the most pleasant reading came from one or two Magnetites who say that they had only recently started reading the Old Paper, and having read one or two, found them so good that, like Oliver Twist, they are asking for more. It made me feel like a missionary with his first converts!

But to return to the map. As I expected, the main criticism was Willards Island and the course of the River Stowe. I admit that here we have an insurmountable difficulty. During the first ten years of the N.L.'s existence the River Stowe ran its course approximately where I've put it, but with the advent of the new houses and the map of St. Franks which appeared at that time, the Stowe is made to flow from Bennington, by the Moor View School, passing Willards Island at the bottom of the playing fields, through Billton and so on to Carstowe. You must admit that it was a dilemma of the first magnitude to any budding map-maker! So I did the only thing possible. As I felt that the majority of Lee-ites were readers in the time of the Old Series it was better to plan as they remembered it, rather than for the shorter half of the Lee's existence. At the same time I thought it better to draw the school with the later five houses rather than with the original two. In other words, I endeavoured to combine the outstanding features of both periods. For example, the River House School is not in the position that readers of the older stories would remember. That school was of course the old house later known as Most Hollow.

One point about Wilberds Island. It is stated quite definitely that the Island is the property of Col. Glenthorne and is on his estate, which, we were told, was fairly near Bannington. So unless we agree that Col. Glenthorne owned all the land between Bannington and St. Franks (a supposition that is not borne out by the stories) then the Island cannot possibly be at the bottom of the playing fields where it was so gaily dumped by the artist (probably Briscoe) in the map of 1925.

One chap even pointed out that Shingle Head was to the west of Carstowe, not east as I have it! What's more, he was able to prove it by quoting chapter and verse. This was a bit of a facer, but luckily I was able to prove my point. (I think!). All very difficult!

Finally, I have left out several places which cropped up during the latter part of the 1st N.S. and during the 2nd N.S. because I could not believe in their existence then and I don't now. Edgemore Castle and the house in Bellton Wood are examples.

For our tour let's make a start at the Moor View School. This is the blob to the left of the letter B in Bannington Moor and not to be confused with the blob above the letter A which is a clump of trees! (Incidentally, before I go any further I want to say that although the map hasn't reproduced as well as Herbert and I had hoped, this was not the fault of the agency. They had a very difficult task, especially when it came to reproducing the various buildings, which in the original consisted of fine pen lines. I'm told this job was one of the biggest they'd ever tackled and I think on the whole, considering the limitations of duplicating, it's a creditable effort.) The Moor View School was originally, of course, known as The Mount, which in the early days housed Mr. & Mrs. Ridgeway, a friendly couple well known to Nelson Lee and the boys because of mysterious happenings demanding Lee's professional attentions as a detective.

Bellton Lane which runs from Bellton past St. Franks and the Moor View School, meanders over the moor until it eventually loses itself in a network of quiet country lanes, and goes nowhere in particular, but it the traditional route for cross-country runs and paper-chases. It was on this lane that Handforth fought a losing battle with a very tough customer for kissing Joan Terrent, not knowing that

he was her brother.

As we approach St. Franks the stately ruins of the old monastery can be seen on the right. A peaceful sight, yet many times has it been the scene of desperate affrays. The tunnels that lie beneath were also the scene of much excitement and deeds of derring-do.

The incidents that took place at St. Franks are too numerous and well-known to describe in detail. However, just in case you have never seen a map of the school, let me describe the scene.

Standing in the gateway practically the whole school can be seen grouped artistically around the green lawns of the Triangle with the fountain playing merrily in the centre. Immediately to the right against the wall, stands Josh Cuttle's lodge. Josh Cuttle, the school porter, was a real "character". Pessimistic he always was and lugubrious to a degree, but he never willingly reported any of the boys and was always ready to help where he could without an eye for the main chance. Consequently he was very popular. More so, perhaps, by contrast with his predecessor Warren, an ill-tempered man who was never, and never tried to be, popular.

Partially shaded by the tall, leafy chestnuts stands the gymnasium where Mr. Clifford holds sway, and the scene of many stirring contests between those aspiring to athletic honours such as Lawrence, Handforth, Pitt and Nipper, etc.

The stately building that comes next, as we glance round, is that of the Modern and East Houses. (You can, I think, see what shape these buildings takes). The East House which is the nearest half of the building is separated from the Modern House by the graceful East Tower, with the East Arch underneath leading to the East Square beyond. However impressive the building may look, the East House holds the finest collection of "duds" ever. From Kenmore, the Head Prefect, down to Fullerton of the Third, they are complete wash-outs in nearly everything. It is true some individuals do their best to keep the flag flying, but they are swamped by the dead weight of the rest.

The Modern House, the house of Buster Boots and Christine and other prominent Fourth Formers, is a very different story. Although not as distinguished as the Ancient and West Houses, they nevertheless see that the Remove are kept on their toes. Usually there is a spirit

of friendly rivalry between the two factions, but on one occasion friendliness was forgotten and something like hatred took its place. Remember the occasion? Bernard Forrest, one of the worst schoolboys in school fiction, was behind it, fanning the flames for which he was justly expelled.

We now turn our gaze to the building directly in front, beyond the fountain. Although it is partly hidden by the chestnut trees, as are the other buildings, one is immediately impressed by the tall and stately clock-tower which dominates the whole school and which can be seen for miles over the surrounding countryside. At its base is Big Arch through which can be seen part of the Head's house, on the other side of Inner Court, which lies beyond. The two wings that Big Arch separates are the school houses, Senior School to the right and Junior school to the left. Here are the classrooms, lecture halls and labs. There are no living quarters in these buildings as all the studies and common-rooms etc. are in the other houses.

Coming now back towards the gate the first half of the building to the left is the Ancient House, the "cock" house of St. Franks. Here we will find such stalwarts as Nipper & Co., Handforth, Church and McClure, Archie Glenthorne and many another well-known person such as Nelson Lee, Fenton etc. Not for nothing is the Ancient House the "cock" house, for with such versatile youngsters how could it be otherwise. Yet this was not always so. In the old days, when there were but two houses, the Ancient and Modern, the Ancient House was more like the East House of the present period. When Nipper first came to St. Franks, Fullwood, then as bad as Forrest was later, ruled the roost and none dared gainway him. It was the Modern House under the leadership of Bob Christine which was the leading house in almost everything. With Nipper's advent and Fullwood's downfall at his hands, the picture gradually changed and with Nipper at the helm, the Ancient House gradually came to the top and held its superiority against all comers.

Passing now West Tower and the arch leading to West Square, we come to the West House, where Marlowe, the head prefect, with Reggie Pitt holding the reins as Junior House Captain. Although there is a great deal of rivalry between the Ancient and West House where sport is concerned, they join forces when it is a question of a jape against the

Modern and East Houses. This is understandable when it is realised that whereas the 6th, 5th and 3rd are divided equally between the four houses. The Remove occupy the Ancient and West Houses, whilst the Fourth are quartered in the other two.

Leaving now the West House, the next building that comes is the Chapel. Of this nothing much can be said, for it is a place of quietness and meditation far removed from the adventurous happenings that take place elsewhere in the school.

Finally we glance to our left against the school wall. Here we find Mrs. Hske's tuckshop with the good lady herself standing outside with a welcoming smile, so what could be better to round off this visit than to go inside. Anybody care for a ginger-pop?

++++
+ LETTER BOX +
++++

His last Days Were Made Peaceful

184 Riverview Drive,
Chalmers S.W.3.
Brisbane.
27.7.52.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Just a note to tell you that I have just officiated at the funeral of my young friend whose wish it was to meet Billy Bunter again. In the last few months he had read almost all the Bunter Books, a "Tom Merry Annual" and old Megnets and the "Tom Merry" books. It has been with sadness that I collected my books from his home this afternoon. He was reading a number of series at once. About ten days before his passing he asked me did I remember the Holiday Annual. Of course I did and I got an early edition for him. As he took it in his hand he said, "The good old Holiday Annual. I haven't seen one in years." He read it in a few days, and I brought him another. However, his strength was leaving him and he never opened it. Instead he was called Home. Strangely enough, other ministers of my church who had known him for many years, just didn't seem to be able to cheer him up on their visits: yet his people said that I, a newcomer, had been a great success. Perhaps, in part, helped by a fictional character!?! I was glad to know he looked forward to my visits each two days.

With all best wishes, JACK HUGHES.

B L A K I A N A.

SEPTEMBER 1952.

Edited by H.M. Bond. 10 Erw Wen. Rhiwbina. Cardiff. S. Wales.

THE ROUND TABLE.

First of all this month we welcome yet another new friend to the pages of Blakiana. Mr. W.O. G. Lofts of St. Marylebone, N.W.8 writes:-

Through the kindness of Mr. Wm. Martin I was able to obtain a large number of back numbers of the C.D. and was amazed at the number of people who collected Old Boys books. Myself, I have been collecting S.B.Ls for years, and, if it wasn't by chance that I became acquainted with Mr. Martin I still would think that I was one of the few people in the world who collected such books. After reading your section through the back numbers I must confess that your knowledge of Blake is far greater than mine will ever be, how you find out about the various authors etc, and can write articles every month about them seems nothing short of miraculous. I agree about the present S.B.L. series, they are not a patch on the old ones, in fact I have written to the Editor to this effect. He replied like this: "I was pleased to receive a letter from you and to know you have got hold of back numbers you required although I consider you paid an exorbitant price for them. I shall certainly bear in mind what you say about the old yarns and endeavour to incorporate some of the flavour in future ones. My record quotes the first Blake story as appearing on May 4th 1894. It was definitely not written by W. Murray Graydon, the only American who came over to write for us. There was no name employed on the first story published, Yours sincerely, THE EDITOR. S.B.L."

I think the stories have got worse since I received that letter. With ref to your S.B.L. reviews, I think that they are very fair and accurate and should be continued, although I haven't yet seen any mention of mistakes that I have noticed in the present series of the Library. Firstly in "The Man Without a Passport" No. 260 (bottom of page 24 "The man beckoned Allen with his head, and the two went out to the car", yet on page 25 Allen speaks in the same room

while he is supposed to be on his way to the station! Secondly the story is built around a man who wanted a visa to go to France. One does not need one these days and I should know! Mr. Parsons should get his facts right true to life at the late G.H. Toed did, to make his stories lifelike in every detail. Then the artist to designs the covers should try to be more accurate. In No. 80, "The Tragic Case of the Stationmaster's Legacy" the story starts off with "The single branch line, one platform" etc yet, on the cover it shows you two platforms, two tracks etc. In No. 150 "The Holiday Camp Mystery" - if one discovered a girl's body after several years buried in the sand, would one find it in such a perfect state of preservation! Although I have read hundreds of S.B.Ls in the 1st and 2nd series I have yet to see a number 1 of any of them. This has been my main desire for years! Do you know anyone who has the complete collection of S.B.Ls of all series? I had 800 at one time but had to dispose of them. I now have about 200 of the 3rd series only. My favourite stories are (a) "The Headhunters Secret" (No. 108, 1st series). "The Case of the Millionaire Newspaper Man" (No. 322 1st series) "The Secret of the Bucketshop" (No. 345 1st series) "His Father's Crime" (No. 365 1st series). Who are the authors of those? Then I liked No. 361 2nd series "The Murder on the "roads" by G.H. Toed. This was a brilliant story. The description of life on the Broads was perfect. I feel sure Gwyn Evans would have risen to greater heights if he had written longer stories more often. I liked his "The Great Waxworks Crime" (No. 357 2nd series). Alas, only John Hunter is worth his salt now. I have yet to find an error in any of his stories. Have you noticed how true to life his characters are. No. 203 "The Man from China" was Parsons best. He has certainly come down in the list of popular authors of to-day. Walter Tyrer, Lewis Jackson and the newcomer "Hilary King" (is it a woman?) are my next on the list. The WORST story I have read was by Ladbroke Black entitled "Pronounced Dead" (No. 354 2nd series). It nearly made me drop dead to read it! I did NOT like the stories of Waldo, Rymor, Kestrol etc as Blake was such a clever man to me that it annoyed me to think that he could

never safely put these criminals behind bars for good. I never read of any sequel to these stories, so perhaps you could help me here, and let me know whether they ever met their just desserts. I only live a few minutes walk from Baker Street so I must claim of being the nearest person who admires him, living to Sexton Blake.

Welcome again to Walter Webb of Birmingham II. He is undoubtedly one of the leading authorities on Blake lore and his latest letter is very interesting and, I might add, revealing. He says. I was interested in your views contained in the article "The U.J. at it's Peak" in which it is stated that the palmiest days of the old paper were between Nov. 1929, when the name of the authors were first given, until the end of the run. There WERE some excellent yarns written in this period, which saw the introduction of Roxane Harfield and the return of Lobangu and Sir. Richard Losely, but these were off-set by a string of gangster yarns of the snappy American style, which, for the most part, were of very inferior quality. During this era I thought that the stories by Gwyn Evans, Anthony Skebo, and Gilbert Chester had fallen off considerably, and that only Teed was writing at the same consistently high standard as before. The Confederation stories were good but, of course, these were reprinted versions of stories written between 1919 and 1921 and therefore belonged to another era. The Proud Tram series was a great idea, as was "The Next Move". They were the highlights of the period in which Mr. Herbert Lockenby considers the U.J. was at it's peak. My own view is that the period between 1921 and 1927 saw the oldflag **flying** at its proudest, for it was in 1921 that the finest Editor took command from Walter Edwards and proceeded to put his own ideas into execution. He was Mr. H.W. Twyman, who had, as his assistant, Mr. Rossiter Shephord. Mr. Twyman's first idea resulted in the publication of the famous "Detective Supplement" which he subscribed to himself, with the assistance of Mr. Shephord, George Dilnot, T.C. Bridges, Richard Goyne, Eric R. Parker and other writers and artists connected with the Blake stories. What a fine two-pennyworth we got in those days! A supplement of some 12,000 words. A Blake story ranging from between 25,000 and 30,000 words, and an instalment of a serial.

Mr. Twyman also brought back G.H. Toed to the fold after an absence of six years, and so earned our undying thanks. He also introduced Alfred Edgar, Gordon Shaw, F. Addington Symonds, Gilbert Chester, Gwyn Evans, C. Malcolm Hincks & one of two others to Blake stories, and published their first efforts in the U.J. Nearly every story published in the old paper between '21 and '27 featured a popular character, and there was a host of them in those days: the glamorous Mademoiselle Yvonne, the sinister Mr. Rooce, Professor Kew, Count Carlac, Dirk Dolland, Granite Grant, Huxton Rymer, George Marsden Plummer, the Three Musketeers Waldo, Zenith, Lobangu, Losaly, Kestrel, Fifette, Wu Ling, Janssen, Lawless, the Owl, The Raven, Claire Dolisle, Gung a Dass, Ysabel de Ferre, Dexter, the Halos, Charon, Frau Krantz, Julia Fortuno, The Black Eagle, Prince Henes, Mary Trent, Nirvana, Splash Page, Ruff Hansen, Dr. Satira, and, occasionally Sidney Drew's famous characters, Ferrers Lord Ching Lung and Gan Waga, truly a colourful crowd. During this period Anthony Skene, Gwyn Evans and Robert Murray were at the top of their form and G.H. Toed was also at his peak. This period was, I think, unsurpassed in the history of the U.J. I can say that The "Proud Iron series" and the serial "The Next Move" were both Mr. Twyman's ideas. Murray, however, was not taken ill as everyone was led to believe; he was either too lazy or not sufficiently interested to do his part towards the series. Twyman has stated that it was always a big effort to get any material from this writer. Murray was consistently making promises to forward copy - promises he hardly every kept, and this was why, in U.J. No 1030 it was stated that he was invalid and that the stories he wrote came from his bed. There were several big interludes in the Confederation 2nd series you may remember, and these were due to the author's unwillingness to play his part. In the end Mr. Twyman got fed up and called upon a deputy to finish off the series. He was Gilbert Chester who had hitherto "shadowed" for Andrew Murray. Mr. Twyman tells me he only wrote one Blake story (U.J. No. 1073 "The Case of Cornacks Koy") and left early in the career of "D.W.". It is a matter of deep regret with him that he was not

able to see his friend, G. H. Toad, before the latter's death in the London Hospital. He was not in London at the time, he explains.

There were other interesting letters that I intended to print this month, but space is now VERY short so I shall once again have to hold them over until next month. My thanks to Messrs. Lofts and Webb for some very interesting remarks - come again sometime! And that must be the end of our Round Table session for this time. Cheerio for now and don't forget to send those letters and articles.

H. MAURICE BOND.

SEXTON BLAKE IN THE EDWARDIAN ERA. (13) WALTER WEBB.

But on this occasion Blake proved badly at fault, and it was the junior partner of the Gray's Inn Road firm who emerged with credit in the exciting incidents which followed. The doubtful Nipper loaded his rifle ready for emergency & well was it that he did so, for when Hansoll flew over the school buildings in the stolen aeroplane, and, diving downwards, attempted to shoot the Prince, it was Nipper's well aimed bullet which struck the barrel of Hansoll's weapon and knocked it out of his hands. Hansoll abandoned further attempts to kill when Nelson Lee appeared in the Gadfly and gave chase. Blake and Tinker were reduced to the roles of passive onlookers whilst the Gray's Inn Road slouth pursued his man, but Lee's petrol quickly gave out and he was forced to land and abandon the chase. Such was the startling and thrilling commencement of one of the most momentous cases ever undertaken by Blake and Lee, who, each playing just an important a role as the other, helped to bring to justice one of the most dangerous crooks of the times - John Hansoll, known as the "Winged Terror". Later well-remembered incidents included Hansoll's attempt to bomb one of the battle-cruisers anchored at Scr borough; the destruction of Sheffield Town Hall, despite all Lee's efforts to thwart the attempt; the panic which gripped the big crowd at Celtic Park, Glasgow on the occasion of the football match between Celtic and Hibernian, when the Winged Terror appeared over the ground and stopped the game. Hansoll's intention to drop a number

of bombs amongst the spectators was foiled by the presence of mind of Sexton Blake, who therefore atoned for his lamentable error of judgment at St. Minians. It was, in fact, the St. Minian's episode all over again, with this time Blake as the successful marksman. Then followed the the finding of the secret hiding place on the bank of the River Humber of the Winged Terror by Tinker and Hippo, and their capture by Hansoll and his chief accomplice, one John Ruperto. Occured the wrecking of the Tower Bridge and London Bridge by Hansoll and Ruperto; the fight in the air between the Terror and Britain's first airship, with Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee aboard - the bringing down in flames of the dirigible into the sea, with the two world-famous sleuths only just escaping death, first by fire and then by water. Followed the Terror's fruitless attempts to blow up Manchester Town Hall, the Exchange and the cathedral; the capture of Ruperto by Sexton Blake and Lee on the York Road; the destruction of the aeroplane by Hansoll himself when hard-pressed by Blake and Lee; these and other episodes, equally exciting, until the Grand Finale, when Hansoll was shot down in a small monoplane by an ordinary British soldier as he was trying to make his escape after his associates had been arrested through the combined efforts of the two private detectives. The closing months of the Edwardian era saw the first literary efforts of Andrew Murray one of the most prolific Blake chroniclers. These efforts, however, were confined to love stories for ~~A~~ Answers Library. A good writer who "knew his stuff", Murray was quite a good looking fellow, tall, slim, but nicely proportioned. Rarely seen otherwise than well-dressed, he invariably wore a soft felt hat at just that correct angle to give him an air of distinction. His bearing was soldierly and his tanned features suggested that he has been in sunny climes. As a matter of fact one of the places he had stayed in during a period on active service was Persia. he knew the East very well. A pleasant, confidential sort of fellow, Murray was always good company, although, at times a source of irritation to his colleagues because he refused to worry about anything.

THE CONCLUDING INSTALLMENT NEXT MONTH.