

THE COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 101.

MAY, 1955

PRICE 1s.6d.

AN EXAMPLE OF MR. C. H. CHAPMAN'S EARLY WORK, "BIG BUDGET" 1906



The Collectors' Digest

Vol. 9 No. 101.

Price 1s.6d.

MAY, 1955

Editor, HERBERT LECKENBY,
c/o YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES,
7, The Shambles, YORK.

From the Editor's Chair

THE BIG EVENT: Well, it happened and on time too as with all the ninety-nine which had gone before. It might not have been so because for several days Mr. Gore-Browne of the duplicating agency had something else to think about. Nevertheless, he saw to it that you were not kept waiting.

Came the aftermath: verily, it reminded me of Annual time. Very soon came a telegram from Stanley Smith and after Easter shoals of letters. I had been a little uneasy for I had thought some of you might say there was rather too much about the editor, but evidently you thought it was excusable under the circumstances.

And here let me explain something to those who were not in the plot - for there was a plot. It was this. Until I went down to collect the completed copies I had not the slightest idea that those four centre pages on green paper were in. They were a well-kept secret between the Clubs and the Duplicating Agency.

Merseyside said something about "so small a head". Um! I dunno! Methinks there's a danger of me being nick-named "Big-head".

Gerry Allison did the editing, but he told me afterwards that the idea came from John Gunn of Nottingham.

Well, anyway it was a very nice gesture typical of the brotherhood and vastly encouraging to me in setting off for the second century.

But, before leaving the subject, let me explain something else. Mr. Chapman's sketch shows me seated at a typewriter. Those of you who knit your brows over my handwriting might have been saying 'If he's got a typewriter why the deuce doesn't he use it?' Well it was like this. The sketch was taken from a photograph which accompanied an article written by Jimmy Stewart

Hunter which appeared in "Yorkshire Illustrated" four years or so ago. It was taken at my office and a friendly sergeant of the Military Police kindly cleared his table of quite different sorts of documents, and let me pose for the photographer in the manner of a film star who can't play a note, before a piano.

And that's all about that.

* * * * *

A SAD STORY: A few weeks ago a man, aged 54, was charged with the theft of a jig-saw puzzle worth 1/6. In evidence it was stated he had only 8d. in his possession: he had had domestic trouble and his last job was picking flowers in Cornwall. He had not been in trouble before where the police were concerned. He was given a conditional discharge.

An ordinary story, the kind of thing heard in Magistrate's courts every day. Why mention it here? Well, I'll tell you.

The defendant, whose coat and flannel trousers were patched, spoke in a cultured voice and said he used to write adventure stories for boys, but all that had gone now; he hadn't the incentive. He had slept rough once or twice but he had had a good week-end in prison and had been treated kindly by the police.

He mentioned his pen-name; that was what made me sit up and take notice for it was one very familiar to readers of the A.P. papers and 'Chums', thirty years or so ago. He specialised in adventure serials, many of which were republished in the "Boy's Friend Library". Many of you will have read them.

The report gave me all the greater shock for only a week or two before I saw it I had been looking at some biographies with photographs, which appeared in one of the A.P. papers over 30 years ago, and, this man in trouble was one of them.

The biography told of a cheery young man apparently without a care in the world, and whose stories were in great demand. The photograph showed him smiling, handsome and prosperous looking. It brought a lump to my throat as I visualised the one time author now grey-haired with patched clothes and 8d. in his pocket who had spent a week-end in a prison cell. One doesn't know what has brought him to such a pass in these days of little unemployment, but I thought of what someone once said, "There but for the grace of God go I".

I mentioned the sad business to a member of our circle. He was shocked for it so happened that they had corresponded when

both were young, though they had never met. He had an urge to help if he could so he wrote to the Chief Constable of the city in which the case had been heard. A reply was received saying that the man had stayed there for a few days then set off on his wanderings again. We are still hoping to trace him.

* * * * *

ANOTHER COINCIDENCE: In our April number Bill Lofts article "Ghost Papers" appeared. Whilst it was being prepared the newspaper strike in Fleet Street started. In the days which followed provincial papers which were published told how work went on preparing the London ones just in case the strike finished suddenly. They called them "Ghost Papers"! Maybe a few copies would be run off which the public will never see, thus providing a puzzle for collectors in years to come, when the strike has been forgotten.

THE "CHAMPION": As briefly announced last month, the "Champion" folded up on March 19th. As it started January 28th, 1922, it ran for over 33 years, longer than even the "Magnet". From that it would seem to have been a success, yet for over 30 years of that run it seemed to most of us a rather anaemic rival of the Thomson papers, Adventure, Wizard, etc.

For its first two-and-a-half years, it was edited by Mr. F. Addington Symonds. During that time it was a real live intimate paper, packed with fine serials and long complete stories. The readers were supplied with interesting information about the authors and the artists. Then Mr. Addington Symonds left and with him that friendly, confidential touch.

I suppose it could be claimed that the change justified itself; all the same to me it lost its charm.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

THE GENTLEMAN'S JOURNAL

by COLONEL TOPCHIN

"The Gentleman's Journal" - a Magazine devoted to Literature Information and Amusement saw the light on the 1st November, 1869 and the first number consisted of 16 pages, with a Colored plate and four extra pages given in, all for one penny.

It was of the same size as Frank Leslie's Weekly and was in every way a well produced boys' journal, illustrated by first-class Artists and printed on good quality white paper. In other words there was nothing cheap in its production.

It was published by E. Harrison of London, who also published The Young Ladies Journal, Black Bess and Blueskin, a mixed group if ever there was one.

It started off well with a flourish of trumpets and some advertising and attained a fair circulation, although at this date it is impossible to say with what success.

If good exciting tales were of any use in boosting the circulation then this paper had the "goods". In the first number three serials started, namely:- "The Raven and What Became of it" "Saxilby Manor" and "The Sea Kings", an Historical Romance of the time of Alfred. The first one was a long tale of the adventures of several boys in a balloon over Europe and the last was, as its title indicates, a Sea tale.

The first Volume consisted of 35 numbers and the second 28 numbers. In the first volume no less than 20 large Chromo-Lithographic pictures were given away and nine Recreation Supplements.

The two most noted writers in the first volume were Watts Phillips (of the Royal Academy) who wrote "Facing the World" and Manville Fenn who wrote "Gold" a tale of hunting for gold in Mexico. Both were exciting tales. To show the style of the serials I will append a few more titles:- Mark Single - a Sea Story, Townshend the Runner or The King's Favourite, Behind the Mask or The Gypsy's Hate, "Dick O'the Diamond" or "Out on the World", Zarco the Corsair by Charles Stevens, whose speciality was early historical tales. "Luke's Luck" by one of the Emmett Brothers, Edwin J. Brett's great rivals. "Top-Gallant Tom or "The Cruise of the Dreadnought" was another good sea yarn. In Number 99 commenced three serials:- "Heir to Half a Million", "The White Indian" a tale of Redskin Life and "Paul Adair" or "The Prince of the Pearl Divers" by Charles Stevens. Unfortunately very few author's names were given.

The first volume contained articles on Science, Art and Practical Mechanics. Lessons in Chess, Draughts, Billiards, Solitaire, Angling, Rowing, Croquet; the keeping of Domestic Pets; in addition to Essays, Poetry, Music, etc.

Yet with all these advantages, the paper came to a sudden death with No. 150, Vol. 6.

The fault of the paper was it was too highbrow for the boys of that period who wanted more Pirate yarns with more gore and less of the "uplift" business. In fact they were not going to have uplift at any price and they dropped the paper, the consequence being the Publishers stopped publication very suddenly in the middle of a volume. And thus ended a well conducted and well printed paper for boys. There are no copies about and none in the British Museum. I am glad to say I have a complete set from the library of the late Collector, A.E. Waite.

BLAKE FANS

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN,

27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

I do hope all Blake fans will enjoy Walter Webb's latest articles - and maybe write and tell him so. A great deal of work goes into these contributions and a few words of thanks helps considerably.

How do you like Derek's 'Consulting Room Chat'? His suggestion about Tinker is good. I can remember many cases in which he escaped from awkward situations, such as when he was very nearly eaten by the Chinese Dragon on the Island of Samsi; another time he was saved from the cannibals' cooking-pot, by no less a person than Dr. Huxton Rymer (no prizes for identifying these stories!).

Can't spare any more space this month for remarks, or I shall exceed my maximum quota.

JOSIE PACKMAN.

THE MEN BEHIND PLUMMER

by Walter Webb

Part One

In its long history as a detective and adventure story paper, the UNION JACK published many splendid Sexton Blake stories, a lot that was of good average quality, much that was uninspiring, and a few downright poor stories which should never have found their way into its pages. Into the latter category came some of the early Plummer stories, believed to have been written by John William Robin, otherwise Mark Osborne, but which were certainly not the

work of that very good writer. For many years it has been strongly believed that Bobin actually conceived Plummer and wrote all the stories featuring the character until Hamilton Teed took him over in the 1920's. But far from creating the notorious master-criminal, John Bobin was not even the man who took over from the original creator - was not even the third, nor the fourth to chronicle the exploits of that utterly ruthless and most unscrupulous of all Sexton Blake's enemies.

Who, then, were the men who took over Plummer when his creator, Michael Storm, passed away? First story by the team of 'ghost writers' was that which was contained in UNION JACK (No.342), entitled "The Mystery of Room 11", and which introduced the characters of John Marsh and his attractive wife for the first time, the latter appearing in only the last few lines of the story, when, with Plummer and Marsh standing in the dock after being sentenced to heavy terms of imprisonment she sent out, from somewhere within the confines of the court, reassuring words of comfort to her husband, informing him of her intentions of letting nothing stand in her way of getting him free. A very good tale, this, one of the best of the early Plummer stories, and the first Sexton Blake effort by one of the most popular Blake writers of all time.

The name? Well, I have it on very reliable authority that Mrs. Michael Storm sold UNION JACK editor, William Back, some stories after her husband's death which, at the time, were thought to have been written by Storm. Afterwards, however, they were found to have been the work of a new writer, named George Hamilton Teed. How Mrs. Storm came to be in possession of Teed's work is not clear, but the latter had such a good insight into Plummer's character that the possibility of he and Storm having worked together in harness on occasion cannot be ruled out, which is the reason why, in my previous article, I ventured to suggest that Teed could have shed some light on the mystery of Michael Storm. Teed ghosted for other Storm stories apart from "The Mystery of Room 11", but these must have appeared in other publications because I can trace no others within the covers of the UNION JACK. Nearly three years later Hamilton Teed turned up in the flesh and started in under his own name and steam, but probably forgot all about John Marsh whom he created in 1910, for he never wrote further stories about the character.

Reverting back to Plummer, the next story to feature him was

published in issue No. 357, but apart from stating that it also starred John Marsh I can offer little comment as I do not possess a copy. Next came "The Cotton Corner", by the same writer, with Marsh again linking up with Plummer to form a dangerous alliance for Sexton Blake to tackle. The fourth Plummer and Marsh story found, as in the two previous tales, Norman Goddard doing the ghosting and bringing in Mr. Spearing to the side of Sexton Blake, and Tinker, to lessen the odds a little in the crooks' favour.

Ghost-writer No. 3 and the fourth writer to relate the nefarious activities of George Marsden Plummer was author-editor Lewis Carlton, and he made his debut in issue No.401, week-ending 17 June 1911 with, it must be admitted, an indifferent effort, entitled "The Kidnapped Inspector". With Storm's Plummer, Teed's John Marsh and Norman Goddard's Mr. Spearing, the only creation of any importance to Carlton's credit in this case was that of Sir Henry Fairfax, Chief Commissioner of Police, well-known to all lovers of Sexton Blake lore; that is, so far as the name is concerned, for Sir Henry was to become as familiar a figure in the Blake stories as Inspectors Coutts, Harker, Martin, Thomas and Lennard, and one or two others attached to the Yard.

For exactly a year Plummer and Marsh were not featured in the UNION JACK; then, in issue No. 453, Lewis Carlton brought the notorious pair back again in a story entitled "The Case of the Convict Millionaire". By this time it was apparent that Norman Goddard had decided that he had little further use for Mr. Spearing, and, for that matter, Sexton Blake as well, for his appearances as a contributor to the UNION JACK had practically ceased, which is probably the reason why Carlton took over the character of the popular ex-Scotland Yard Official. Be that as it may, Spearing took quite a prominent part in the following five Plummer stories, but after issue No.465, containing the affair of "The Secret Salves", Carlton apparently also decided that Spearing's day was done, for after that record the once popular old character was left out of the stories.

The year 1912 was undoubtedly Plummer's year, for he appeared regularly at the rate of about once a month in stories all of which were written by Lewis Carlton, who, under the pen-name of 'Claude Custer', turned out serials of Buffalo Bill for THE DREADNOUGHT, which were afterwards reprinted in volume form in the BOYS FRIEND 4d. LIBRARY. As far as his Plummer stories were concerned, Lewis

Carlton may have put plenty of effort into his work, but the results achieved hardly justified the endeavour. Having said that these stories were poorly written, it must be added that, in some instances, they were also very carelessly produced. Take the case of the character of Mrs. Marsh, wife of Plummer's confederate. She was introduced under no fewer than three different Christian names; for in THE MYSTERY OF BLEAKMOOR PRISON, John Marsh referred to her as Clara (page 7 column 1); then in THE KIDNAPPED INSPECTOR (page 1 column 2), Lewis Carlton introduced her as Julia. In the next Plummer story he wrote Carlton changed her name to Hilda, and then, obviously deciding that this was actually her name, continued to refer to her as such. There were occasions, too, when Carlton referred to Sir Henry Fairfax as Sir John Fairfax and called John Marsh by the name of Henry Marsh (see THE CASE OF THE CONVICT MILLIONAIRE, page 19, column 1), examples of careless writing that served to lower the poor standard of his stories even deeper.

-----ooOoo-----

CONSULTING ROOM CHAT

by Derek Ford

Introduction: The above title will no doubt be familiar to you as the one which appeared over that grand little feature in the Sexton Blake Libs. for so many years: to be exact, from April 1934 to July 1940; rather appropriately the title of one of the following August case-books was "The Consulting Room Mystery" (726). When it ceased, the 'personal' note departed from the S.B. stage: the curtain descending upon our views and suggestions with editorial replies; no longer were we to have news and photographs of our favourite authors, or details of new case-books. It has not risen again, and I suppose never will now - more's the pity.

However, to get to the real purpose of this paragraph's heading, I have decided - with Mrs. Packman's approval - to adopt this title for an occasional Blakian miscellany by myself. Your suggestions, comments or news items will be welcome for inclusion in my next 'go'. The address is: 42, WEST BOND STREET, MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE.

House-names: In his February case-book (329) Anthony Parsons mentions a retired Yard inspector calling his cottage 'Dununtin'. It recalled these lines from Rex Hardinge's "The Observer Corps Mystery" (733):

"Sexton Blake? Do you mean to tell us that you are the

detective - the Sexton Blake?"

"The only thing I know of with the same name is a house, and that was named after me" retorted Blake.

Which brings me to the question: have you ever seen a house-name recalling some Blakian character or case? I remember once seeing a 'Zenith', but whether this had any reference to the famous 'Albino', I don't know. In passing, it would seem that Jack Wood is a Holmesian as well as a Leeite, calling his house 'Nostaw': (Doctor) Watson in reverse.**

** Len wrote to Jack Wood about this some year or two ago, but Jack's reply was that the house was already named before ever he occupied it. J.P.

Surprise: I wonder if you have heard this story about the famous (?) author in the railway carriage? Across from him was sitting a rather pompous looking man reading one of his latest books. "Excuse me", the author said, tapping him on the knee, "but I'm the author of the book you're reading. How do you like it?" Startled, the man dropped the book - and out fell an S.B.L.!

Second Surprise: This time it was I that was surprised. Going through the last C.D. Annual 'Who's Who' I found that, altogether, there are 71 collectors of either one or all of the three main S.B. groups! You wouldn't think it, would you, judging by the dearth of material for 'Blakiana' each month? It sometimes puzzles me where Mrs. Packman finds the enthusiasm to carry on. I suppose you like reading this section - I've never heard any protests about it taking up valuable room - but someone must write for it if it is to continue - IT'S UP TO YOU!

Suggestion: Tinker is a neglected subject in 'Blakiana'. How about one of you 71 collectors telling us about some of his famous escapes, on the lines of Victor Colby's champion article about some memorable Blake exits? Do you remember Donald Stuart's case-book "The Motor Bus Murder" (422) in which Tinker is bricked up in a cellar? I was puzzled how Warwick Jardine was going to save Tinker in the blazing cinema in his latest case-book (332), weren't you? Trapping him in the projection room, which is of course always fireproof, was rather neat.

Puzzle: Below you will find the descriptions of three words. Find these, then sort them into the name of a Lewis Jackson character who could be the subject of quite an interesting article

too. It is not Leon Kestrel. (1) To be without. (2) Payment for the use of a thing. (3) A long pointed weapon. Answer next month.

Talking of puzzles, I wonder why there was never a S.B. jig-saw? I have always thought the cover of the second S.B. Annual would have made a good one.

Visiting-Card. I wonder if you have ever seen a visiting-card with some quotation or rhyme on the back which was appropriate to the man's trade or business on the face of the card? If ever S.B. wanted a few suitable lines for his card, I would suggest these by Berton Braley:

Got any river they say isn't crossable?
 Got any mountains that can't be cut through?
 We specialise in the wholly impossible,
 Doing things nobody ever could do.

Better Memory: A Start: When you are suddenly called away from reading your S.B.L., - usually at a most exciting part of the case too - do you push a pen, pencil, spill, table-knife, cigarette (someone once put a lighted one which burned down, set the book alight and.... but that's another story), match, & note or what-have-you between the page you have to leave it at? I'll bet you do. Well, next time DON'T - just memorise the page number. It's easy!

Tailpiece: Did you hear about the chap who wrote to the London County Council during S.B.'s sixtieth year, suggesting that they should consider re-naming their perhaps most famous street - BLAKER STREET?

THE 'ANNUAL' BALLOT

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All others receiving good support.

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

BILLY BUNTER IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

AGAIN: In the adjourned debate on the Children's and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Bill, popularly known as the Horror Comics Bill, on March 28th, 1955, a Member rose to his feet and spoke thus:

"On the other hand, a publisher would be running a grave risk if he produced an illustrated version of "The Pit and the Pendulum" once this Bill became law. He would also run the risk of difficulties if he produced an illustrated version of "Billy Bunter" because "Billy Bunter" contains many incidents which might incite children to violence, such as jamming people between doors and pushing people into fireplaces. I imagine it would not be a great loss to literature if "Billy Bunter" disappeared and it will disappear in illustrated version once this Bill is passed."

Fancy that now. At first I thought the Member must be joking, but judging by his personal opinion of Bunter expressed in his last sentence, he was serious. Well, well, I wonder if Mr. Chapman is shivering in his shoes or whether Joy Harrington is feeling guilty for producing bad boy Billy on T.V. for millions to see.

I won't mention the M.P.'s name for it might be that some Hamiltonian lives in his constituency, and would feel like voting against him at the coming election, even if the M.P. does use common sense in other matters.

The quotation was taken from Hansard kindly supplied by David Harrison.

THE LAUGH OF THE WEEK: It was later reported that five out of six copies of Horror Comics had been stolen from a reading room in the House of Lords! Whom were the culprits? - Peers? Bishops? who couldn't resist the temptation. Perhaps they would plead they were hungering for some reading owing to the newspaper strike!

Now comes an interesting article from Anthony Baker. And it so happens that I have just come across another school story which appeared under Charles Hamilton's name. It was called 'Rivals' and it appeared in "Fluck" No. 38, July 29th, 1905. The school

was Clavering, but evidently with no connection with the one with Tom Merry associations. The hero was Jack Stanley who had a chum called Tom Nugent and the captain of the school was Bulkeley.

I have added it to Anthony's list. Probably it is by no means complete. Nevertheless it is an impressive one. Actually of course 'Charles Hamilton' was not a 'Pseudonym' but as he himself says he is better known as 'Frank Richards' we will let it pass.

* * * * *

SCHOOLS -- AND PLENTY OF THEM!

BY ANTHONY P. BAKER

I thought recently it might be quite interesting if I jotted down the names of all the schools created by Frank Richards which I had ever come across. I expected the total to be not more than about 15, and so I was staggered when eventually I found I had a list of 36 schools, all evolved and written about by the Master of School Story writers! Some are very minor ones, but all have had stories centred round them at some period during Frank Richards' half-a-century of school story writing. It is, of course, a unique achievement, and, as the list may be of interest to others, here it is. Naturally, there is not the space to give much information, even where I know it, so I have concentrated mainly on the papers in which the stories originally appeared, and if and where they were reprinted. I have not included any schools which have not had stories in their own right (e.g., Highcliffe).
 Barcroft: Pseudonym used, Frank Richards. T.M.O. (Poems).
 Carbrooke: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Realm, No. 231.
 Carcroft: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. Hutchinson's "Pie", T.M.O., The Silver Jacket.
 Carnforth: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Realm, No. 244.
 Cedar Creek: Pseudonym, Martin Clifford. Boys Friend. Reprints:- Gem, Holiday Annual.
 Clavering: Pseudonym, Martin Clifford. $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Gem, Reprints: Gem Popular, Holiday Annual, Sun.
 Clavering: Charles Hamilton. Pluck No. 38.
 Cliff House: Pseudonym Hilda Richards. School Friend, T.M.O., B.B.O., "Bessie Bunter of Cliff House" (book).
 Clivedale: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Realm No. 209.
 Cliveden: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Herald.
 Felgate: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. Raymond Glendenning's Book of Sport, T.M.O., B.B.O.

- Fernley: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Id. Union Jack No. 106.
 Reprint:- Nugget 3d. Lib. No. 64.
- Floating School, The: Pseudonym, Owen Conquest. Greyfriars
 Herald 2nd series (?). Reprints:- Gem.
- Greyfriars: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. Magnet, Holiday Annual,
 Bunter Books, T.M.O., B.B.O., Comet. Reprints: B.F.L., S.O.L.,
 Gem, Holiday Annual, Dreadnought, Popular, Comet.
- Grimslade: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. Ranger. Reprints S.O.L.'s
 232, 238, 242, 248, 252, 254, 256.
- Headland House: Pseudonym, Hilda Richards. Headland House Series,
 publ. by Wm. C. Merrett (3 issues).
- High Coombe: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Modern Boy, T.M.O.,
 B.B.O. Reprints:- S.O.L.'s. 290, 299.
- High Lynn: Pseudonym, Hilda Richards. "Girls of High Lynn School",
 paper-backed booklet publ. by J.B. Publ.
- Lynwood: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. "Fourth Form at Lynwood" and
 "Chums of Lynwood", 2 paper-backed booklets publ. by J.B. Publ.
- Northcote: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Vanguard, Nos. 1, 7, 9.
- Oakshott: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Modern Boy. Reprints:-
 S.O.L.'s 353, 371, Holiday Annual, 1941.
- Packsaddle: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. Unable to find where
 stories originally appeared. Reprints:- S.O.L.'s 305, 323, 329.
- Redcliffe: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Best Budget No. 8, Larks
 No. 4 and possibly others.
- Rookwood: Pseudonym, Owen Conquest. Boys Friend, Popular, B.F.L.
 No. 413, 1st Series, T.M.O., B.B.O., "Rivals of Rookwood" (book)
 Reprints:- Holiday Annual, S.O.L.
- St. Cynthia's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Id. Union Jack No.76
 Reprint, Nugget 3d. Lib. No. 32.
- St. Dorothy's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Realm, Reprint:-
 S.O.L. No. 292.
- St. Egbert's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Realm No. 245.
- St. Freda's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Vanguard No. 31.
- St. Hilda's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Realm No. 225.
- St. Jim's: Pseudonym, Martin Clifford (Charles Hamilton in Pluck).
 Fluck, Gen, B.F.L., Holiday Annual, Tom Merry Books, Gold Hawk,
 Books, T.M.O. Reprints:- B.F.L., S.O.L., Holiday Annual, Gem,
 Popular, Triumph, Sun.
- St. Ronan's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. Boys Realm Nov. 16/07.
- St. Kate's: Pseudonyms, Charles Hamilton, Frank Drake (for last
 2 stories). Vanguard Nos. 32, 42, 49, 58, 68.

- St. Kate's: Pseudonym, Hilda Richards. "The Girls of St. Kate's", book not yet published.
- St. Kit's: Pseudonym, Charles Hamilton. "The Rivals of St. Kit's", a serial in the Empire Library.
- St. Kit's: Pseudonym, Clifford Clive (for School and Sport), Frank Richards (for Boys Friend and S.O.L.). School and Sport, Boys Friend. Reprints:- Boys Friend, S.O.L. Nos. 64, 70, 136 and 188.
- Sparshott: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. Schoolboy Series and Sparshot Series (5 issues). Publ. by Wm. C. Merrett.
- Topham: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. Arrow Schoolboy Series (4 issues). Publ. by John Matthew.
- Tipdale: Pseudonym, Frank Richards. "Bunker Bates on the Warpath", short story in "The Fourth Form at Lynwood".

To this list, I might add a 37th: the stories of Rylcombe Grammar School in the Empire Library, but, as no one seems to know whether or not it was a genuine Hamilton School, I have left it out. Strictly speaking, when Frank Richards wrote under his own name of Charles Hamilton, the word 'pseudonym' is not correct; however, I have used it for want of a better. Of course, it is very doubtful indeed if this is a complete list — and even more doubtful if the details I have given are correct! All the same: 36 schools!! Not only is it by far the greatest total in number, but what other school story writer can claim such schools as Greyfriars, St. Jim's, or Rookwood in his writings?

NOTE: Highcliffe could be included because of the two Boys Friend Library 3d. (First Series) "The Boy Without a Name" and "Rivals and Chums". H.L.

R E V I E W S

By ERIC FAYNE.

"BILLY BUNTER'S DOUBLE"

This, the latest of the Bunter books, is a jolly romp. Modern in idiom, with its theme carefully developed from the first line and with little or no irrelevancy, "Billy Bunter's Double" will undoubtedly be very popular with the younger generation, who will revel in the bubbling fun of its plot, unbelievable though it may be. For older collectors, the impact may be lessened by the fact that we have read it all before, when Billy and Wally changed

places in those halcyon days - oh, so long ago! But if such is the case, the loss of impact will more than be compensated by the fragrant charm of nostalgia which comes to the reader in meeting again a character who made our days joyful when we were boys, Wally Bunter. Recommended for the young in heart of all ages. (Cassell's. 7/6)

THE TOM MERRY SERIES

The original Tom Merry series of Mandeville, now published by Spring Books at 2/6 are exceptionally good value for money. With stiff covers, and attractive dust-jackets, they are presented in slightly smaller print, which I consider no disadvantage at all. The series, so far, is as follows:-

- "TOM MERRY & CO. OF ST. JIM'S":- Excellent story in light vein, notable for a fine pen-picture of a schoolmaster in Mr. Ratcliffe.
- "SCAPEGRACE OF ST. JIM'S":- One of the very best of the post-war stories of the old schools, with excellent character study of Harry Manners.
- "SECRET OF THE STUDY":- Good story with neat and original plot.
- "TALBOT'S SECRET":- Good of its type, and well-worth while in bringing Talbot to the fore again, though the typical Talbot plot is familiar.
- "RIVALS OF ROOKWOOD":- Enjoyable story of the lighter type. Each of the Tom Merry stories in particular is first-class of its type. Fully equal to anything of the Gem days, they are even better than some of the Bunter stories, and should reach high sales at their moderate cost.

-----ooOoo-----

DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins

No. 9 - Gem No. 441 - "Too Clever by Half"

The early Blue and White Gems really had little to distinguish them from their famous blue-covered predecessors - apart, of course, from the covers themselves. Many of the stories in the latter half of 1916, for instance, were very fine indeed, and nearly all were interesting reading. No. 441 was no exception.

A St. Jim's story featuring Cutts and his circle has the special attraction for older readers which tales about seniors in the Gem always possess, an attraction caused by the more serious tone of the narrative. On this occasion it was St. Leger who was

in the forefront; though as reckless and unscrupulous as Cutts in most things, he lacked his cool and calculating nature.

It all happened on one of those glorious summer afternoons when it was too hot for cricket, and practically all the school was down on the river. St. Leger was playing nap on the bank with a disreputable character from Wayland, and was caught in the act by a governor of the school, Major Stringer. He refused to give his name, and the major declared he would go up to the school the next day and identify him.

It was Cutts who was "Too Clever by Half". He arranged an alibi for St. Leger by going up to Baggy Trimble and congratulating him on saving St. Leger from the pool in the Ryll. Baggy at once believed that he had really done it, and St. Leger was saved - for a time. Baggy then proceeded to blackmail St. Leger while Mellish and Piggott blackmailed Baggy, until eventually the whole cunning scheme collapsed like a pack of cards.

No. 441 was a satisfying story, with thrust and counter-thrust between the major and St. Leger, with Cutts spinning his cobweb of lies over it all to confuse the issue. The only blemish was the paper shortage which, one suspects, induced the author to abbreviate his story.

MAGNET TITLES: 1409, The Remove's Remarkable Recruit: 1410, The Unseen Witness: 1411, The Fifth Form Mystery: 1412, Coker the Reformer: 1413, A Schoolboy's Secret: 1414 Honours Even: 1415, The Sleuth of Greyfriars: 1416, Fooled on the First: 1417, Facing the Music: 1418, Quelch's Easter Egg: 1419, Jimmy the Fox: 1420, At the Eleventh Hour: 1421, Up for the Jubilee: 1422, Harry Wharton's Double: 1423, Rivals of the Remove: 1424, Harry Wharton's Enemy: 1425, The Hero of the Hour: 1426, Who Shall be Captain? 1427, Harry Wharton's Triumph: 1428, The Black Sheep: 1429, A Traitor to His Side: 1430, A Dangerous Double: 1431, Standing by Smithy: 1432, Saved from the Sack.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Library (First and Second Series Only). Your Price Paid for Good Copies. Serial Numbers and Series to:-
JOSEPHINE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.
WANTED: Any Copies of 'Chips' between 1914 and 1920 (inclusive). Good Condition Only. 2/6 each offered. L. PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

GOSSIP ABOUT ST. FRANK'S



By JACK WOOD,
 NOSTON, 328, Stockton Lane, York.

Continuing our story of St. Frank's and the Bannington Grammarians, we now come to 1st New Series No. 44, The Deluge at St. Frank's, where we find the school playing fields so sodden by continued rain that Nipper rings up the junior captain to postpone the Grammar School match.

Edgar Stanmore, a new junior captain, has some lurid comments to make about a "fake ground" for ducks to revel in, and then suggests Nipper & Co. should change venues as the Grammar School is well elevated and far from the river Stowe. However, a deluge occurs, and Mr. Cotton, the burly 5th Form master, forbids the match.

Handy's antics on the way home when he finds the Pine Hill Reservoir cracking, his unheeded warnings, and the disastrous results, all make up one of Brooks's best series.

In 92, The Voice of the Tempter, Vivian Travers is at his most unscrupulous in dealing with Harold Grayson to right the fortunes of Jimmy Potts, the Bootboy Baronet, and the story opens with an inter-school match in a tense situation. St. Frank's led 2 - 1 at the interval and were down 2 - 3 soon afterwards, only for Nipper to equalise. In a ding-dong closing struggle Handy saved in great style, and then Travers, who had scored one goal and helped to make a second, was in action at inside left. His

polished football was a joy to watch and he got the winning goal in the last minute with a great angled drive. The Moor View girls make his acquaintance and invite him to Winnie Pitt's birthday party, which leads to Grayson being tempted and succumbing.

In 104 we are in the midst of the famous series in which Handy, falsely convicted of wrecking Mr. Crowell's study, becomes at logger heads with the Remove. He refuses to play cricket at Bannington and then locks up his successor, Alan Castleton, so that he misses the game, too. Handy played, after all, but he was too conscience-stricken to be much value to the team, missing a catch off Hope, the new Bannington junior skipper, and being out first ball. Net result, a defeat for the Saints by 10 runs, and Handy shunned by the form.

By 117 the results have become even more startling with Cuthbert Chambers relegated from the Fifth - surely, here was a more Coker-like character in many ways than Handy? - and bullying his way into the junior captaincy, and now in the Third and being tamed by the Fags. We are introduced to Rex Palmer of the Bannington Fifth, and his sister, pretty 15 year-old Phyllis, who has just joined Moor View.

No. 37 Second New Series, Glutton and Goalkeeper, presents Fatty Little, less familiarly known as James Rodway Little, of Study P, West House, in one of his rare leading roles. Thanks to studymate Nick Trotwood, who uses his ventriloquial skill to make Nipper include him in the team, Fatty plays for the junior XI against the Grammarians, much to the disgust of the team. However thanks to his previous stern exercising, Fatty acquits himself as a second Fatty Fowkes. In the first minute he saves a shot from Moulden, a Grammaria forward, and later in a brilliant display he saves a penalty taken by the centre forward after Parkington had handled in the area.

Townrow, Smith and Braby, of the Grammar School Fourth, win substantial bets at the expense of Forrest & Co. as St. Frank's win by five goals to nil.

In 59, Capper's Captured Caps, Handy & Co. get into trouble after George Capper, a newcomer, Fortescue Ford and Clarence Vine, of the Grammar School Fourth, throw a brick into a mirror at the Caistowe Waterfront Pavilion. Capper is a practical joker in his way, slim, aristocratic and elegant. The Grammarians had not lost a game that season, but St. Frank's won by two goals to nil,

Nipper and Pitt scoring for St. Frank's. That is the introduction to a story in which Capper works out a cunning revenge for Handy striking him for betting.

As the plot develops we learn that lessons at the Grammar School start earlier than at St. Frank's, that Mr. Bull is the Fourth master, and that Colmore is a prefect. Capper was expelled and the others flogged.

In 91, *The Riddle of the Seven Stars*, main theme features Travers and Ezra Quirke in the mystery of an Egyptian Seven Stars ring.

St. Frank's and the Grammarians meet in a St. Frank's Football League game, and thanks to the Curse of Osra and Quirke's machinations the Grammarians profit from the St. Frank's errors, and mishaps, to win by six clear goals to nil.

That completes our survey of the long story of St. Frank's and the Grammarians, and now here is an article from an old friend, too long absent from our column, Norman Pragnell.

THE LAST DAYS OF "BETWEEN OURSELVES"

A few weeks ago, on a bitterly cold Saturday afternoon, we were compelled to sit in front of a blazing fire, instead of enjoying the more healthy, but perhaps more foolish hobby that we citizens of Liverpool go in for on such Saturday afternoons. Instinctively, we took down from the shelves some fifty odd copies of the Nelson Lee Library of varying periods, and pulling up our favourite chair began to turn the pages.

Without realising it we automatically turned to the back of the books to read if it were there. Edwy Searles Brooks' own column. Reading once again some of his answers to our oft foolish questions, we realised how much the success of the Nelson Lee was due to his pleasant personality and intimate touch. We are quite sure no other author ever enjoyed such personal contact with the reader. Certainly the readers of the *Magnet* and the *Gem* were not so fortunate, for their favourite author never wrote his school stories under his own name, let alone make contact with them each week.

As we turned from the older Nelson Lees to the later ones we realised that it was only our personal regard for Brooks' work that kept us buying the "Old Paper" week after week during that depressing period of its life between 1930 - 1933. A detailed

study of the two features "Between Ourselves" and "Gossip about St. Franks" would take far more space than the Collector's Digest can afford, but what we propose to do here is to glance through the last period which we were to enjoy of "Between Ourselves". Nelson Lee enthusiasts will remember that from January, 1930 to April, 1931 we had had no word whatsoever from Brooks. We can hardly imagine that this was his fault. The foolish people who were responsible for the publication of the Nelson Lee no doubt thought that the adventures of Dicky and his Dinosaur were far more interesting. However, we can only assume that the "light" was eventually seen at Fleetway House and at the end of March, 1931, the following announcement was made. "Between Ourselves". This popular feature will return shortly. Once more Edwy Searles Brooks will Pow-Wow with readers of the Old Paper in a series of breezy chats."

And so at the beginning of April our favourite author returned to us. In his first article we had an attractive photo of Brooks in the top left hand corner - something we older readers remember all too well. We were also invited to write to him again, an offer of which many of us took advantage. Mention was also made of a number of "Chin Wags" between the Editor and the author about the future of the Nelson Lee. It would have been most interesting to have been at one of those meetings. We can imagine many hard words being spoken. A touch of irony appeared also. Brooks told us that any complaints such as the quality of the illustrations were to be directed to the Editor and not to himself. We know that Brooks must have yearned for the illustrations to be done again by Arthur Jones. Two weeks later the names of some of the old correspondents appeared. Mick Sullivan and Reg. T. Staples were but two of them. We often wonder what has happened to some of those well-known names. A interesting reply to Leonora Baber appeared on April 25th. She had written to Brooks suggesting that the recent St. Franks stories had not been written by him. He wrote the reply:- "Well, I hope she won't continue to labour under this delusion. Every St. Franks story that has ever appeared in the "Old Paper" has come from my pen". We can well understand the readers' apprehension however. Many of the stories appearing in the Nelson Lee Library were to say the least, very odd indeed. Several months ago in a letter to the writer of this article Edwy Searles Brooks said that the style of the stories

appearing then was not of his own choosing. Editorial policy at that time was not in favour of the more solid type series we knew of old; what was wanted apparently were medium length stories of the "slap stick" variety. On May the ninth, we read a scrap of information that may not be generally known. The first Nelson Lee story he ever wrote was entitled "Twenty Fathoms Deep" and it appeared in No. 16 Old Series. We also noted that Tich Harborough had left St. Franks - not much of a miss we think. The following week another letter by Leonora Baber was commented on. She was obviously still dissatisfied with the way the Nelson Lee was being run, and reading between the lines, she made no bones about it. Brooks had to promise once again that we were back to the "good old days". Up to a point we were, and our author, no doubt was doing his best. Possibly he did not realise what the future months held for the Nelson Lee Library. A few weeks later on May 30th appeared the last of "Between Ourselves" as we knew it. The following week Brooks' photo disappeared and the title of the feature was altered to "Our Round Table Talk" and we were informed that it would be conducted by The Editor and Mr. Brooks.

Why the change? Having no inside information we can only put it to pure jealousy, whether by the old editor or possibly a new one, either way it was obvious that the Editor wanted to collar all the limelight.

Brooks, writing for the first time in the third person commented on a letter from Robert C. Blythe. Mr. Blythe wondered whether his letter went straight into the waste paper basket, as his remarks were nearly all complaints. He was assured that all readers' letters were carefully read, but we can sympathise with him for he had plenty to complain about. It would be interesting to read the original letter. The writer of these notes also received an answer to three questions, one of which was to ask for Nipper's correct name. Why the question was asked we cannot say, as we have always known the answer - possibly sheer vanity in an attempt to see our name in print.

A few weeks later, at the foot of the column, we noticed a change of address for our letter, no longer to be addressed to Edwy Searles Brooks, but to the Editor himself.

Later we read of numbers of readers, their appetites whetted by the Northestrian series, asking if the original series could be purchased. The editorial comment was brief - "Sorry, out of

print". A pity, for readers would have had the chance of reading the Nelson Lee at its best. With Edwy Searles Brooks no longer at the helm of his own feature, our interest began to wane. The old atmosphere had gone and our feelings toward the Editor were far from cordial. We did note a comment by Jack Murtagh of New Zealand appearing in September of 1931. He was asking for more tales of the Ezra Quirke and Dr. Karnak type. The Editor promised him every satisfaction, but we doubt whether Mr. Murtagh was so easily put off. Perhaps Jack Murtagh of New Zealand would give us his answers to this point in our Nelson Lee column. In its unsatisfactory form "Our Round Table Talk" continued until the re-introduction of the Silver Dwarf Series. From then on, discussion of St. Franks and his character was taboo. The space was taken up by readers' jokes and other nonsense. Truly what had started out as a great revival, finished up as half a page or so of sheer drivel. Such treatment of the fine work coming from the pen of Edwy Searles Brooks is something we shall not easily forget.

A V A I L A B L E: MAGNETS, GEMS, UNION JACKS, POPULARS, MARVELS, SEXTON BLAKES, BOYS CINEMAS, BOYS REALMS, BOYS MAGAZINES, BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY'S - ALL PERIODS. BUFFALO BILLS, TURPINS, ROBIN HOODS, DIAMOND LIBRARIES, YOUNG BRITAINS - 1920's. BULLSEYES, WIZARDS, SKIPPERS, ROVERS, ADVENTURES, PILOTS, STARTLERS, MODERN BOYS, CHAMPIONS, TRIUMPHS, HOTSPURS, HOLIDAY ANNUALS, BOYS FRIENDS 1903-1914 - 1930's. COMIC CUTS, PALS, COMRADES, SNAPSHOTS, NUGGETS, PLUCKS, ALDINE TURPINS, BUFFALO BILLS, DETECTIVE, FIRST-RATES, CHEERFUL, LAND & SEA, HALF HOLIDAY, etc. 1890-1905. MONTHLY CAPTAINS, B.O.P's, 1907-1917.

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OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION

April Spring meeting at Woodingdean, Brighton, was a great undebated success. Guest of honour was C.H. Chapman, no need to state what his claims to fame are, and to support him were three Bristolians, Cliff Lettey, Fred Rutherford and sister Nora. A very full programme of events were carried out. The hosts, Bill and Gladys Jardine, provided two very fine feeds and to wind up a family affair Bill provided two quiz' and young Jean read her article from the Woodingdean School Magazine, viz. "Billy Bunter's Stepfather". Mr. Chapman must have been very pleased to listen to this tribute to himself. Bill's first quiz was entitled an examination one and the tie for first place was shared by the Two Packmans, Josie and Len. The other quiz was the Tape Recorder one, a great idea of Bill's and an easy winner was Bob Whiter. Bob also had to conduct his quiz, as he was the winner at last month's meeting. Len Packman won this one. Another reading was the article by vice-president Bill Gender, "The Rookwood Press", telling all about the Low-down on its Set-up. This was read by myself and was well received. Finally, our Mr. Chapman obliged with some more lightning sketches of various Greyfriars characters. Thus with unanimous congratulations on the very successful 100th number of the "Collectors' Digest" and the grand St. Frank's and St. Jim's country meeting, all departed their various ways glad in the knowledge that they would meet on Sunday, May 15th, at Cherry Place, Wood Green, London, 4 p.m. sharp.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

NORTHERN SECTION

FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, APRIL 9TH, 1955.

Our chairman was unfortunately unable to be present owing to the illness of Mrs. Bentley. Opening the meeting in his absence I said all present would wish her a speedy recovery.

I went on to welcome a new member, Wilfred Billson. As he had been in the room half-an-hour, he was already perfectly at home. I also said we were pleased to see Bill Harrison again

after several months unavoidable absence.

Minutes and correspondence having been disposed of, we came to the annual report and the election of officers. The balance sheet audited and found correct, showed the Club to be in a very flourishing state. The library, besides providing quite a lot of reading matter for those able to attend the meetings, had handed over revenue to the G.P.O. for parcels passing to and from postal members.

Bill Harrison proposed that the officers be re-elected en bloc. This was seconded and carried unanimously. So Messrs. Smith, Allison and Co. carry on their labours for another year.

Business completed in such happy atmosphere, we got down to two games - 'Happy Families' and 'Ladder Words', the latter the BLAKE into PRICE by changing a letter at a time kind of thing. Both provided plenty of fun.

Next meeting, May 14th, a five weeks' interval, worse luck.

H. LECKENBY,
NORTHERN SECTION CORRESPONDENT.

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING: MARCH 28th

Another chapter in the history of our Club was opened to-night when we met for the first time at an admirable new rendezvous very generously offered by Mr. J.T. Handley. Our Chairman opened the meeting with a happy little speech thanking Mr. Handley on our behalf. Aply aided and abetted by his son, John, Mr. Handley had spared no pains to make us happy and comfortable.

We then had the pleasure of welcoming two new members, Mr. I.A. Carbin of Rugby, and Mr. L.L. Dyer, (an old friend of Mr. Handley). We were pleased to see Mr. Broster of Kinver again. After minutes and apologies we settled down to the programme which had been organised by our Chairman.

This commenced with a reading by Mrs. Corbett from Magnet No. 1361 (Smedley series), which related how Smithy's Millionaire Pater comes up to Herbert's study and surprised Punter busily engaged in scoffing Smithy's tuck while the coast was clear.

We were then asked to write our own continuation of the story. The eight or so entries were read by their authors and judged by a panel of three. They awarded the prize to Mr. G.L. Chatham for a very amusing and original idea. His story made Mr. Samuel Vernon

Smith say "Let me help you, my Boy", and he proceeds to suit the action to the word. Completely out of character of course, but an arrestingly novel idea. After this Mrs. Corbett finished the reading and told us what really happened. Incidentally this was a good example of Mr. Richards' more serious and dramatic passages.

It was now refreshment time and unfortunately two members (Mr. Broster and Mr. Carbin) had to leave for their long journey home. Not, however, before drinking a toast. In fact we drank several. First to Mr. Handley who had offered us such convenient accommodation at his offices, then we toasted the clubs, and finally and most important of all to the honoured name of incomparable Frank Richards.

EDWARD DAVEY.

* * * * *

MERSEYSIDE SECTION MEETING, 10th APRIL, 1955

There was a very pleasant opening to this Easter Sunday meeting as Don Webster informed us that he had purchased a considerable number of new books. Our policy is to add to our stock whenever possible, for the borrowing of the books at very reasonable charges has certainly done much to make this section such a happy one. It does one good to see the variety of the good old favourites neatly stacked on the library tables for every member to enjoy, and I mention this as one small instance of Chairman Don's great work for the Club.

Mr. Francomb has set us a most interesting, and what promises to be a highly amusing competition. Never, he says, has he read a proper description of Billy Bunter's spectacles, so his competition is intended to remedy this state of affairs, being an essay, not more than two hundred words, on "Billy Bunter's Spectacles". Entries are to be read out, and results announced at the May meeting. Mr. Francomb himself will judge the entries and is kindly providing the prizes. Let's hope that the fat Owl will not be too offended by some of the descriptions!

For the amusement (???) of this meeting Frank Case set us an acrostic. Its a jolly good thing that we are not members of Quelchy's class, otherwise that severe gentleman, I'm sure, would resign on the spot in dismay. One could almost hear the painful sound of brains being cudgelled to meet this challenge; certainly one could hear one or two uncomplimentary remarks directed at Frank

for setting such a poser, on Easter Sunday too! In sheer desperation, and with great good fortune, I managed to hit on the solution first, followed by Don and then by Peter. Our chairman and son kicked themselves later, as the answer was "Waterloo House".

To suit the convenience of several members, the next meeting will be on the 3rd Sunday in May (May 15th) at 7.0 p.m.

FRANK UNWIN.

WANTED: Collectors' Digest, No. 3A, etc. T.W. PORTER, OLD FIELDS, CORNGREAVES ROAD, CRADLEY HEATH, STAFFS.

DO YOU REMEMBER THAT LARGE PINK PAGED POLICE BUDGET? Copies are now extremely scarce, but R.E.J. ROUSE, 3 ST. LEONARD'S TERRACE, GAS HILL, NORWICH, recently secured a large quantity. Send S.A.E. for details.

LETTER BOX

BUSY JACK OF ALL TRADES

April 23rd, 1955.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Many thanks for the C.D. I specially liked Roger's article "In the Remove Fore-room". I fear that Latin did a little pre-dominate: but as Roger very truly remarks, most youthful readers could enjoy the howlers perpetrated by Bunter even if they couldn't quite follow the original. And very often I am pleased by letters from old readers who tell me that the Magnet gave them their first push in the direction of the classics. Really and truly the ancient authors are a fascinating study: and one who enjoys them feels like a fellow with a treasure he would like to share with everybody.

Some readers may be interested to hear that Spring Books are to publish the "Jack of All Trades" series. These will begin with a reprint of "Jack of All trades" published by Mandeville's: followed by "Jack's the Lad", "Jack of the Circus", and other volumes, which I have had ready for some time. The price of the books will probably be 3/6, which is at least a step in the right direction. I hope, one of these days, to see all my books at half-a-crown: but I expect I shall have made my century by then! With kindest regards, Always yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

GEM FANS! ITS UP TO YOU!

24, English Street,
LONGTOWN, Cumberland.

April 14th, 1955.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

Herewith find P.O. value 4/4 in payment for the March and April numbers of the C.D. received.

What ails St. Jim's these days that no article about it appeared in the 100 number of the C.D.? I was very disappointed about this, and think that Gemites ought to be ashamed of themselves for having let their old school down so badly. Thank goodness that "Tom Merry and Co., Caravanners" is coming along soon to keep the St. Jim's flag flying, although I am not pleased to notice that the silly Bunter has again been stuck in where he isn't wanted. St. Jim's requires no help from him.

The C.D. is unbalanced as between St. Jim's and Greyfriars, and unless this fault is rectified, the monthly may suffer from a loss of interest by those readers who favour St. Jim's. Surely there are sufficient Gemites with a little literary ability to provide at least one St. Jim's article for every number of the C.D. The time has come for them to get on with the job.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT FARISH.

MR. F. HAYDN DIMMOCK

Mr. F. Haydn Dimmock, who retired last year after 36 years as editor of "The Scout", died at his home in Welwyn Garden City, on April 26th. He was only 59.

Mr. Haydn Dimmock was the writer of numerous stories and books for boys. He joined the staff of "The Scout" in 1913 as office boy. He became assistant editor in 1915 and editor in 1919. He was the originator and organiser of the Scout "Soapbox Derbys"; the idea of "Bob-a-job" Week was also his.

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