

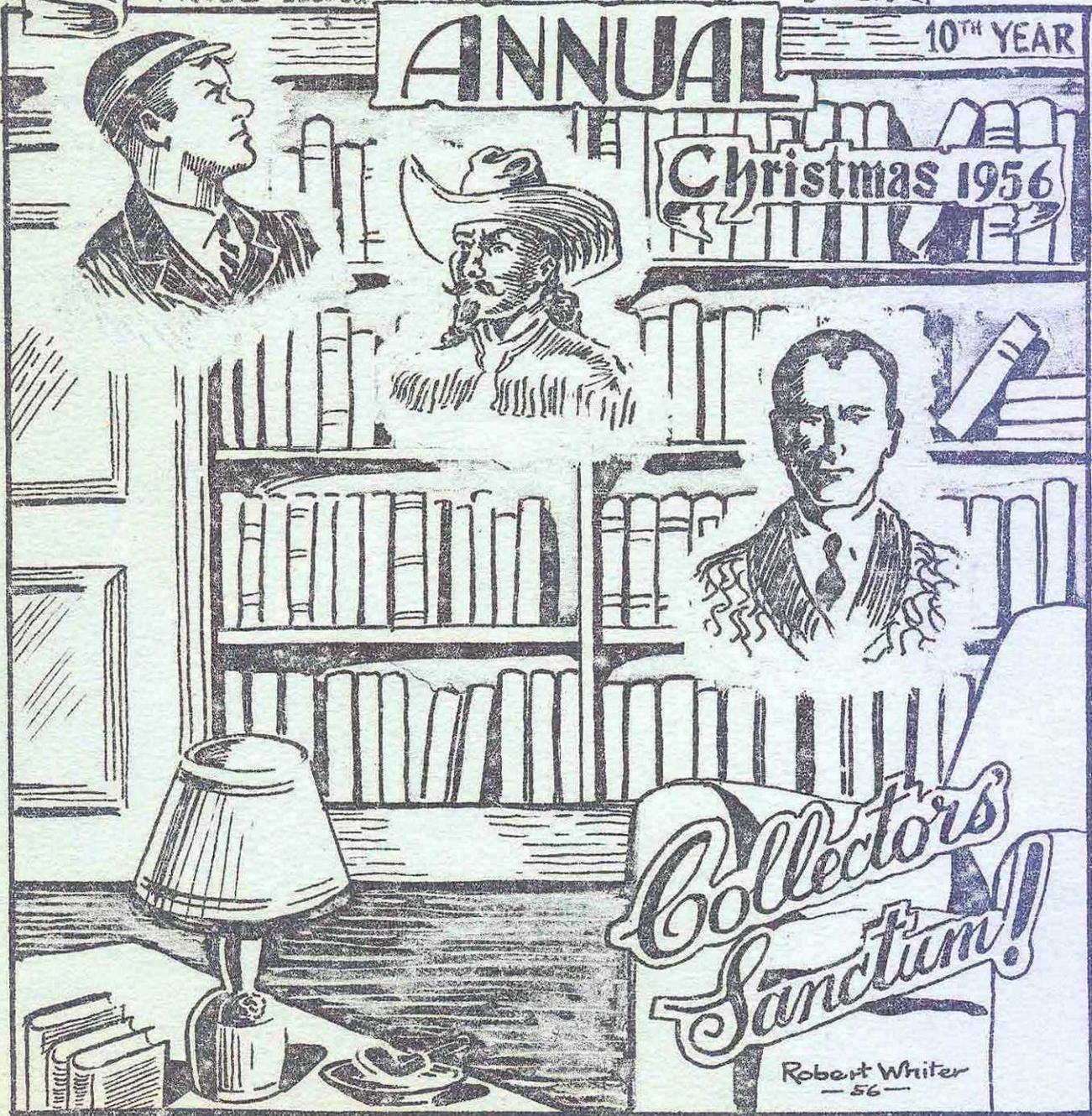
# The Collectors' Digest

PRICE 11s. 6d

## ANNUAL

10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

Christmas 1956



*Collectors' Sanctum!*

Robert Whiter  
-56-

# The Collectors' Digest Annual

TENTH YEAR

Christmas 1956

TENTH YEAR

Duplicated throughout by  
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## FOREWORD

Dear Fellow Collectors,

Yes, here it is - the Tenth Collectors' Digest Annual. I can hardly believe it. Hundreds of thousands of words on the same subject collected in ten compact volumes all reaching their destinations as regularly as Christmas itself. Indeed a wonderful achievement in the gaining of which my own has been only a small part compared with the magnificent support of contributors and subscribers, and the staffs of the publishers.

Years ago more than one sceptic said "You won't be able to keep it up you'll run short of copy." Short of copy! Why this year there's been so much that I was compelled to leave out the "Who's Who", except for the new chums we have had the pleasure in welcoming during the year.

There must alas! be a note of sadness at the thought that three members have joined the Great majority, Hugh Fennell, Percy North and George Grainger. How grievous to think that Percy did not live to see his fine article in print.

In conclusion, once again the old, old wish - "A very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year" to all my friends at home and overseas.

Yours very sincerely,

*Herbert Leckenby*

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# LIBRARIES THROUGH THE YEARS

by W.O.G. LOFTS

(Editor's Note: As Bill Lofts says below, compiling a list like this is a tremendous task at this time of day. The "Aldines" for instance never had dates except when new stories were being advertised on the covers, and even then they very seldom mentioned the year. However, so careful and industrious has Bill been in his labours that I can guarantee that it is as correct and complete as it is possible to get it. - H.L.)

(Foreword: I would like to express my grateful thanks to the following collectors, who have so kindly given me information in compiling this article: Derek Adley for a rough list of known Libraries, Anthony Baker for his help in the post-war publications, and Percy Smith for his information on the complicated Aldine Libraries.)

The title of "Library" when relating to 'Old Boys Books' has been always hard to define, especially so when one considers that many weekly papers were published bearing the title of "Library", for example we had the "Magnet Library" and the smaller "Nelson Lee Library" and from the older Aldine publication the "True Blue Library". If this article covered all the papers which had the title of "library" we would have some weeklies, some fortnightly's and some that were published at irregular intervals. I shall therefore reserve the title term "Libraries" to those papers which were published at the rate of two or more per month, or longer intervals, for example the post-war publications, Sparshott Series, and later the well known Gold Hawk books.

To say when the first Library was published is a very debateable question. There was in 1846 a paper entitled "Tiny Library", but as this was a weekly publication one cannot include it here. There were no doubt libraries published by the renowned firms of Brett, Fox and Strong in the early 1880's but I have found very few records of them. The earliest Library that I have been able to trace is "Champion Series" around 1880; this was priced 3d. and only ran for 10 issues, no publishers name was on the imprint, the stories were like the majority of stories for boys, very bloodthirsty. Charles Fox published in October 1885 the first "Champion Library" which had very famous stories featured, one such story was "Life of Vidocq - French Detective".

The General Publishing Co. of the Strand were well to the fore of Boys Libraries, as during the 1887's they published 4 very popular Libraries. The "Union Jack Library" was mentioned in my Annual article 1954. (This has no connection with the A.P. issue which came out 1894). I understand that the Aldine Publishing Co. bought them out.

The biggest firm for this kind of publication was the Aldine Publishing Co. Little did they know that their publications would be read half a century later. With no dates and so many re-issues of stories, they were a compiler's headache. I took three months alone trying to find a second series of Buffalo Bill's which was recorded in an Annual article some year ago, and have found that it never did exist!

Two new Libraries discovered which I do not think have been known to collectors before, were firstly "One at a Time" Library in 1888, and amazing for the Aldine firm a "Deadwood Dick Library" in 1909 which only ran for 1 issue! This was entitled "Deadwood Dick, Outlaw of the Black Hills", a story much re-printed in other papers. I have seen this copy in the Museum, but not the "One at a Time Library".

Newnes: The Captain Library, an attempt to copy the B.F.L., but a failure.

Joe Pickford Library: This was one of the strangest Libraries ever to appear, as collectors looking for number 1 will search until Doomsday! It actually started with the Bulldog Library, as a supplement numbered 51A, price 2d. (to get round the war ban on new publications) entitled "Tubby Haig Supplement", but after number 59A the title was changed to "Joe Pickford Library" and the numbering then from 60 until it ceased at number 81. The stories then continued in the Newnes "Adventure Library". There were in fact 31 numbers to this library, although it is most unusual to see Numbers 51A-81. The firm of George Newnes were very cagey when I asked them about the strange numbering and thought it buried in the past.

The Aldine Publishing Company:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Stop</u>	<u>Total</u>
Adventure Library	1927	1928	20
Black Bess Library	1909	1910	18
Boys Comic Library	1912	1912	14
Boys First Rate Pocket Library	1890	1905	472
Boys Own Library, 1st Series	1907	1914	93
Boys Own Library, 2nd Series	1921	1922	44
Britons Own Library	1914	1916	18
Boxing Novels, 1st Series	1925	1932	92
Boxing Novels, 2nd Series	1932	1933	20
Buffalo Bill Library 1st.	1899	1910	240
Buffalo Bill Library 2nd.	1911	1932	701
Buffalo Bill Novels	1916	1932	342
Cinema Novels	1916	1916	6
Claude Duval Library	1902	1906	48
Deadwood Dick Library	1909	1909	1
Detective Tales, 1st.	1889	1906	348
Detective Tales, 2nd.	1922	1923	28
Diamond Library, 1st.	1907	1913	213
Diamond Library, 2nd.	1913	1920	149
Diamond War Library	1914	1916	20
Dick Turpin	1902	1909	182
Dixon Brett Library	1926	1928	28
Football Stories	1922	1923	12
Football Novels	1925	1932	88
Garfield Library	1890	1897	92
Home Library of Powerful and Dramatic Tales	1886	1896	64
Jack Sheppard	1904	1906	24
Life and Adventure Library	1890	1893	20
O'er Land and Sea	1890	1905	408
One At a Time Library	1888	1888	6

The Aldine Publishing Company (cont'd)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Stop</u>	<u>Total</u>
Racing Novels, 1st.	1922	1932	116
Racing Novels, 2nd.	1932	1932	4
Red Rover Library	1903	1904	8
Robin Hood Library, 1st.	1901	1912	88
Robin Hood Library, 2nd.	1913	1914	14
Robin Hood Library, 3rd.	1924	1927	88
Robin Hood Library, 4th.	1930	1930	8
Romance of Invention, Travel and Adventure, 1st Series	1894	1906	272
2nd Series	1910	1912	32
3rd Series	1913	1913	12
Springheeled Jack	1904	1906	12
Schoolboys Pocket Library	1932	1933	23
Tip Top Tales, 1st.	1890	1904	328
Tip Top Tales, 2nd.	1910	1914	24
Tip Top Detective Tales	1910	1914	36
War Stories	1930	1931	28
Wild West Yarns	1932	1933	68

Amalgamated Press Ltd:

Boys Friend Library, 1st.	Sept. 1906	May 1925	764
Boys Friend Library, 2nd.	Jun. 1925	Jun. 1940	724
Boys Wonder Library	Jul. 1932	Jan. 1933	26
Broadsheet Novels	Jul. 1936	Jul. 1936	6
Champion Library	Feb. 1929	Jun. 1940	274
Football & Sports Library	1921	Oct. 1938	566
Girls Friend Library, 1st.	1907	Apr. 1925	578
Girls Friend Library, 2nd.	May 1925	May 1940	728
Monster Library	Nov. 1925	May 1927	19
Nugget Library	May 1919	Mar. 1922	70
Schoolboys Own Library	Apr. 1925	Jun. 1940	411
Schoolgirls Own Library, 1st.	Nov. 1922	Jun. 1940	733
Schoolgirls Own Library, 2nd.	Oct. 1946	Still issued	
Sexton Blake Library, 1st.	Sept. 1915	May 1925	382
Sexton Blake Library, 2nd.	June 1925	Oct. 1940	744
Sexton Blake Library, 3rd.	Nov. 1940	Still issued	
Thriller Library	Jul. 1934	Jun. 1935	24
Western Library	Apr. 1950	Oct. 1954	110
Wonder Library	Sept. 1915	Apr. 1916	14

George Newnes Ltd:

Adventure Library, 1st.	1916	1922	109
Adventure Library, 2nd.	1933	1933	34
Black Bess Library, 1st.	1921	1921	16
Black Bess Library, 2nd.	1921	1922	38
Bulldog Library	1917	1922	108
(Joe Pickford Supplement)	(Numbered 51A to 81)		31
Bulldog Breed Library	1915	1916	10

George Newnes Ltd (cont'd)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Stop</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bulldog Adventure Library	1923	1924	20
Captain Library	1910	1910	10
Deadwood Dick Library	1928	1929	34
Dick Turpin Library	1922	1930	138
Flag Library for Boys	1935	1936	12
Nick Carter Library	1918	1920	118
Redskin Library	1917	1922	66
New Redskin Library	1926	1929	86
Treasure Trove Library	1919	1922	45

General Publishing Company:

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Issues</u>
Buffalo Bill Wild West Series	1887	12
Scotland Yard Series of Detective Stories	1888	12
Union Jack Library	1888	12
The Golden Library of Indian and Detective Adventures	1888	12

Edward Lloyd Ltd:

	<u>Start</u>	<u>Stop</u>	<u>Issues</u>
Lloyds Sports Library	1922	1922	8
Lloyds School Yarns	1921	1922	25
Lloyds Detective Series	1921	1922	36
Lloyds Boys Adventure Series	1921	1922	32

James Henderson Ltd:

Budget Story Books	1894	1903	632
Lion Library	1909	1909	25
Nugget Library	1907	1916	322
Nugget Library (New Series)	1919	1922	70*
Pocket Budget Library	1903	1904	28
Rob Roy Library	1903	1904	16
Triumph Library	1908	1909	17
Wild West	1903	1909	284
Young Folks Tales	1906	1915	325

\* Taken over by A.P.

Other Libraries:

	<u>Start</u>	<u>Stop</u>	<u>Issues</u>	
Boys Ace Library	1936	1937	24	Pearsons
Dixon Hawke Library	1919	1941	576	D.C. Thomson
Boys Star Library	1891	1891	12	Best for Boys Co.
Detective Library	1895	1895	5	Richard Crompton
Boys Star Library	1885	1886	10	Charles Strong
The New Boys Paper Pocket Library	1887	1887	12	Ralph Rollington
Hearts of Gold Library	1890	1890	13	The Popular Pub. Company

Other Libraries (cont'd)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Stop</u>	<u>Issues</u>	
Champion Library	1885	1885	6	Charles Fox
Champion Series	1880	1880	10	No Name given
Boys Torch Adventure Library	1928	1936	92	Edinburgh House Press
Pocket Wonder Library			12	P.M. Productions
Target Library	1930	1930	20	Target Publications Ltd.
C.I.D. Library, 1st.	1933	1933	10	" "
C.I.D. Library, 2nd.	1933	1933	20	" "
Walt Wheeler Library	1890	1890	40	Cameron & Ferguson
Boys World Pocket Library	1890	1891	25	Ralph Rollington
Buffalo Bill Novels	1935	1935	6	Pearsons
Dick Turpin Novels	1935	1935	6	Pearsons

Post-War Publications:

Schoolboys Pocket Library		25	Gerald Swan
Schoolgirls Pocket Library		36	Gerald Swan
Schoolboy Adventures		4	Gerald Swan
Football Pocket Library		10	Gerald Swan
Martin Speed Detective Detective		18	Gerald Swan
Detective		24	Gerald Swan
Detective Shorts		4	Gerald Swan
Detective Tales		117	Boardman & Co.
New Detective Tales		2	Boardman & Co.
Slick Detective Yarns		10	Gerald Swan
Boys Favourite Library, 1st.	1949/50	20	Panmure Publications
Boys Favourite Library, 2nd.	1953/54	7	Panmure Publications
Scorcher Novels		4	Sharman
Goldhawk Books	1952/53	11	Hamilton & Co.
Arrow Schoolboy Series		4	Martin & Reid
Mascot Schoolboy Series		4	John Mathew
Headland House Series		3	William C. Merrett
Sparshott Series		6	William C. Merrett

# ANNUAL REVERIES

By GEORGE MELL

I feel sorry for modern children who have never known the thrill of receiving an annual at Christmas that really was made up from 52 separate weekly parts. Only the "Scout", a pale ghost of its earlier self, survives for "Chatterbox", long a children's favourite, only masquerades as an annual. It appears yearly and is compounded of stories and articles and a long story, spattered through it in odd chapters, in an attempt to create the illusion that it did appear in parts.

"Chatterbox" was the first Christmas annual I ever received and the volume, though in first-class condition, was published several years before the 1914-18 war. "The Harum-Scarum Karls" was the chief serial story, though there was another about two boys who tried to rescue their father from Arab kidnappers, and I was greatly impressed by the coloured plates it contained.

In response to my hints next year's "Chatterbox" arrived on Christmas morning and, though it was printed on inferior paper, I enjoyed every page of it, especially Archibald Marshall's serial, "Jimmy the New Boy". Showing excellent judgment my parents, next year, produced a massive "Scout" annual for, I believe, the year 1911. I was never more delighted with a present.

Each weekly issue was there with its exciting frontispiece and occasional coloured plates. The Scout background was not over-emphasised and, as it was chock-full of school, sport and adventure stories, it held me enthralled. Two of the several serials were T.C. Bridges' "The Changing of St. Chad's" and, I think I have the title right, "The Crimson Pirate", an air story by Christopher Beck, one of Bridges' pen-names.

A year later I acquired the first of the several "Chums" that ultimately came my way. It belonged to the same period as the "Scout" and was just as huge, almost bulging with serials by authors who have since become famous. The only ones that remain in my memory are W. Home-Gall's freakish characters "The T's of Totham", one of which was a boy with an india-rubber face which he could contort into the most fantastic and terrifying shapes; and "Walker's Weekly", a short series about a boy after my own heart who boosted circulation in one episode by offering a cup he could not pay for and then won it himself to avoid getting into financial difficulties. One day I'd like to have that volume again---this time to keep!

Subsequent years brought one or two more "Chums" and one, of 1914-1918 vintage, is still vivid in my mind for the T.C. Bridges serial "The Guardians of the Straits" and a similar war epic that followed it.

Meanwhile, of course, I was an avid reader of the "Magnet" and "Penny Popular" although, strangely enough, the "Gem" and the "Boy's Friend" (weekly) never appealed to me. After a few years, when Frank Richards seemed to be running through a cycle of plots for the second time, I switched to the "Nelson Lee" not

long before Nipper and his Guvnor were compelled to seek the shelter of St. Franks.

When I moved from elementary to grammar school my tastes underwent another change when one Christmas present proved to be a "Captain" annual. It was not one-tenth the size of the earlier "Chums" and "Scouts" but it appealed to my more mature critical faculties. Here were stories about schools and characters which, I knew, really could exist as distinct from the fantasies weaved by Frank Richards and his other selves.

After that I could not bear to wait for the half-yearly volumes. I wanted to read school stories by Hylton Cleaver, Gunby Hadath and Richard Bird as they appeared and I remained a faithful monthly reader of the "Captain" (which I still maintain is the best boys' magazine I have ever seen) until its unfortunate demise.

But, backtracking along memory's lanes, I had already briefly met one annual that had naturally escaped my eagle eye as I moved up the literary scale from the Companion Papers to the "Captain". During my last few periods of silent reading at the elementary school I borrowed from a friend what, I imagine, was the first "Holiday Annual".

I liked it so much that, from Christmas presents and my own purchases, I acquired the next two or three issues but parted with them as my growing library of Conan Doyle's yarns outstripped my limited shelf space. There were no more annuals for me after that as I read my way through Doyle, Haggard, A.G. Hales, W.J. Locke, W.W. Jacobs, Bennett, Wells, P.C. Wren and scores of others.

Then, after a lapse of many years, my old interests were revived when I read E.S. Turner's "Boys Will Be Boys". At once I subscribed to Joe Parks's "Collector's Miscellany" and, as I lived not many miles from Saltburn, met him and envied his fairly substantial collection of Old Boys' Books.

I then began to search for "Holiday Annuals" and "Magnets". Though more than twenty years had passed the friend who lent me that first "Holiday Annual" still had its successor and let me have it for a "Modern Boy" annual I had picked up somewhere. I found another in a jumble sale, bought two from Joe Parks and other enthusiasts.

Then I found I could still be entranced by the old boyhood magic. Those plans of Greyfriars and St. Jim's, the lists of boys and studies, Dick Penfold's poems of school landmarks and those articles in which Frank Richards and Martin Clifford visited the schools they had made world famous seemed to add authenticity to what had not seemed real years ago.

The superb illustrations of schools by E.E. Briscoe with their queer twisted chimneys made me wish that I had been lucky enough to be a scholar there---Greyfriars, St. Jim's or Rookwood, I would not have minded which. Now, looking back, I have revised my views. The old bulky collections of weekly papers were unsurpassable in their own fields and a volume of fifty-two "Magnets" would not have seemed such good fare as a massive "Chums" or "Scout".

But the "Holiday Annual", until in later years it fell away as its deceptive bulk grew and the favourite authors occupied less and less space, was a new departure with which none of the others could possibly compete.

How lucky I am that I never missed IT!

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# "The Captain"

by FRANK VERNON LAY

"The Captain" was well-named. It was without doubt a Captain in the field of boys periodicals and its influence extended far beyond the limits of its comparatively small circulation and today it is remembered by many who have forgotten other boyhood papers.

During the past few months it has been the recipient of several flattering notices in that section of our press that still condescends to review books.

The first was in connection with the Penguin issue of books by John Buchan, the late Lord Tweedsmuir. One of these which is considered by many to be his best adventure story was "Prester John" the story of a Western educated African directing a native rising in Africa. Reading this yarn today one is immediately struck with the resemblance between the rather sinister but courageous figure of Lapata with his Scots education imposed upon his African lore of Black Magic and the recent tragic real-life episode of Jomo Kenyatta and the Mau-Mau. Buchan had spent some years in Africa and was well aware of the innate qualities of the negro and running through Prester John is the theme that if the negro is treated well and as a human being there is nothing he cannot aspire to, but if he is treated as an animal and a menial then his potentiality for evil is immense. Events today would appear to be justifying the truth of this assertion.

The story was first published in the Captain in 1910 under the title of the Black General and was marvellously illustrated by George Soper. To anyone who knows this original story with these illustrations no later bound volume will do as a substitute. Quite a large part of the charm of the Captain is due to the quality and number of the illustrations. During its 25 years of existence over 200 artists appeared in its pages and they numbered some of the best in the land. A few names at random that spring to mind are Tom and Gordon Browne, Phil May, H.M. Bateman, Matania, Hassall, Heath Robinson, Caton Woodville, H. Rountree, Stanley L. Wood and John de Walton. Two others who we know elsewhere are G.M. Dodshon and Paul Hardy.

Another recent reference to the Captain was on the occasion of the issue by Messrs. Jenkins of the first eight volumes of an autographed edition of the works of P.G. Wodehouse. Wodehouse is the most famous Captain author his first story appearing in Vol. 6 in 1902 and his last in Vol. 29 in 1913 when he found the rewards from the American market so much greater than the British that he gave up writing for the British press. As the first editions of Wodehouse's writings are much sought after it follows that volumes containing his contributions are collectors pieces and this is so. They do not have the value of two of his earlier writings which are very scarce indeed as very few copies have been preserved whereas the Captains in bound form have been treasured and the number of them that have survived the passing years is surprising.

Wodehouse's early stories are routine ones without any particular features to differentiate them from other school stories of the period. But in 1908 in a

story called The Lost Lambs (which was later combined with an earlier Captain serial called Jackson Junior and published under the new title of Mike) we first meet Psmith spelt P.S.M.I.T.H. Psmith was the forerunner of Jeeves, Mr. Mulliner, Lord Emsworth, Bertie Wooster and the host of Wodehousian characters that have delighted millions for the past 50 years. He also served as a model for Edwy Searles Brooks when he created the character of William Napoleon Browne. Other Brooksian characters who derive from Wodehouse are Phipps the valet, Lord Pippinton and the Hon. Douglas Singleton.

About 20 years ago Wodehouse received an honorary doctorate from Oxford University and was named by Hilaire Belloc as the best living writer of English.

I have related the above to show you some reason why the Captain is remembered so affectionately by so many. It contained hardly a single serial that has not been reprinted in book form and many are still being reprinted today. It was definitely the finest paper of its type ranking above the Boys Own Paper for the quality of its authors and artists. As it was aimed almost exclusively at the Public and Grammar school market, like most quality productions, it never attained a large circulation but for the bulk of its 25 years it obviously paid for itself. Its appeal was almost entirely confined to the middle and upper classes as it incorporated much material devoted to public and grammar school affairs and it is easy to imagine what the late George Orwell thought of it.

As may be expected its stories were first class being mainly either of the adventure or public school type. There was no place for the fantastic or impossible.

The first editor R.S. Warren Bell, himself a well-known author of public-school stories insisted on realism. As a public school man and an ex-public school master he knew his subject and insisted on all his contributors doing so too. Wodehouse was educated at Dulwich College and his stories of Sedleigh and St. Austins use Dulwich College characters, customs and traditions as a background. Similarly the other school-story authors Gunby Hadath, Desmond Coke, Hylton Cleaver, Richard Bird, Harold Avery and last but not least J.N. Pentelow used their own public school experiences as backgrounds.

Pentelow's schools were real schools, his atmosphere authentic and although his stories were marred for some by excessive sentimentality his favourite topic the public-school spirit as exemplified by the phrases "playing the game" and "keeping a stiff upper lip" used in many a story of public school sport made him an exceedingly popular author for those alas all too few who could spot the difference.

As befits a paper for public schools the emphasis was on sport. Warren Bell knew the average Captain reader was above the general average for the country and his choice of sub-editors, artists and writers was to get the best he could for his cash. The first athletic editor was C.B. Fry and he was so successful he was promoted to his own sports magazine "C.B. Fry's Magazine" again a quality production. Fry was succeeded by Pelham Warner and other cricket contributors were Jessop, Hobbs, Fender and Grace. Jem Mace regularly wrote on boxing and articles on cycling, rugby, swimming and shooting were regular features.

#### SERIALS AND SERIES IN "THE CAPTAIN"

Vol. 1. D.H. Parry The King's Red Coat, R.S. Warren Bell Stories of Greyhouse School, Ascott R. Hope The Red Ram, A. Lee The Two Fags.

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 SERIALS AND SERIES IN "THE CAPTAIN" (cont'd)
 

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- Vol. 2. John Mackie Heart of the Prairie, R.S. Warren Bell Tales of Greyhouse School, W.W. Mayland New Gulliver's Travels.
- Vol. 3. F. Swainson Acton's Feud, R.S. Warren Bell Tales of Greyhouse School, F. Wishaw The Three Scouts.
- Vol. 4. Dr. Gordon Stables The Cruise of the "Vengeful", W.W. Mayland King Waterbottle the First, R.S. Warren Bell Tales of Greyhouse.
- Vol. 5. R.S. Warren Bell Sir Billy, Fred Swainson Smith's House, E. Cockburn Reynolds Jingle Achieves the Impossible, John Mackie Tales of the Trenches (1).
- Vol. 6. John Mackie Tales of the Trenches (2), H. Burrows Told on the Junior Side (1), In Deep Water Stacey Blake and W.E. Hodgson, Clifford Mills A Cavalier Maid.
- Vol. 7. Louis Becke The Jalasco Brig, H. Burrows Told on the Junior Side (2), R.S. Warren Bell J.O. Jones and How He Earned His Living, Fred Swainson Tales of Eliza's.
- Vol. 8. John Mackie Rising of the Red Man, F.P. Gibbon Tales of India.
- Vol. 9. Capt. Protheroe The Isle of Fortune, H. Burrows Lower School Yarns, R.S. Warren Bell The Long 'Un.
- Vol. 10. F.W. Calkins Across the Wilderness, P.G. Wodehouse The Gold Bat.
- Vol. 11. F. Swainson Further Tales of Eliza's, R.S. Warren Bell The Duffer, G. Hawley Sailors of the King, Calkins Tales of the Far West (1).
- Vol. 12. F.L. Morgan At Hickson's, P.G. Wodehouse The Head of Kay's, R.S. Warren Bell The Duffer (Book 2), Calkins Tales of the Far West (2).
- Vol. 13. H.C. Crosfield The Adventures of John Baywood, Calkins Tales of the Far West (3), Geo. Ellbar O.H.M.S., P.G. Wodehouse Tales of Wryhyn, F.L. Morgan At Hickson's.
- Vol. 14. P.G. Wodehouse The White Feather, R.S. Warren Bell Cox's Cough Drops (1), B. Mitford Adventures of Dick Selmes.
- Vol. 15. G. Firth Scott The Track of Midnight, R.S. Warren Bell Cox's Cough Drops (2).
- Vol. 16. F. Swainson The Informer, John Mackie In Search of Smith Bheel The Exploits of Tantia, P.J. Thorpe A Soldier's Life.
- Vol. 17. P.G. Wodehouse Jackson Junior, Herbert Hayens The Fatal List.
- Vol. 18. R.S. Warren Bell Green At Greyhouse, Capt. Gilson The Lost Island.
- Vol. 19. P.G. Wodehouse The Lost Lambs, Francis Marlowe The Train Pirates (1), Herbert Hayens The Iron Hand, Brew Molohan The Ways that are Wild.
- Vol. 20. Francis Marlowe The Train Pirates (2), Percy Longhurst The Champion's Conqueror Gleig Middy of the "Blunderbore", Christopher Beck Crew of the Cat-Boat, P.G. Wodehouse The New Fold.
- Vol. 21. C.B. Dignam The Inventions of Brown, F.L. Morgan "The Scraggs", Clucas Joughin The People of the Caves, Capt. Gilson Twins of Tendring.
- Vol. 22. P.G. Wodehouse Psmith Journalist J.S. Martin Merinam; or Tales of a Border Lad, W.A. Fraser The Tiger God.
- Vol. 23. John Buchan The Black General, Stories of Sedleigh P.G. Wodehouse.
- Vol. 24. Desmond Coke The Worst House at Sherborough, Francis Marlowe The Brig "Jane Mary".
- Vol. 25. Capt. G.A. Hope Kerr of Castleburgh, Percy Westerman The Sea Monarch.
- Vol. 26. R.S. Warren Bell Black Evans, John Mackie The Lost Explorer, Capt. Richard Benson The Tiger of Batol.
- Vol. 27. Gunby Hadath Conquering Claybury, F. Watson White Man's Gold.

SERIALS AND SERIES IN "THE CAPTAIN" (cont'd)

- Vol. 28. Max Rittenburg The Cockatoo, P.F. Westerman The Stolen Cruiser, P.G. Wodehouse The Eighteen-Carat Kid.
- Vol. 29. H. Mortimer Batten Birdett The Trailer, R.S. Warren Bell The Mystery of Markham, W. Bourne Cooke The Black Box.
- Vol. 30. J.S. Martin The Escapades of Lordie, F. Watson Muckle John, Capt. Gilson The Fire Gods, Harold Avery The New House.
- Vol. 31. G. Hadath The Last of His Line, H. Strand The Old Man of the Mountain.
- Vol. 32. H. Bedford Jones Flamehair the Skald, Hylton Cleaver Who Cares, H. Strang The Prisoners of the Chateau.
- Vol. 33. Harold Avery The Amazing Secret, Capt. Gilson Held by the Enemy.
- Vol. 34. F. Watson The Master of Adventure, W. Bourne Cooke Wreck Cove, Richard Bird The Dipcote Shippers.
- Vol. 35. G. Hadath His Highness of Highfield.
- Vol. 36. Richard Bird The Ripsward Ring.
- Vol. 37. H. Strang With Haig on the Somme.
- Vol. 38. R.S. Warren Bell Playing the Game, F. Watson Waking Up Warrenders, Edward Platt Getting Rid of Schmidt, H. Strang Bright Ideas Unlimited.
- Vol. 39. Hylton Cleaver Brother O' Mine.
- Vol. 40. The Blue Raider H. Strang.
- Vol. 41. Harold Avery The Runaway.
- Vol. 42. Hylton Cleaver Stormy Days at Harley.
- Vol. 43. H. Strang No Man's Island.
- Vol. 44. R. Bird Hooligan Hall.
- Vol. 45. Hylton Cleaver The Old Order, G. Hadath Sparrow In Search of Expulsion.
- Vol. 46. Thompson Cross The Yellow Flower.
- Vol. 47. R. Bird Bats v. Boats.
- Vol. 48. H. Cleaver Lucky Lorimer.
- Vol. 49. Richard Bird The Liveliest Term at Templeton.
- Vol. 50. G. Hadath Pulling His Weight.

Stories by J.N. Pentelow appear in Volumes 30 and 35 and short stories by Hadath in most volumes from Vol. 22. A story called "The Susceptible Monitor" by Leslie Hore-Belisha appears in Volume 28. R.S. Warren Bell relinquished the editorship at the end of Volume 23.

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# RED, WHITE and BLUE

By ERIC FAYNE

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Anyone who has a comprehensive knowledge of the history of the Gem must pause, now and then, to think rather wistfully of what might have been in the old paper during the "Twenties" compared with what was. Towards the close of my article on the White Cover Days in last year's ANNUAL, I wrote this:- "1922 was the Gem's finest year since 1912, and must ever rank as one of the best of all time. The genuine Martin Clifford wrote almost every story. What a contrast with much of the rest of the White Cover period with its drabness and disappointments! What promise for the years of the Roaring Twenties yet to come - a promise only partially fulfilled, sad to relate. But that is another story!"

## ANOTHER STORY

Well, this is that "other story", a review of what was, in the remaining years of the Roaring Twenties. - a little wistful in parts when we step aside to think of what might have been, and very enthusiastic in other parts when we give thanks for the smaller mercies which sum up to a good deal.

Before we analyse the offerings of these Red, White, and Blue days, let us look at the period as a whole, from November 1922 until July 1931 when the re-prints started. It began well, but it deteriorated as the years passed, until we reach at the end of 1927 the period to which I refer in this article as the "Twilight Years", when the Gem was almost exclusively handled by a substitute writer or writers. Though a reader's enthusiasm must get less and less as he progresses through the Twenties into the Thirties, there was, nevertheless, a great deal of noteworthy material during the period. Three of the series, in fact, are among the finest school stories ever written - they show Charles Hamilton at his very greatest. These were the Oliver Lynn series, the Old Bus series, and the Victor Cleeve series. True, three very great series hardly compensate for the lean time suffered by Gem readers in the Twenties, but they go far to making us feel that the time, to some extent, was worthwhile.

There were other fine stories, too. In fact, the earlier part of the time is remarkable for some outstanding "single" yarns which were gems beyond price. There were very many Levison series - these were extremely well written, but the troubles of the Levison family recur with such regularity that one wonders whether Levison was not a trifle overplayed during these years.

In the later period, when the genuine Clifford was only contributing a story very rarely, all too many of these stories were light efforts featuring Grundy or Trimble. Even the most ardent admirers of Charles Hamilton - and most people know that he has no more ardent admirer than myself - could scarcely claim that his few Gem stories between 1928 and 1931 showed the famous writer at anything like his best. In fact, why they were contributed at all is something of a puzzle - unremarkable though they were, they formed a sharp contrast with the regular material of the time, and, in any case, there were not enough of them to help the circulation of the Gem.

THE YEAR 1922

1922, the last year of the White Covers, had been a wonderful honeymoon for Gem readers. With issue No. 770, dated November 11th, 1922, the Gem blossomed forth in its Red, White, and Blue cover, it was enlarged to 28 pages, and the price was increased to 2d. At this time, the "CARDEW CUP" series was in full swing. Lightly-written, with many chapters devoted to various games in the fight for the Cup, this series hardly figures among the Gem's greatest, but it is memorable for two delightful stories in which Cardew, in disgrace for slacking at games, seeks to regain his pals' good opinion by presenting a football cup for competition. Unable to obtain the money from his grandfather, and refused it by his uncle, he pawns his valuable tie-pin to raise the wind to pay for the Cup - and the truth of the escapade leaks out. With a typical Cardewism, he suggests that the trophy might be named "the pawnbroker's cup".

After this came two stories in which Gussy was adjudged guilty of damaging a precious volume which belonged to his form-master. Martin Clifford observed that it was a problem which "might have taxed the ingenuity of Sherlock Holmes, Sexton Blake, or the greatest of them all, Ferrers Locke".

With the Christmas Number, dated December 23rd, 1922, came "FOR FRIENDSHIP'S SAKE", the opening story of the Christmas Barring-Out series.

THE YEAR 1923

This series was completed in nine issues, and, reading it again now when more than thirty years have passed since it was written, one tends to do it less than justice. It was certainly competently handled, and if it strikes one as being hackneyed today, it must be remembered that the theme was nothing like so hackneyed in 1923. Tom Merry was accused of theft in the brilliant opening story, and he was supported by two hundred juniors in the barring-out which followed. They held the School House throughout the Christmas vacation. Far-fetched, of course, it would probably have been more convincing if it had been staged on a slightly less wholesale scale. There were many original situations, one in particular when Billy Bunter joined the rebels, and then tried to "sell" them to Dr. Holmes. I fancy that strong arguments could be put forward to support a claim that this was the best of the many barring-out series which appeared in the Gem and the Magnet over the years.

A substitute writer now weighed in with a heavily-sentimental melodrama entitled "THE PLUCK OF EDGAR LAWRENCE". Here is a brief trailer from it :-

----- Redfern threw out his hands in passionate appeal. "Can nothing save him?" he cried, wildly. "Oh, don't say that he's dying! Anything but that! He shan't die! He mustn't die! He's my chum! He risked his life for me, and I want him to live, so that I can make amends! I wronged him, - and I wasn't worthy to lace his boots".

Lawrence lay back on his pillow. The boy was dying.

"I'm not afraid to die", he said. "I don't think any fellow need be if he's gone through life with a straight bat. I've never been a religious fellow, as you know, Reddy. A fellow may not go to church for a year -- for twenty years. But God won't forget him when the time comes. God never forgets a sportsman". -----

If that beautiful passage reminds you of the tears you shed over the death of Russell, in Dean Farrar's "Eric", I shall not be surprised. I fancy the substitute writer in question may have been reminded of the same thing, for Lawrence had come to grief on a lone rock in the sea in the same way that Russell foundered on the Stack in the more famous story.

The second week in March brought the start of the SCHOOLBOY PUG series, the story of Oliver Lynn, which must rank among the very greatest that the Gem or the Magnet ever presented. I think it could be classed as the real beginning of the fine character work which Charles Hamilton was to weave into so many of his stories -- particularly in the Magnet -- in the years to come. In the Oliver Lynn series, character was skilfully etched and analysed, and it lifted the weekly school story to a higher plane than it had ever occupied before.

Lynn, who had been known as the "Chicken" in the professional boxing-ring, was the cousin of St. Leger of the Fifth. Coming to St. Jim's, he was placed in Stury No. 6 with Blake & Co, who resented the intruder and disliked his rough manners and customs.

Thirty years later, this series is as fine and outstanding as it was when it first appeared. I doubt whether any school story has ever been written to surpass it. In the closing chapters, sincere and touching, the story ended with a sigh - an ending without artifice, vaguely unsatisfying like real life, yet leaving behind the memory of a masterpiece.

An interesting point is that the plot was repeated later in the Dury series in the Magnet, but it did not reach the high literary quality of the Gem series. The same phenomenon was often evident when themes were repeated.

The Lynn series was followed immediately by "FRANK LEVISON'S FLIGHT", which, with its sequel, was a well-told story of a trick on Mr. Selby which resulted in Levison Minor fleeing from school and Levison Major following him to Greyfriars, where the two brothers remained for a number of weeks.

This period of Gem history is noteworthy for a number of single stories -- yarns which were complete in one issue -- which remain in the memory for their charm and brilliance. Such a single story was "TAMING A TARTAR", which has lost some of its original impact on account of the theme being used again later in the Magnet. The heroes of the Third had the bright plan of putting Mr. Selby into a good mood by making him a birthday gift -- needless to say, the plan misfired.

A fortnight later came "TRIMBLE'S AUCTION", a joyous, sparkling gem of a story, in which Trimble announced that he was leaving St. Jim's, and a leaving-sale was conducted on his behalf. Bubbling with wit, with never a wasted line, this wonderful little yarn stands out as the light school story supreme.

The next week, No. 800, June 9th 1923, we find "LEVISON'S RETURN" followed by "CLEARING HIS NAME". The return of the Levisons from Greyfriars is marred by a fake telegram sent by Skinner at the instigation of Racke -- insinuating that Levison has been under a cloud at the Kent school, for suspected theft. After a maze of misunderstandings, things are cleared up.

Mid-July brought another "single", "RUSHDEN'S FOLLY", in which the prefect backs a horse with Mr. Banks, to raise money to aid his sister's husband. Entertaining, if not a record-breaker, this tale featured Lord Conway.

The end of July gave us "MANNERS HOLDS HIS OWN", a delightful character

single. Manners gets a compromising photograph of Mr. Selby, and blackmails the master. A fine story in which, once again, the impact today is lessened by the theme having been repeated.

But no impact at all is lost in the case of "D'ARCY MAXIMUS", a story which stands completely on its own as one of the funniest school stories ever written. Gussy adopts a donkey - or an ass, as the Head insists on terming it.

September introduced the most charming series of stories that the maestro ever presented to his admirers - "THE OLD BUS" series, in which Tom Merry & Co spend a holiday on the Thames. There was no plot - a mere series of episodes, drenched with the spirit of a sunny holiday on the upper reaches of the Thames - witty, joyful, brilliant in its simple charm.

The only criticism one could make of these river stories is that they were all too short. But fifteen years later, Harry Wharton & Co spent a holiday on the Thames in stories more than twice the length which, excellent though they were, fell short of the delight and charm of the Tom Merry "Old Bus" series.

This holiday ran late in the year, so only a fortnight after the end of the Thames series we had a jolly romp, "GLYN, THE GUY MAKER".

The end of November saw the commencement of another outstanding series. Cardew, chivvied into sporting activity by Tom Merry, resolves to filch the junior captaincy from the hero of the Shell, and succeeds in doing so. It was a fine set of tales, running over Christmas into the New Year. Tom Merry and Cardew, bitter rivals, were present at Eastwood House at one of those amazing parties which were cluttered up with a host of characters from the various Hamilton schools. Years later, Mr. Hamilton advantageously chopped out the dead wood at Greyfriars, and also at St. Jim's in the final year of the Gem.

#### THE YEAR 1924

This was not so good as 1923. There were more substitute stories, though, taking 1924 as a whole, the genuine Martin wrote the majority of the yarns.

The Tom Merry - Cardew feud carried on for several weeks in the New Year. It was a superb series, bringing out all of Cardew's familiar whimsicalities. Tom Merry, here and there, seemed to be depicted in a slightly less sympathetic way, especially in an episode where he refused to deign to canvas votes. Mildly smug and pompous in this incident, he was irritating in a way which would be typical of Harry Wharton, but seemed out of character with the more sunny-natured Tom Merry.

A month later, in mid-February, the genuine Martin came into the picture again with the LEN LEE series, in which Lee leaves Wodehouse and goes to St. Jim's in the name of Claud Pomfret's nephew. Unknown to Len, this is a swindle to enable Pomfret to keep secret the fact that the real nephew is dead. Len is recognized by Cardew, who was once a pupil at Wodehouse. A pleasant, if not particularly memorable, series.

Two singles came at the end of March - "COCK OF THE WALK", in which Tompkins became a fighting-man and routed Mulvaney Minor, the bully of his study - and "THE OTHER GRUNDY", in which Grundy's cousin and double (shades of Wally Bunter) came to St. Jim's in George Alfred's name for a few chapters.

April brought several more singles, the second of them noteworthy. The first, "TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE", told of Baggy's belief that findings are keepings. The second, "GLYN, THE GOLD MAKER", was novel and much more outstanding. Glyn, interested in the transmutation of metals, believes that he has discovered how to make gold, and prepares to be the world's first trillionaire. But the gold has really come from one of Racke's sovereigns, which Trimble has dropped into the crucible. This was followed by a neat twosome, on an entertaining if familiar theme - "UP AGAINST RATTY" and "SEVEN ON THE WARPETH".

An excellent three-story Cardew series came on the menu at the end of June, when Cardew inadvertently lets down his side at cricket. The Editor described it as "the cricket story of the year", and this was no exaggeration. Titles - "CARDEW, THE CRICKETER", "THE DESERTER", and "THE HERO OF THE HOUR".

For a time now, the Gem presented much larger interior illustrations, one of them usually being full-page. But the school story remained regrettably short.

Mid-July gave us that classic story, "THE FORM-MASTER'S MISTAKE", in which Mr. Ratcliff accused Cutts of theft, and in a delicious episode the Fifth-former insisted on a public apology. A smash hit.

A substitute writer now sent Tom Merry & Co into camp for several weeks, but we found them back at St. Jim's, still in the summer term in mid-August. Grundy's double was re-introduced in a single cricket story, which was followed by another Grundy turn in which he locked the Head up in his own study.

Tom Merry & Co were lucky this year, for they enjoyed a second summer holiday, this one by the genuine Clifford. A hiking series, entertaining though it only lasted four weeks, during which Tom Merry met Coker, captured his caravan, and the St. Jim's party eventually went to France and encountered Cardew.

In Mid-October, "D'ARCY'S ADOPTED" was a baby with which he was landed. Amusing, but lacking the sheer joy of the earlier "D'Arcy Maximus".

The St. Jim's stories were growing longer now, but not those from the genuine Martin Clifford. The substitute writers came more and more into the picture.

Early December brought "SAVED IN SECRET", an excellent single story in which Crooke plotted to implicate Tom Merry in a theft charge, and was foiled by Talbot.

The Christmas story once again introduced Talbot, but this time it was from the pen of a substitute writer.

## THE YEAR 1925

When the bells rang in 1925, the red light was showing. This year the genuine Clifford was to contribute considerably less than 50% of the stories. At the beginning of the year he was back with two stories concerning a new boy, Torrence, with whom Manners had an unreasonable feud.

Spring was with us before the master contributed his next effort, "FOOLED ON THE FIRST", a light story, full of fun and games - all the more acceptable from the fact that genuine stories were becoming a rarity. A fortnight later he presented two tip-top yarns containing fine character work, telling of the strange

disappearance of Lowther's uncle. These, "THE MYSTERY OF HOLLY LODGE" and "D'ARCY DOES IT" were well up to the star author's inimitable standard.

The above twosome was followed immediately by a pleasant frolic - short, but very sweet - "D'ARCY'S SPECULATION", in which Gussy attempted to do business with a share-pushing swindler.

In June came another Levison series, with a clever character study of Mr. Selby. He had tried to increase his bank balance by purchasing a French banknote for 10,000 francs in the hope that the rate of exchange would improve to his benefit - gambling on the foreign exchanges was apparently a pastime at that time. Racke stole the note, Levison Minor was accused of the theft, and Levison Major took the blame. Even though it is possible that the continual tribulations of the Levison family may have tended to become a trifle monotonous, this was an extremely satisfying series, and, from the outstanding character work it contained, it probably reached the highest literary standard of all the many Levison series of the early Red, White, and Blue years.

In August, a substitute writer sent Tom Merry & Co on tour in a motor caravan, in what has been known as the "NIPPY FROM NOWHERE" series. It has been suggested that the author of this long series, whoever he may have been, was the most acceptable of all the substitute writers. Such may be the case, but, personally, I do not find the stories readable.

The genuine Clifford was on the bill again in mid-September with the SIDNEY TROOPE series. Troope was the schoolboy owner of a famous racehorse, Kohinoor, and, as such, found himself subjected to various attempts at kidnapping. There was nothing particularly outstanding in this series, but it shines with perhaps more brilliance than it merits, owing to the fact that it appeared at a time when substitute stories glutted the Gem.

In mid-October we were treated to another offering from the master - two stories in which Mr. Selby was blackmailed by a rascal named SNEATH, and was saved from the blackmailer by Wally D'Arcy and Cardew.

A month later came two really grand stories in light vein - "TRIMBLE TELLS THE TRUTH" and "TOO GOOD FOR ST. JIM'S". Trimble, unlike Billy Bunter, was seldom a very welcome character in the stories, but this delightful romp was far and away the best in which he ever featured. The unscrupulous Baggy became smug and sanctimonious, and stirred up a mass of trouble. A pair of tales which certainly must be listed with the Gem's greatest.

The genuine Clifford wrote the Christmas story and its sequel - a thrilling yarn in a festive setting, telling of the Terrible Three caught up unwittingly in a feud between one, Rufus Beaumont, and his pursuer, a homicidal maniac. It opened at Laurel Villa, the scene passing thence to Lowther's home, Holly Lodge, and ending tranquilly at Eastwood House.

## THE YEAR 1926

If 1925 had been disappointing on the whole, 1926 was far worse, for this year you could count the number of genuine stories on the fingers of your hands.

It would seem that there was a slip-up somewhere in publication arrangements at the Fleetway House, for the Christmas stories, written by the genuine Clifford (and considered above), were followed by three substitute stories set at

the school, and then, in mid-January, we found ourselves back at Eastwood House, amid the snow and ice and the after-Christmas festivities. It was explained, rather unconvincingly, that the Christmas party had returned for another period to celebrate Lord Eastwood's birthday, but it was obvious that the two stories which now came from the master had been intended to complete the holiday series, but for some reason they were published out of sequence. A robbery was committed at Gussy's home, and Pongo, Wally's dog, played a substantial part in recovering the loot.

This was a terrible year for the Gem, and it was not till September that we were treated to the ANGELO LEE series - clever and amusing tales of a boy who wanted to leave St. Jim's to become an airman.

### THE YEAR 1927

There was a slight improvement in 1927, which gave us about a score of genuine stories, which included a series of Tom Merry & Co in Canada.

Towards the end of January came "THE BLACK SHEEP OF ST. JIM'S", introducing an excellent four-story series on serious lines. Croke, who had run into debt to the tune of £50, stole that amount from Mr. Railton, and the blame fell on Croke's cousin, Talbot. From the restrained pen of the master, this series offered the reader a month of fascinating reading, with a plot which was never obvious.

The issue dated April 16th, 1927, was Gem No. 1000, and, as was only fitting, it was graced with a genuine story, though a very light one. "TRIMBLE'S TENNER" was counterfeited, obtained from his father for the purpose of swank. The idea was unoriginal, for Tubby Muffin had done the same thing a few years earlier.

Levison was in trouble yet once again at the end of May - he endured more than his fair share of suffering in these Red, White, and Blue years, but the two stories which told the tale were first-class of their type. That shady gentleman, Tickey Tapp, was reintroduced to readers, and on this occasion Levison shouldered the blame for a fault of Cardew, and fell from the ivy while trying to run away from school.

At the end of July, the St. Jim's chums went to Canada as the guests of Kit Wildrake. This series was, perhaps, not Martin Clifford in his very best holiday mood, but it had its moments and was well-written throughout. Its impact was lessened for the inveterate Hamilton fan by the fact that Jimmy Silver had enjoyed similar adventures in a very long series in the Boy's Friend, only a few years before.

St. Frank's was now brought closely in association with St. Jim's for the very first time, and the connection was to last for some years. A substitute writer presented the story of the Castleton twins, one of whom came to St. Jim's, the other going to St. Frank's. One was a nice boy, the other was a bounder. Henry St. John had used the same theme in a story of St. Basil's.

The real Martin was back again in mid-November with yet another yarn of Levison's suffering. It was a single story, and prepared the way for the Levison brothers' departure for Greyfriars, to play their parts in that fine "Toad of the Remove" series in the Magnet. The Levisons went to Greyfriars in search of a will, the title of the St. Jim's story being "LEVISON'S LAST DAY". It was an excellent tale.

In mid-December came another single, "LEVISON'S RETURN", the title of which explains the theme.

This was followed immediately by a good single Christmas story which opened at Cardew's home, where Cardew met Jimmy, the rat, and then was played out to a climax at Eastwood House. This story, "THE WHITE CAVALIER", was the last Christmas tale that Mr. Hamilton was to write for the Gem for many a long day - in fact, the next one was in the very last issue of the Gem, at the end of 1939.

## T H E T W I L I G H T Y E A R S

### THE YEAR 1928

This was a dreadful year, with only four stories from the master pen. These four stories were very fine, but, as four swallows cannot make a summer, so these four stories could not save 1928 from being one of the blackest in Gem history. The policy for the old paper was now plain. It seems evident that substitute writers were now handling the stories almost exclusively, and they were allowed to make fundamental changes as no substitute writer had ever done before.

From the Christmas story of 1927, we saw no further St. Jim's story from the master hand until the second week of August, 1928. Then the Gem commenced to present metal models free with the paper, the gifts were advertised widely, an influx of new readers was expected - so it is fairly certain that something extra-special in the way of stories was arranged in an effort to consolidate the loyalty of the new readers. The genuine Martin Clifford contributed the VICTOR CLEEVE series.

These four stories were as good as anything that Charles Hamilton ever wrote, which is saying something. There is no doubt that he put everything he had got into this series - and that meant plenty. These stories, too, were much longer than those he had written in earlier Red, White and Blue days, for now the Gem programme consisted only of the school story and a serial. The appeal of the Victor Cleeve series was chiefly to older readers, the more discriminating, and the intelligent. Probably the series is not so well known as a great many of the others, for, owing to the glut of substitute material during these twilight years, it is not a period which is much sought by collectors. It is also likely that a number of the old faithfuls had given up the Gem in despair before this series appeared. Yet it is so good that, between stiff covers, it might well become a school story classic.

Victor Cleeve, Mr. Railton's nephew, had been expelled from Barcroft for theft, and came to St. Jim's. He hated his new school and its occupants, he resented his uncle's kindness. Mr. Railton tried to make him friendly with Tom Merry, and Tom did his best, without any marked success for a time. The stories contained fascinating cricket sequences, natural dialogue, superb character painting, tense situations, working up to a grand climax. A satisfying dish of fare for the most jaded palate. What a treat for the Gem reader during this twilight year! But what an anti-climax when the party was over, and the sun of Charles Hamilton's genius was covered again by the clouds of substitution!

### THE YEAR 1929

For the first time in Gem history, the genuine Martin Clifford contributed no story at all to the paper during the year.

## THE YEAR 1930

This year there were four genuine stories. A radical change took place at St. Jim's in April, 1930, - Etons were abolished - and Mr. Hamilton took over for one week only to introduce the change. The story, "GOOD-BYE TO ETONS", was nothing to write home about, and one wonders why it was that the genuine Clifford came back just to mark the change of attire.

The Magnet had gained by the passing of Etons. I doubt whether the Gem did, for R.J. Macdonald's boys in Etons always seemed to me to be more attractive than those he depicted in sports jackets. However, that is merely a passing thought.

At the end of May the genuine Martin was back in the picture with a single story. "BRAINY GRUNDY" was no masterpiece, though it was mildly amusing.

The general programme of the Gem seemed to be becoming rather ominous. Apart from the school story there was a serial, a humorous complete story about "One Ton Willy", a facetious half-page headed "How Many Beans Make Five?", an unfunny funny page called "Round the World with Professor Pimple", a comic strip entitled "The Roaring Adventures of the Wigga-Wagga Boys". Decidedly ominous! The sort of programme that many papers had presented when they were on the way out. Regular readers must have wondered - unless they had ceased to care.

June brought a genuine story, "A KNOCK-OUT FOR KNOX", on familiar lines but quite good entertainment.

At the end of the year another single came from the genuine writer, under the title of "GEORGE WASHINGTON JUNIOR". Just a pot-boiler, this.

## THE YEAR 1931

A remarkable year - though up till the end of June there were only four genuine stories.

At the end of January we had another single, "THE MAN FROM ANGEL ALLEY". Talbot recognised in Mr. Linton's nephew a man he had known in his old "Toff" days in Angel Alley. Rogue Rawdon had kidnapped the real nephew, and taken his place. This was purely a rank-and-file yarn, but it seemed to shine brightly among the surrounding stories.

This was followed immediately by another tale from the master - "FIGGINS IN A FUNK" - in which Cousin Ethel caused Figgins to promise that he would not "lay a finger on Trimble". Trimble overheard the conversation, took advantage of the promise, and set out to bully Figgins. A trifle, this story, but like other genuine tales of the period, it tends to shine far beyond its merits on account of the surrounding bog of substitute yarns.

But at the end of March the genuine Clifford was back in form with "THE SHADY THREE", the best story since the Cleeve series. Mr. Lathom was struck down by St. Leger who was returning from a trip to the Green Man. Trimble, who happened to be in Lathom's study in search for a confiscated cake, was blamed for the attack and expelled. It is a thought that stories which introduced the Fifth-formers were usually much above average quality.

The issue dated June 20th, 1931, contained a substitute story called "Gussy the Waiter". It also contained a small panel with the announcement,

"A BIG SURPRISE IN STORE FOR ALL GEM READERS". I knew what that surprise was going to be. I had heard from the Fleetway House that a suggestion which I had made and pressed home for many months was to be put into operation for a trial period.

The following week the Gem contained another substitute story, "Skimpole's Musical Spasm". It also contained another panel, "THE BIG PLAN! There's a royal treat in store for Gem readers".

This Skimpole story was the last new substitute effort ever to be published in the Gem. The substitute writers, who were more to be pitied than blamed, departed from the old paper, unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

No. 1220, dated July 4th, 1931, contained a story by the genuine Martin Clifford. Ironic, perhaps, but very fitting, that the real Martin should come into his own again for this historic occasion. "BATTLING GRUNDY" was the last new story of St. Jim's to appear for many years. Eight years were to go by before the genuine Clifford used his agile brain to give us new stories of Tom Merry.

"BATTLING GRUNDY" was quite a good yarn of the Grundy type. He was in trouble with his form-master, Mr. Pilbeam, for fighting. Mr. Pilbeam was a character created by a substitute writer. Expulsion threatened Grundy if he received any more black eyes, but he got one in saving the Head from a tramp.

So ended another phase in the St. Jim's saga. That issue contained a full two-page "spread" in the centre of the paper, announcing, "YOUR EDITOR'S BIG PLAN! Next Week, - "TOM MERRY -- NEW BOY".

#### R E V E R I E

A poet has observed that the saddest words in the English tongue are "It might have been". That, of course, is rather a morbid thought, and we can comfort ourselves with the knowledge that nothing is so bad but that it might be worse, and, to be completely practical, it is no use crying over spilt milk.

We are probably all more or less in agreement with regard to what I have called "The Twilight Years", but there are varying opinions concerning the re-prints.

I have occasionally heard it suggested that the decision to re-print the old St. Jim's tales was a mistake; that it halted the full development of the Tom Merry saga; that during the Thirties the Gem might have presented St. Jim's stories greater than ever before, in the same way that the finest Magnet tales were published in those later years. If the people who believe these things are right, then I was hopelessly in error in 1931, and indeed I have much for which to answer. For I have no doubt at all that the re-print experiment would never have been tried at all, but for my well-intentioned (though perhaps misguided, as I freely admit) activities.

In the early weeks of 1931, I made the suggestion to the Fleetway House that the St. Jim's story should be told again in the Gem from the beginning. At first, the suggestion was turned down flat, - "the Gem has never been a re-print paper, and will never be one"; - "the St. Jim's stories are more popular now than ever before" (?), and so on.

I renewed the suggestion, and campaigned for the plan to be adopted. In

March came a message, "your suggestion is to be considered"; then, "the idea has not been shelved, but is to receive further consideration". In May, - "the plan is to be adopted for a trial period".

They even accepted my suggestion for the title of the opening story, "TOM MERRY -- NEW BOY". That title had been used in the Penny Popular in 1912, so I can't claim to have been original, but I felt mightily pleased with myself that summer of 1931.

If I was wrong, I can only bow my head in shame, and seek some sackcloth and ashes. I wonder, sometimes, what might have happened in 1931 if, instead of suggesting the re-prints, I had campaigned for the permanent return of the genuine Martin Clifford. But if Martin Clifford had returned to the Gem, Frank Richards might not have given us all those wonderful series in the Magnet for which we are so grateful.

I could only act on the evidence as it seemed to be presented to me at that time. That a substitute writer was now running St. Jim's was quite clear; over a number of years we had had but a mere handful of stories from the genuine Clifford, and, when he popped up very occasionally, he seemed careful not to be very good.

It could be argued that the substitute writer who handled the Gem stories in the Twilight Years showed literary ability far in excess of that shown by other substitute writers. I honestly believe that he did, but, personally, I liked these stories far less than anything the Gem had ever presented. The simple reason was that he was blasting to smithereens the traditions of the St. Jim's tales, and, however gifted he may have been, he never captured the spirit of the Gem. To be quite honest, he was embarked on a hopeless task - no writer in the world could successfully have taken over the master's characters and settings, for Charles Hamilton's style is unique and inimitable - but that does not excuse the abandonment of tradition.

Dozens of the stories were on fantastic lines; a section of the school embarked on a tour of the world in a giant airship, with lessons carried on in the air, and calls being made at amazing imaginary lands. Some of the titles tell their own tale - "The Schoolboy Airmen" (in which the juniors flew their own aeroplanes); "The Snake Men of Zundaki"; "The Tyrant of Urudor"; "Kildare of the Foreign Legion", and so on.

A girls' school, Spalding Hall, was opened near St. Jim's, -- Cousin Ethel and Doris Levison went as pupils, and a new range of girl characters came into the stories and appeared frequently.

St. Frank's was brought into close relationship with St. Jim's, and the stories sometimes ran in concert with the two schools. This, perhaps, was a mere detail, except that St. Frank's and St. Jim's had never before been connected. Obviously, if the man who was writing the St. Jim's stories was also writing of St. Frank's, he cannot be blamed for introducing his own characters into the Gem. But it was against tradition, for, with the possible exception of Clifton Dane long before, Mr. Hamilton never used any characters but his own.

Mr. Linton was retired - a major step indeed, considering that he had been in the stories for well over twenty years - and his place was taken by a Mr. Pilbeam. A tedious American character, Cyrus Handcock, was introduced and even joined the Terrible Three, so that we read of "Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, and

Handcock, the chums of Study No. 10". Straws, maybe, but the last one broke the camel's back.

My opinion then was that such major changes would never have been made at all, had not the substitute writer been assured that the future of the St. Jim's stories had passed permanently into his hands - and I am still of the same opinion.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Hamilton, in his very few contributions to the Twilight Years, only used these innovations on one occasion. For instance, in "FIGGINS IN A FUNK" (early 1931), Cousin Ethel played a substantial part, but there was no mention of Spalding Hall. It was only in his last story of all, "BATTLING GRUNDY", that he introduced Mr. Pilbeam extensively - and it is more than possible that, even in the case of this story, the genuine Martin Clifford wrote of Mr. Linton, and a careful Editor had the name revised to Pilbeam throughout the story. I don't know, and it's unimportant, for the curtain was coming down on the glut of substitute stories, and the re-prints were due to begin.

I believed, and still believe, that in early 1931 the end of the Gem was imminent, and that only the re-prints saved it. I may add that I welcomed the opportunity to read those very early masterpieces which had been published before I was born, though, shortly after the re-prints commenced, I was able to purchase bound volumes of the first three hundred Gems - the most valued items in my collection today.

I proved conclusively that a determined reader can have a marked effect on the policy of a paper; I wished that I had realised it earlier. In the years that followed, I played a part on occasions in connection with the re-printing of certain stories, and when, in 1939, I campaigned that we had had enough of the re-prints - they stopped.

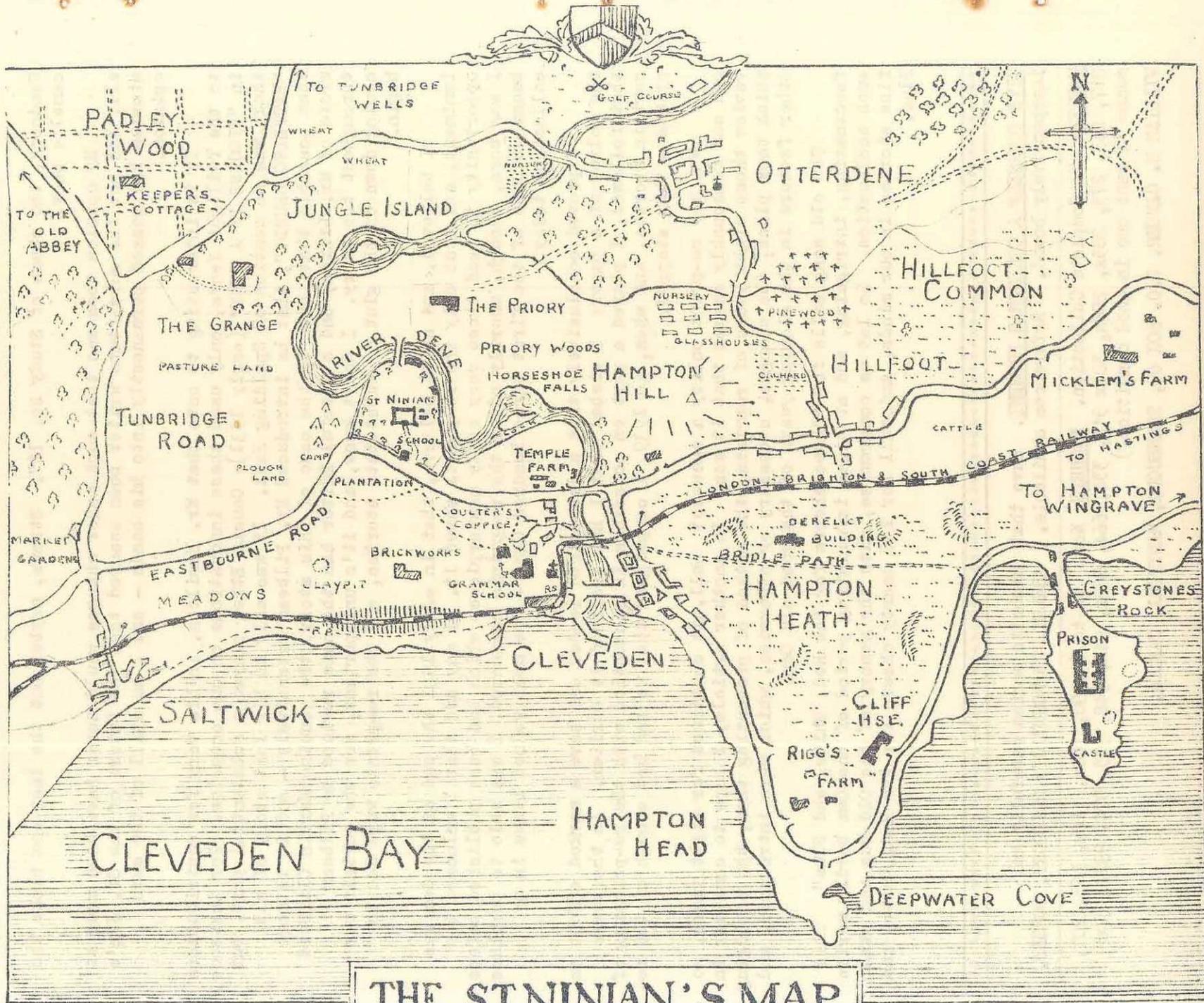
Was the re-print policy a success? Well, it continued for eight years, so one can reasonably assume that it was. In another article, I hope to consider in review those eight years of reprints, the method of presenting them, the abridging which took place, the changes, necessary or otherwise, which were introduced, and other factors in the closing years of the good old Gem.

The old song calls for "Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue". This fascinating, intriguing, and at times infuriating period of the Gem hardly merits such acclamation. So let us compromise, with the memory of the Old Bus and other fine stories in our minds, and call for TWO hearty cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.

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THE ST. NINIAN'S MAP

THE pleasant pastime of browsing through old-time boys' papers has many delightful little surprises; in acquainting one's self with the stories found in the pages of those stalwarts of the Edwardian age, THE BOYS' FRIEND, REALM and HERALD, oft times a charming little corner of the world of boys' fiction may be discovered, cleverly described by the author; read, no doubt with enthusiasm by the boys of that age, and then lightly forgotten.

Such a corner is that, which for want of a better title I will call St. Ninian's country, described in the tales of the school of that name by the late Maxwell Scott.

St. Ninian's, like St. Frank's a Sussex school, was situated on the coast, somewhere between Eastbourne and Hastings. Such a wealth of detail was given in the five serials from which is gathered the St. Ninian's story, that it has been possible to draw what I hope is an interesting map of the surrounding countryside. Even the position of the fields and hedgerows were skilfully interwoven in the story, not all those shown on the map, of course, but those near and around St. Ninian's itself may be taken to be much as visualized by the author.

There were three Houses at St. Ninian's: Rant's, the inhabitants of

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## "THE ST. NINIAN'S STORY"

by the late  
PERCY NORTH

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which were known as Ranters; Jerman's (Germs) and School House (Coolies). Each of these Houses formed one side of the Quadrangle, Rant's and School House facing one another, while opposite Jerman's and nearest the road were the Chapel and ancient Dining Hall, divided by a finely carved stone archway, which led from the Quadrangle to the school grounds. These grounds contained the boat-houses, cricket and football pitches, a gymnasium and a fives court: a building was later added as a science laboratory and Nelson Lee lovers will remember the story of the opening ceremony, where King George Vth, then Prince of Wales, had a narrow escape from assassination by John Hansell, the Winged Terror.

The central figure in the St. Ninian's Story was Richard Hamilton, Nipper to his many admirers, the assistant to the great detective, Nelson Lee.

Much criticism has been Nipper's lot of late, and it has been pointed out by his many staunch fans that he was, after all, "Nelson Lee's Pupil" and no ordinary schoolboy: in the St. Ninian's Story the reader is not allowed to forget this, for no other character rivals Nipper in stature. There was plenty of room for the development of characters like Arnold of the Grammar School and Proctor, leader of the Germs, Nipper's two great rivals; also of his own chums in Study No. 10, but Maxwell Scott was ever mindful of the fact that the St. Ninian's Story was Nipper's story, and no one else was allowed the centre of the stage.

It must not be assumed that Nipper had things all his own way at St. Ninian's; he was always the central figure but as often the loser of the day

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as the winner. Arnold was at least his equal in strategy, while Proctor was definitely his superior. However, Nipper was blessed with quick wits and superb initiative, and being born under a lucky star was often able to snatch victory from defeat.

Among the other masters appearing in the stories besides Messrs. Rant and Jerman were Dr. Owen, who was replaced after the first story by Dr. Shuttleworth, as was the French master M. Nicot by M. Hachette. The German master was a really good character named Herr Hentig. "Old Hen-Egg" he became to the boys. Herr Hentig was a friend of Nelson Lee, and he was very fond of Nipper, who in turn admired the kindly old German, although he always regarded him as fair game for a jape. Then there was Mr. Darlow, the master of the Lower Fifth; Mr. Trigg, maths master; Mr. Chadwick, an American, and a Mr. Cottle. The latter was detested by the boys on account of his habit of making the rounds of the dormitories, in order to see that the boys were safely tucked up in bed. Of the masters the author says "With one exception the masters of St. Ninian's had too much regard for their dignity and self respect to spy on the movements of the boys after school hours". Um-m-m!

The only other boy worthy of mention, besides Nipper's own chums, is Lionel Dawson, captain of the school, who played the title role in "The Captain of St. Ninian's". In Dr. Owen's time it was customary for the school captain to be the leading classical scholar in the School House, but Dr. Shuttleworth ruled that the captain could be chosen from any of the three Houses. A candidate for election had to be a member of the Upper Sixth, a monitor for at least two terms, and he must have gained not less than two of the caps which were awarded for proficiency at cricket, football, hockey, racquets and boating. The custom of awarding the captaincy to the head classic was dropped.

Of Nipper's friends and studymates little need be said now, except in the case of Wagstaffe, the auburn haired fat boy. True to form, his thoughts ran on food all the time, waking and sleeping. He was not very bright, and being fat and ponderous he came in for the lion's share of the japing at the hands of the Germs and Grammarians. His christian name was not disclosed, the initial was P. Probably for Percy. The other three, Dick, Lal and Bob were all featured prominently, and will introduce themselves later.

No chronicle of the St. Ninian's Story would be complete without a word about the artists. Arthur Clarke was the illustrator of the first three serials, H.M. Lewis did the drawings for "The Fighting Fifth", while J. Abney Cummings did like service for "Nipper of St. Ninian's". As the serials drew to a close the familiar pictures vanished, in their place was a pictorial heading, probably by Leonard Shields.

New readers were always given a very good precis of the preceding chapters, but throughout the whole series the writer (obviously not the author) referred to Nipper as ROBERT Hamilton, and upon one occasion as Tinker!

This, then, is the general outline of the St. Ninian's Story, the frame to the picture, as it were, so now to the first story.

The serial to start the series was "Nipper's Schooldays" which appeared in the BOYS' HERALD in December 1904, and was reprinted in THE BOYS' FRIEND 3d LIBRARY No. 171. Efforts to obtain either the HERALDs or the B.F.L. having proved unsuccessful, I am indebted to Jack Wood who has come to the rescue with

information about this story. With his notes and the references to the happenings in "Nipper's Schooldays" gathered from the later stories, a fairly good idea of the plot can be conceived.

Most Nelson Lee fans are aware that the famous detective had two wards in those far off days, Nipper and a lad named Dick Starling. (It will be better to continue to refer to Richard Hamilton as Nipper, while the other Richard in the field will remain Dick). Dick was a younger, smaller boy than Nipper, and in many ways his character was moulded in the pattern of Nelson Lee's Pupil. Nipper's dominant personality was the unwitting cause of poor Dick being somewhat overshadowed, but he was a likeable boy, strong in his admiration of Nipper, who was his idol, and quick to back him up in any enterprise, however dangerous, even against his own inclinations. In the first story he appears to have been in the Upper Fourth Form, while Nipper was a member of the Upper Sixth, and head monitor of Rant's House. Such was the set-up for the story of Dick Starling.

Dick, like Nipper, had been discovered by Nelson Lee in humble surroundings before being sent to the same school as his friend and fellow ward. In reality he was Richard Mowbray Syme of Redmore Hall, Surrey, heir to a fortune, and therefore a considerable obstacle to the ambitions of one, Major Syme, a cousin of Dick's, who with considerable ingenuity plotted the latter's departure from this life. The villainous major's activities necessitated Nelson Lee maintaining a closer watch on Dick, and to this end he came to St. Ninian's as Mr. Leeson, assistant maths master, also taking football, hockey, boxing and gym. He was stated to have held a medical diploma, but never practised. Dick Starling's enemies had a hold on the French master at St. Ninian's, M. Nicot. The hapless Frenchman was forced to take an active part in the plot to murder the lad. To the north-west of St. Ninian's, too far away to be shown on the map, was a ruined abbey, a favourite haunt for picnic parties, and it was there that Nipper, Dick and five other boys were trapped in an underground vault beneath the chapter house and left to a lingering death. The Germs, under the leadership of Proctor, were hot on the trail of Nipper and Co., and were anxious to pay off old scores by capturing the feed, but instead they found themselves in the role of rescuers of their rivals. So the dastardly plot was foiled, and Syme and his henchmen met with their just deserts. As for M. Nicot, the poor fellow lost his reason, and disappeared entirely from the St. Ninian's Story. The truth of Dick's heritage was then revealed, but he remained at St. Ninian's as Richard Starling until the end in 1912.

With the second story in the series, "Detective Warder Nelson Lee", the story of St. Ninian's was transferred to the green pages of the BOYS' FRIEND. As may be gathered from the title, the tale was a detective story with the school playing a very large part therein. Great changes had been made at St. Ninian's, the Head, Dr. Owen, had resigned, and the newcomer, Dr. Shuttleworth, addressed the boys in the Dining Hall. The fagging system was drastically overhauled, and discipline tightened up. This in itself was bad enough, but worse was to come, for Nipper had been up to his old games on his way to school to start the new term. It was great fun to drench a stranger with ginger beer at Eastbourne station, even funner to smother the unfortunate man with flour as well, but somehow it did not seem at all funny when Nipper discovered that the drenched and floured one was none other than the new Head of St. Ninian's.

The speech began, and as time went on and by no word or look did it appear that our hero had been recognised, so did that cheerful young gentleman's

spirits rise, until it seemed that he was the only one in that vast dining hall who had any kind thoughts towards the despotic new Headmaster. But just as the boys were dismissed and filing out of Hall, Dr. Shuttleworth turned his steely gaze upon Nipper, and with a sinking feeling the latter followed the Doctor's beckoning finger, through the green baize door and into the Head's private sanctum. O, what a fall was there, my countrymen! Nipper might have expected lines, a gating, or at the worst a severe thrashing. In fact he got none of these punishments. The reality was far, far worse than anything in Nipper's most horrible dreams. In the first place he was stripped by the Head of his position of head-monitor, and with it went his right to a study of his own. Secondly he was sent down, not into the Lower Sixth, not even into the Upper Fifth, henceforth he was to languish in the Lower Fifth Form in the company of boys like Wagstaffe, who was too idle to get his remove, and Dick Starling, who did get his from the Upper Fourth. These three lads now shared a study, and they had as a fourth companion a scholarship boy from a lower form named Bob Unwin. It was customary at St. Ninian's for boys in one form to invite a junior to share their study with them. Now Nipper's old study had been taken over by his successor as head monitor of Rant's, a boy named Leslie Arkle. Arkle was an objectionable character in every way, and made life for his fag, young Unwin, almost unbearable. The chums of the Lower Fifth were all agreed that the situation could not be tolerated, and Nipper's chance came when he became the possessor of a letter written by Arkle to Pringle, a shady bookmaker and publican. Nipper was not averse to a little genteel blackmail, and in return for Arkle ceasing to persecute Bob Unwin, the letter remained in Nipper's desk, which was in Study No. 10, Lower Fifth passage. If Arkle continued to bully Unwin, the letter was to be shown to the Head without delay. Arkle was so desperate that he was driven to a spot of burglary, forcing Nipper's desk in the dead of night and recovering the letter, while at the same time he helped himself to the football club funds with which he promptly paid bookie Pringle. Nipper, who was treasurer of the club, had taken the number of one banknote, and it was this fact that ultimately led to Arkle's downfall.

The bullying head monitor had received a sobering shock, and henceforth he treated young Unwin in a more rational manner, but he soon found a means to hurt the scholarship lad even more. Bob had always thought that his father held a position in an Australian bank, but Arkle got hold of a magazine which commented that young Unwin, the son of Philip Unwin the blackmailer, had won the Beaufort scholarship and was now a pupil at St. Ninian's School, a few miles from Greystones Prison, where his father was a convict.

It was a devastating blow when Arkle taunted Unwin with his discovery. Crazed with grief the young lad decided to run away from school, only pausing to take a cherished photograph of his father from Nipper's desk. The result was a foregone conclusion: young Unwin was blamed for the theft of the football club funds, but Nipper refused to believe him guilty, and stood up to the formidable Headmaster in fine form.

Bob, meanwhile, had reached Hampton Heath, the desolate waste between Clevedon and Greystones, and he took shelter in an old hut halfway along the bridle path. He was scarcely inside when he heard voices and footsteps, and he quickly hid himself in a dark corner of the hut. Two men then entered, one in fact being Sir Edwin Arkle, father of Bob's fagmaster. It was evident from their muttered conversation that they were there with intent to murder someone who was

yet to appear upon the scene: who it was Bob Unwin did not know, but eventually a shadowy form was seen by the miscreants approaching the hut. Bob awaited his opportunity, and when the unknown paused for a moment in the shadow of some trees, the boy screamed an urgent warning. With a savage imprecation Sir Edwin wheeled around, and clubbing his revolver, dealt Bob a savage blow.

Hurriedly the two men climbed through a window frame at the back of the hut, and made off across the heath.

After a brief, vain chase, the stranger, who was none other than Nelson Lee, returned to the hut to find the scholarship lad unconscious on the floor. A search party which included Nipper and Dr. Shuttleworth arrived at an opportune moment, and poor Bob was gently carried back to school.

Now although Sir Edwin Arkle had succeeded to the baronetcy, which carried with it Micklefield Hall, and a strictly entailed estate to the annual value of £20,000 certain people including Sir Edwin's sister-in-law, Lady (Robert) Arkle, widow of the baronet's elder brother, had suspicions that he was not the rightful owner of the title. This was only too true, for several years previously a son had been born to Lady Arkle. Sir Edwin had evolved a desperate scheme: with the help of a man named Nathan Grimshaw he substituted a dead child for the rightful heir to Micklefield Hall, and the bereaved parents took the infant Arkle as an adopted son. Grimshaw had to take the Arkle's nurse into his confidence, and to pay her well for her silence, but years later, when she was dying, the woman confessed to Lady Arkle the story of the changeling babes. At once Lady Arkle called upon the services of the great detective, Nelson Lee, who trailed Grimshaw to Greystones prison, where the scoundrel was serving a sentence. A disguised Lee obtained a post as a warder at the prison, and as Warder Cole, late of Parkhurst Prison, he took up his duties with the hope of worming the secret of the missing heir from the taciturn Grimshaw. The convict, however had contacts both within the prison and without, and it was he who plotted the murderous ambush which, but for the intervention of Bob Unwin, would have resulted in the death of Nelson Lee.

Bob was now back at St. Ninian's, where Nipper had meanwhile discovered that Arkle's letter had also disappeared, which gave him a very good idea of the real thief's identity, but no proof was forthcoming at that time, so the matter was allowed to drop. Later, by a stroke of good luck, Nipper discovered that the missing five pound note was in Pringle's possession, and lost no time in acquainting Nelson Lee with the fact. Pringle, in the meantime, had lost his life in a clash with an escaped convict on Hampton Heath, and Mrs. Pringle allowed "Warder Cole" access to her late husband's private papers. Here the detective found proof of Arkle's guilt in the matter of the five pound note. Arkle was subsequently expelled, and St. Ninian's was all the better for his absence: but Nelson Lee landed an even bigger fish, for among Pringle's papers was proof positive of Philip Unwin's innocence of the charge of blackmail, Pringle being the real culprit. After many vicissitudes the papers ultimately reached the Home Secretary, and the last few weeks of Unwin's fifteen year stretch were remitted. Poor Unwin seemed only too pleased to get his name cleared: the soul destroying years in gaol were as nothing, and lightly brushed aside. Thousand pound awards for wrongful conviction, although not unheard of, were not bestowed lightly in those days.

After all these happenings it was rather a fiasco to find that the

missing heir, who was none other than Bob Unwin, was discovered, not by Nelson Lee, but by a chance meeting between Bob and his mother, Lady Arkle. However, the serial had run long enough, all loose ends were neatly tied, and the scholarship boy took his rightful place as Sir Robert Arkle, Bart., at Micklefield Hall, while his former foster parents settled down at a newly built house near the Hall, the erstwhile convict being rewarded with the stewardship of the estate.

With the final instalment of "Detective Warder Nelson Lee" the readers of the BOYS' FRIEND were introduced to the first chapters of "The Captain of St. Ninian's".

The story opens with Nipper and Dick spending the last weeks of their summer holiday at Micklefield Hall with Bob Arkle, and due to return to St. Ninian's on the following Friday.

It was Dick Starling who had the wonderful idea of starting a school magazine, to be called "Nipper's Weekly". It was to be a complimentary paper, handwritten, with drawings by Bob Arkle, and it was reproduced on a duplicator. Nipper was editor, Wagstaffe his assistant, Bob art editor and Dick "poet". When the boys returned to school the paper was "in an advanced state of preparation". The distribution was in the hands of the school porter, an Irishman named Barney Maguire, a curiosity among school porters of fiction in that he was good humoured and liked boys.

The first page was devoted to a caricature of the captain of the third eleven at cricket, and was surmounted by an ornamental device combined with the arms of the school. This device is reproduced at the top of the map accompanying this article. The colours of the shield, in everyday language, are silver and red, the red being the shaded portion.

Sad to relate, "Nipper's Weekly" was a poor effort as far as school papers go, not to be compared with "The St. Frank's Magazine" for instance.

In the second chapter we are introduced to Lionel Dawson, classical scholar of the School House, and Captain of St. Ninian's. Dawson was a popular captain, and idolized by the chums of Study No. 10. On the second holiday after their return to school Nipper and his three studymates decided to take a walk to the top of Hampton Hill, in order to settle a bet (in golf balls!) that was to be decided by whether or not the time could be read from the face of Greystones Prison clock, with the aid of Dick Starling's telescope. As soon as the bet was settled, Nipper, who was idly focusing the glass on various objects of interest, espied Dawson making his way to Cliff House, the lonely building on the headland overlooking the Greystones Road. With him was a stranger, who Dick recognised as Colonel Cobb, the new occupant of Cliff House. A grim place this house turned out to be, with a negro manservant and two savage dogs which roamed the grounds. However, Dawson and the colonel went into the house and were lost to view.

The boys returned to school in time for calling over, and great excitement was evident among masters and boys alike when it was found that the captain of the school was not present to answer "Adsum". Time went on, and still Dawson did not return, so Nipper told his story to Mr. Darlow, and later to the Head. Dr. Shuttleworth at once ordered the dogcart and set out with Nipper for Cliff House; on the way they were passed by a cyclist, riding at frantic speed. It was pitch dark, but in the glare of the trap's lamps Nipper recognised Mr. Chadwick, a new master at St. Ninian's who had been seen by the chums of Study No. 10 earlier

in the afternoon, coming away from Cliff House! So Colonel Cobb was evidently forewarned, and when Dr. Shuttleworth and Nipper were shown into the colonel's presence, that gentleman (who was an American like Mr. Chadwick) concocted a plausible tale with which the Doctor had to be satisfied.

The Doctor and Nipper were forced to accept Colonel Cobb's version of Dawson's disappearance, for when the missing lad's clothes were found on a ledge near Deepwater Cove, it seemed that the school captain had, as Colonel Cobb had said, gone bathing in the cove, and in so doing had lost his life. But Nipper had his doubts, and resolved to watch the sinister house on the headland all the more closely. The shock of Dawson's assumed death swiftly proved fatal to his ailing father, Lord Rivelin, who in the space of a few days passed away. The title would eventually come to Dawson's uncle, Sir David Dawson, who had achieved notoriety a few months previously, when caught red-handed, as it were, in a little card sharpening while in the army, but before he succeeded to the title and the estates much was to happen.

At the school the first impact of tragedy was wearing off. Life was becoming more normal, and laughter was once more heard in the old Quadrangle and in the playing fields. After a while, Dr. Shuttleworth announced that there would be an election held, to find a successor to Dawson.

Here the thread of the story is broken, for we have come to the end of the available BOYS' FRIENDS containing this serial, but from clues found in later stories it may be stated that Stephen Copley of School House and Gardner of the "Germs" were two of the candidates while probably a man from Rant's was put up as well. Copley and Gardner were "bad hats", and the School House fellow gained a hold over Gardner, forcing him to resign from the election.

I am indebted to Bill Gander, who has the complete serial in his collection, for the information that the election was won by the candidate who was not favoured by Nipper and his friends, so it seems likely that Copley was the winner. But before the winner could assume his duties Nelson Lee created a sensation at the school by producing Lionel Dawson alive and well. The captain of the school had been held prisoner at Cliff House all the time, the bathing fatality having been faked. So Sir David Dawson and the rascally Cobb were foiled in the end, and no doubt went the way of all villains of the piece.

From the green pages of the BOYS' FRIEND to the pink of the REALM, and the next serial, "The Fighting Fifth".

In this story is found most of the detail essential to the drawing of the map. This was the fourth St. Ninian's serial to be written in under three years, and it seemed that at this stage the author thought the time ripe to enlarge and develop the background to his stories.

"The Fighting Fifth" was also remarkable for the amount of japing and rivalry with the Cleveden Grammar School which was interwoven with the main plot. This rivalry, added to that between the Ranters and Germs gave rise to situation after situation of the custard pie, or mustard in the marmalade type.

Of the many thrilling incidents in this serial, mention must be made of the rescue by Nipper of a Grammar School boy who had been trapped by the incoming tide. Nipper and Dick had been captured by the Grammarians near the cliffs, when word was brought to them that the boy, who was a rather delicate little chap, was clinging to the cliff face, and in danger of falling into the sea beneath him.

In Maxwell Scott's own words "Arnold turned away, and burst into tears. 'What can we do? Is there anything we can do?' he sobbed, turning instinctively - as all boys did in times of danger - to 'Nelson Lee's Pupil'."

Well, there was something they could do, Nipper commandeered some stout rope from the neighbouring brickyard, and over the edge of the cliff he went, the other boys paying out the rope, foot by foot. As he reached the unfortunate boy, whose name was Conway, the poor little fellow lost his hold, and was swept out to sea by a big wave. Nothing daunted, Nipper dived in, and half a dozen sturdy strokes brought him level with Conway. Grasping the struggling Grammarian Nipper swam back to the foot of the cliff, and standing in water up to his waist he supported the now unconscious Conway with one arm while he somehow fashioned a loop in the end of the rope with his free hand. With his feet in the loop, and still supporting Conway, Nipper managed to keep his charge and himself away from the cliff face, and eventually got within reach of the many willing hands waiting to haul them to safety.

This heroic feat drew cheers from the ranks of Tuscany, so to speak, and the feud between the two schools died a natural death on the spot.

Through all these happenings ran the main theme of the serial, which concerned a young Indian boy, who became the fifth member of the Co. in Study No. 10. His name was Chota Lal Nath Chandra Das, a prince, son of the late Rajah of Tanjore, and known at St. Ninian's as Lal, because life is short.

Soon after his arrival at the school, Lal, who was taking a lonely stroll along the cliffs, sighted a boat drifting aimlessly some way out to sea. As he looked he saw a human arm appear for a moment above the stern of the boat, wave to and fro, and disappear. Scrambling down the cliff face, the Indian boy swam out to the boat which he found to be leaking badly, being more than half full of water. On pulling himself over the gunwale Lal was horrified to find the apparently lifeless form of a man in the boat. He proved to be only unconscious, and aroused himself to press a small gold locket into the boy's hand.

"Take that - take that to - " he began, but a huge wave swept over the boat and man and boy were thrown into the sea. When Lal rose to the surface, with the locket still in his hand, boat and man had disappeared.

There was apparently nothing in the locket of value, a curl of hair and a faded photograph of a young woman were all that could be seen, but it was soon evident that there was something queer about the trinket. Shortly after, a stranger presented himself at St. Ninian's with a plausible story and a request that he should be given the locket, which he wanted for sentimental reasons. The stranger almost got away with it, but he made a mistake when he identified the photograph in the locket as one of his dead sister. Now Lal had only changed the photo a few hours previously, and he knew that the original was alive and well at Hillfoot. At the mention of the police, the stranger, who turned out to be a German spy named Otto Heinrich, hastily picked up his hat and took his departure - minus the locket.

Many desperate attempts were made by Heinrich to gain possession of the locket, and he enlisted the aid of Fraulein Hoffmann, who struck up a friendship with Mrs. Shuttleworth, the Head's wife, in order to learn the combination of the Doctor's safe, for there the locket had been placed for safety.

Matters were now complicated by the arrival upon the scene of Fraulein

Hoffmann's brother, Karl. Karl Hoffmann was a freelance cloak-and-dagger man, and in the mysterious affair of the golden locket he was working for the British Government.

By a great stroke of luck the Fraulein discovered the key-word which opened the St. Ninian's safe, and, doublecrossing Heinrich and her country without compunction, she wrote to her brother, telling him the fateful word.

Meanwhile, Nelson Lee's efforts in the Tudor personation case brought him to Greystones Prison, where he obtained a confession from a dying convict which brought that case to a close.

While he was there, a rather excited warder entered the governor's room to report that "A young gentleman from St. Ninian's has been found on the Hampton Wingrave road in a bad way".

It was Lal, who had been attacked by Hoffmann and left unconscious. The governor and Nelson Lee undertook to see Lal safely back to St. Ninian's. So off the three of them went, in the governor's dog-cart, and arrived at the school just after two in the morning. Heinrich had not been fooled in the least by Fraulein Hoffmann's duplicity, and while the dog-cart was bowling along the road from Cleveden to St. Ninian's, he was waiting outside the great dining hall. Inside was Karl Hoffmann, who, armed with the key-word, opened the safe and secured the locket. Just as the party from Greystones reached the Quadrangle entrance a shot rang out, and a shadowy figure was seen bending over another on the ground. Karl Hoffmann had been shot by Heinrich as he dropped from the window of the dining hall, but before the German master-spy could get the locket from Hoffmann Nelson Lee arrived upon the scene, and with a muttered curse Heinrich disappeared into the darkness. Great was the commotion at St. Ninian's, and great also was the bewilderment of Nipper and his friends to find "the Guvnor" at the school.

The locket was found on Hoffmann, and Lee straightaway discovered a hidden spring which opened a secret compartment at the back.

In the compartment was a micro-photograph of a secret treaty between two foreign powers. All this Nelson Lee discovered in the space of a few seconds. Karl Hoffmann had a word for it, two in fact - "Wonderful man", he murmured, with almost his last breath.

Four years later: back again to the BOYS' FRIEND, and the serial is "Nipper of St. Ninian's".

As in the previous stories, the japes planned and executed with varying degrees of success by the Ranters, the Germs and the Grammarians dominated almost every instalment. To make matters easier, Cleveden Grammar School had a serious fire; part of the school building was completely destroyed, and Nipper and Co.'s old enemies of the Cleveden Fifth had to seek fresh quarters. There were no heroics at the fire, no one was in danger, and there was no thrilling rescue by Nelson Lee's Pupil, which was rather a pity. No, the whole reason for introducing the fire at the Grammar School into the story was in order to let Arnold and Co. camp out in the meadow next to St. Ninian's, and scope for the raggers was greatly increased.

Mr. Rant, the popular Housemaster, was a central figure in this story. As with many of Maxwell Scott's creations, his character was slightly changed to meet the needs of the plot. Mr. Rant was no longer the competent, incisive and

reliant figure we had met in the previous serials, he was as popular as ever but was rather more reserved, sad and with a hint of secret worry about him. St. Ninian's had claimed him first as a boy, then as an assistant master, and after that as Housemaster. In the opening instalment Nipper and his companions accompanied Mr. Rant to the shore, to see the wreck of a schooner that was being dashed to pieces on the rocks. As they watched, two passengers from the wreck were rowed ashore. One was a tall, thin man and the other was a smartly dressed boy, who Nipper immediately christened "The Nut".

The sight of the man had a curious effect upon Mr. Rant, for he turned deathly pale and bade Nipper and his friends "Go back to the school - for my sake!"

Bob Arkle and the other boys scented a mystery, and were all for trying to find out what it was, but Nipper - for once - was against it, and rather sharply declared that they were not going to pry into Mr. Rant's private affairs.

But as things turned out, they were to play a very large part in Mr. Rant's concerns and the Housemaster was destined to be more than grateful for the part the young rascals of the Fighting Fifth were to play in setting his affairs to rights.

On one of his nocturnal sorties against the enemy, Nipper accidentally overheard a conversation between his Housemaster and the man who was saved from the wreck. From what Nipper overheard, it was clear that Mr. Rant was completely in the stranger's power, for he consented to take the foppish "Nut" as a pupil, very much against his will. The newcomer, whose name really was Nutt, was naturally made a member of Rant's House, and Nipper - who would do almost anything for his Housemaster - promised to protect Nutt from bullying, and to prevent the other boys from pestering the new boy for details about his past life.

In Maxwell Scott's own words " ... Nutt, in addition to being a fool, and a conceited fool ... was mean, sneakish and an arrant coward." Well, as to the last three Nutt was all that and more, but fool he certainly was not, for he got the better of Nipper more than once, although it must be admitted that Nelson Lee's Pupil did not touch his best form in his last adventure at St. Ninian's. The "Nut" was a character which did not develop according to the author's original conception of the role.

Soon after Nutt's arrival at St. Ninian's, Nipper was aroused from sleep one night by the sound of the dormitory door softly closing. Nutt's bed was empty, so mindful of his promise to Mr. Rant, Nipper got up and followed the new boy downstairs, and watched him enter the Housemaster's study. First of all Nutt opened the study window as a line of escape, if necessary, then with the aid of a small electric torch he eagerly scanned a paper that he had brought with him, then he glided over to a corner of the study, and dropping on one knee he rolled back the carpet.

Lifting a loose board, he withdrew a packet of papers. With a cry, Nipper dashed into the room and took them from him, but Nutt, swiftly recovering, bowled Nipper over, regained the papers and jumped out of the window. Nipper was dazed for a few moments, but soon gave chase. Nutt darted through the archway into the school grounds and made for the old wooden bridge over the river, where the tall thin man was waiting for him. Nutt just had time to hand over the papers when Nipper arrived. To the latter's demand for the papers Nutt had stolen, the

man laughed contemptuously and advised Nipper to tell Mr. Rant to send for the police. Returning to the school, Nipper told Mr. Rant what had occurred. The Housemaster, who had no idea that the papers existed, was amazed but flatly refused to send for the police.

While Nipper was talking to Mr. Rant, Nutt returned to the school, bearing a letter, which he handed to the master. Mr. Rant dismissed Nipper, and what he said to Nutt is not known, but in the morning that foppish young man was back at his place in the Lower Fifth.

True to his word, Nipper did not concern himself with Mr. Rant's business, but young Bob Arkle, having no such scruples, kept his eye on the mysterious Nutt.

One day the schoolboy baronet burst into Study No. 10 in a state of great excitement to report that the Nut was at that moment in the old dining hall, where he was astride one of the beams in the roof, busily engaged in writing something in a pocket book. Nipper's curiosity was aroused, and he hurried to the dining hall, where Nutt was just leaving. Clambering up onto the beam, Nipper soon found the spot where Nutt had been making an examination and there, roughly cut in the old woodwork with a knife was the following inscription:-

" l l l L K R h-n-d."

Nipper was of the opinion that the inscription was hundreds of years old, and the boys were puzzled as to how Nutt came to have so much information about secret papers and about the cryptic carving.

In spite of his determination not to meddle in Mr. Rant's private business, Nipper decided to try and find out more about the man who was brought ashore from the wreck with Nutt.

On the other side of the river to St. Ninian's was an old fashioned country house named "The Priory". Here the mysterious individual was living with a Captain Jago, who had bought the house and the extensive grounds some time previously.

Nipper, Dick and Bob did a little scouting in the spinney near the house, and were startled by the appearance in the grounds of another person, a queer looking man with white hair and beard, although not looking old.

Running towards the spinney with mincing steps, and talking and laughing to himself the while, the man suddenly caught sight of the three boys, and the St. Ninian's colours affected him strangely. "Those - those colours!" he gasped, "Merciful heavens! Is my memory coming back?"

His memory was not given a fair chance, for Captain Jago and the thin man came tearing into the spinney, and the vacant look came into the eyes of the poor lunatic again.

At Captain Jago's threat to set the dogs on them, Nipper and Co. decided to leave, and Nipper went to Mr. Rant with his story of this new development. The master was genuinely puzzled and could throw no light on the question of the identity of the lunatic. Nipper made a brilliant attempt to get the unknown away from the Priory, safely to St. Ninian's.

The plan was to create confusion at the Priory by causing the villagers to believe that Captain Jago would welcome them at his house, and would provide

free refreshments. The free refreshments did it! Nipper and his companions almost succeeded in getting the silvery haired man away from the Priory, but were foiled by the ever watchful Nutt.

Captain Jago found out who was responsible for the hoax and set out for St. Ninian's to lodge a complaint. Lal, who had taken Nipper's place as the ventriloquist of the stories, was also a hypnotist, and by putting the captain under the 'fluence was able to avert the danger. Jago was released from the spell with strict orders to forget about the matter from henceforth.

Had it occurred to Lal that, having the captain in his power, a few questions would have cleared up the whole mystery, the serial could have been ended there and then. However, the Hindoo lad let slip the chance, and "Nipper of St. Ninian's" ran for seven more weeks.

Nipper's luck, always a deciding factor in his many adventures, was once more in evidence in the affair of the cryptic inscription in the dining hall.

It is doubtful if any of the boys would have cracked the cipher, but they were saved the trouble by the thin man from the Priory, who solved the puzzle and hurried to St. Ninian's to tell Arthur, as he called the "Nut". Meeting Arthur halfway, he was rash enough to entice that young man into the bar parlour of the Black Lion, and even more rash to impart the secret of the cipher in tones loud enough to reach the ears of Nipper, who had followed them in, and was lurking in the passage.

The carved inscription referred to yet another document hidden "behind the third panel on the left of the King's right hand," the King being a life size portrait of King Henry VIIth at one end of the dining hall.

Nipper stole softly away from the dingy inn, intending to return to St. Ninian's and obtain the papers, or parchment as it turned out to be, before Nutt could get there.

Alas! Nipper's japes upon the Grammarians now recoiled upon himself, for in attempting a short cut he was pounced upon by the Grammar School boys, and in spite of pleading urgent business he had to go through the hoop. When eventually Nipper did escape he got back to St. Ninian's as quickly as he could, and on peering through a window of the dining hall he espied Nutt at an open panel by the side of the King's portrait, in the act of withdrawing the parchment.

Nipper hurried around the dining hall to the door on the other side, only to find it locked. After a long wait Nipper began to get uneasy, with some reason, for the wily Arthur Nutt had heard the doorhandle softly turn and had left the dining hall - with the parchment - by way of the window. It was as easy as that! The task of young Nutt at St. Ninian's was now completed and he left the school for ever.

The whole story was told to the bewildered Mr. Rant, who once more shied like a frightened horse at the mere mention of the police, and again refused to put the matter before the school governors. One thing that Nipper did get out of him was an admission that the thin man was Arthur Nutt's father.

Nipper and Co. were in rather a quandary, for they felt that the Nutts should be prosecuted, for the honour of the school, yet their loyalty to Mr. Rant made such action impossible.

Bereft of the company of the younger Nutt, St. Ninian's once more settled down to the unceasing warfare between themselves, and with their arch-enemies the Grammarians.

On one raid against the latter, who were still encamped in the adjoining field, Nipper and Dick came to grief, and were captured by the enemy.

Arnold thought it a good idea to tie the two Ninianites to a statue in their own Quad. This was carried out, and Nipper, with Dick, spent the rest of the night on a high pedestal, lashed to a large statue of a long dead Lord Cleveden.

During the night there were other visitors in the old Quad, Captain Jago and the elder Nutt appeared, armed with a measuringtape, and proceeded to take various measurements which took them to the foot of the statue, and from their bitter, disappointed remarks the unseen Nipper learned that the statue had been erected over a secret vault where precious ecclesiastical ornaments had been hidden by monks of the old Abbey, at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries.

Nutt vowed that he would return later with dynamite, and would so wreck the statue that the authorities would remove it, with the pedestal, leaving the way clear for him to force an entry into the vault later.

Nipper also learned that the lunatic at the Priory was named Farnell, and he felt sure that Farnell was an eccentric master who had disappeared from St. Ninian's fifteen years previously. Even when Nipper, released from his predicament, disclosed Nutt's dynamite plan the faint hearted Mr. Rant refused to call in the police, but his cause for fear was removed when Farnell presented himself at St. Ninian's, for the "lunatic" and the young Housemaster had been colleagues at the school and had both fallen in love with the same girl. A quarrel followed, and the two men came to blows down on the beach. Farnell fell and was stunned; Rant, thinking he had killed his fellow master hid the "body" among some rocks, and stole away.

Some time later Farnell recovered, and as he staggered along the beach he met Nutt. He told Nutt what had happened and then, to use his own words, something snapped inside his head and he lost both reason and memory, which had only just returned to him at this very opportune time.

Nutt hid Farnell at his house, and proceeded to blackmail young Rant, saying that he had watched the fight from the top of the cliff, and had afterwards seen Farnell's body washed out to sea. Soon after this, Nutt had emigrated to Australia, taking his baby son and Farnell with him. Through the weary years that followed Mr. Rant had paid the price of his poltronery by sending Nutt regular sums of money.

While at St. Ninian's, Mr. Farnell had been something of an antiquarian, and it was he who discovered the secret of the carved inscription, from an old book in the school library. The clue to the whereabouts of the cipher he had hidden under the board in the study that was now Mr. Rant's, but the fight at the beach occurred before he could examine the inscription itself. In one of his babbling fits, in far off Australia, Farnell had disclosed the secret of the hidden papers to Nutt, who by now had teamed up with Captain Jago. The latter set sail for England where he took over The Priory and awaited the coming of the two Nutts, whose mode of arrival we have already noted.

All was now set for a dramatic finale to the story, but the conclusion proved to be something in the nature of a damp squib to Nipper and Co., and to the BOYS' FRIEND readers; though, in the true sense of the words, for the Nutts and Captain Jago the effect was the direct opposite.

Nutt senior had been up to London, where he had obtained a parcel of dynamite and a detonating fuse. What happened was never exactly known, but at the very time when Nipper and his friends, the two masters and the village constable were setting out for the Priory, a terrific explosion rent the air, and when the little party reached the ruins of the house they found among the wreckage the mangled remains of Nutt, his son and Captain Jago.

The vault was duly opened, the treasure found and claimed by the Crown, but what Nipper and his chums valued more than the kudos they got for their share in the discovery of the treasure was the knowledge that they had banished the fear that had clouded their beloved Housemaster's happiness for fifteen long years, and that they had saved him from ruin and disgrace.

These final events were narrated in a concluding chapter of little over three hundred words, and readers were consoled with the promise of the opening chapters, in the next week's issue, of the new Maxwell Scott serial "The Blot".

So ended "Nipper of St. Ninian's", and with it the St. Ninian's Story, for nevermore did Maxwell Scott's facile pen do service to the chronicles of the old school.

To those of us who were brought up on Greyfriars, St. Jim's or St. Frank's stories, it is not possible to read of St. Ninian's with anything more than curiosity, but doubtless in those far off days, when World Wars were unknown, boys used to wait eagerly for the next instalment of the adventures of Nipper and his chums, of whom it may truly be said

"All these were honoured in their generation, and were a glory in their days."

Goodbye, St. Ninian's, you have long remained forgotten, but we shall not soon forget you again.

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# T E N O F T H E M

By the early summer of 1947 the "Collectors' Digest" had settled down to what had all the appearances of a successful career. Encouraged, Maurice Bond, my colleague who had played a big part in launching the monthly, said to me in a letter; "How about an Annual? Something in which we can spread ourselves more and publish longer articles." I saw the advantage at once and straight away we got down to planning, part of which was talked over during a memorable week I spent at Maurice's Cardiff home. Maurice also generously offered to put down a donation of a fiver, just in case of a loss. Philip Wood, our publisher in those days, promptly promised to do all he could, despite the fact that it was going to be a big undertaking for his little business, and that there were difficulties with paper and other materials in short supply at the time.

We appealed for contributions: we did not appeal in vain. Soon the Annual began to take shape and from then on until almost the very eve of Christmas it was to provide problems, anxieties and thrills. To a considerable extent we were working in the dark; we fixed the price at 6/-, yet we had not the slightest idea how many pages it would consist of, or how many copies we were going to sell.

I have my file copy before me as I write; what memories it recalls. The cover for instance: with a picture of Sexton Blake welcoming to his consulting room some of the famous characters. The picture was signed "Nemo". That concealed the identity of Tom Martin of Bristol who was an artist by profession, and preferred to remain anonymous so far as we were concerned, although at the time he was one of our greatest Blake fans, and one of my most regular correspondents. There was to come a time when he was to disappoint and surprise me. He did the cover for the second Annual then one day he told me he was to have an operation for cancer. Later came the good news that the operation had been successful and that he was back in harness. He wrote for a little longer, then came silence. I continued to send the C.D; month after month passed and still no news. The fear began to grow on me that the operation had not been successful as he had thought, and that the dread disease had claimed another victim. In view of the way he used to write the moment he got his copy of the C.D. I could think of no other reason, so over the years since I have thought of Tom Martin lying in his grave - until recently, when I got something of a shock. It came about in this way. Whilst writing to one of our Bristol members one day it occurred to me to ask him if he could make enquiries as to what had really happened to Tom Martin. The member was one who had joined us some time after I had lost touch with Tom. In due course came his reply and as I have said it came as a surprise for Tom was, and is, still in the land of the living and the simple explanation was that his enthusiasm for the hobby had evaporated like a pricked balloon.

Well I was pleased to hear that my fears about Tom had been groundless, but even after all the years had passed I could not help a feeling of resentment that he couldn't be bothered to just drop a line saying "Stop sending the C.D. I'm no longer interested." It

BY

 HERBERT  
LECKENBY

would have prevented me thinking each time his name cropped up "Alas! poor Tom, he must have joined the Great Majority."

However let me pass on to others who helped so well to launch Annual No. 1 and who have not yet lost any of their enthusiasm.

John R. Shaw and Roger Jenkins for instance. Together, after countless hours of research, they produced an article which gave the origins of Greyfriars and St. Jim's stories in the Schoolboys Own and the Holiday Annual. It proved to be of the utmost value to collectors, and a striking illustration of what we had in mind.

Jack Murtagh, for the benefit of Leeites worked on similar lines with the Schoolboys Own, Monster Library and the Nelson Lee.

Colleague Maurice Bond and Rex Dolphin were well to the fore in providing fare for Blake fans.

Jack Corbett, with "An Astounding Adventure" aroused quite a lot of curiosity, and another Jack - Jack Cook - took over from E.S. Brooks and wrote a St. Frank's story. Charlie Daniel (who though he has been in the U.S.A. for many years still writes occasionally) delivered a hair-raising yarn in typical penny dreadful style.

Then there was Reg Cox who wrote on the hobby. Reg is the only one, apart from Tom Martin, who seems to no longer have any interest in the subject for I have had no news of him for years.

Browsing over that first "Collectors' Who's Who" brings conflicting emotions. First a feeling of sadness as I note the names of eight who in the years between have joined the Great Majority; Joseph Baguley, Reg. Hudson, John Medcraft, Patrick Mulhall, William H. Neate, Joseph Parks, Henry Steele and Hugh W. Fennell.

There was stark tragedy attached to the passing of some of them - poor Joe Baguley for instance. He emigrated to Australia, and one day I got a long letter from him. He had got a good plot of land, and full of cheery optimism he told me all about his plans. Great was the shock I got when a little later I had a grief-stricken letter from his wife telling me that on the same day he had written to me he had been taken ill and died.

Neither shall I ever forget that tragic 'phone call which told me of the sudden death of my dear friend Reg. Hudson, or my dismay when I heard of the passing in hospital of John Medcraft, the greatest authority of us all.

In contrast to this touch of sadness I can't help a feeling of pride and gratification when I note that the great majority of those who took the first Annual have had every one since, a loyal band if ever there was one.

There's another intriguing thought when I look at that list of names, the thought of those which are not there. It's just like reading the St. Jim's stories of the later years and then switching to the beginning where there's no mention of Talbot, Cardew, Glyn and others who were destined to become prominent. So with that first Who's Who, no mention of scores who have come along since, many of them to be leading members of the Brotherhood, and great friends of mine. I won't attempt to mention names for if I did I should feel I must fill a page or more. Yes, indeed a lot has happened in the years between.

Preparing that first Annual was an exciting experience as I have said. Many things were in short supply and as Christmas drew near there was still a lot to do; there were nights when I hardly slept a wink. I remember a hold up for some stencils necessary for the pictures; there was then only about ten days to go. I recall wangling a call to Manchester to speed them up, a call which to my relief, and that of our then publisher, had its effect.

On the last Sunday before the festive season I hurried down to the duplicating agency in fear and trembling. As I entered, Mr. Wood, with a smile, handed me a bulky document. My heart gave a leap. I was looking at a completed copy of the first Annual. I scanned it hurriedly, my heart jumped for joy. I gripped his hand, we'd won through. I made for home walking on air. Later Annuals have improved immensely in appearance, but my word, that first one looked good to me that memorable Sabbath day.

There was still the posting to do, but all got away just in time.

On Christmas morning I made a round of telephone calls. First to the late R.A.H. Goodyear, popular writer of school stories, and a regular contributor to the C.D. His copy had arrived and he was loud in his praises. Next to Harry Dowler, then John Shaw and others. All copies through and all's well. I enjoyed my dinner that Christmas morn.

'Tis true that when we were presented with the bill, Maurice had to tip up his fiver, but he did it with a cheerful air.

Well no sooner was the first Annual in the hands of our readers than we were thinking of the second one, and from then on so far as I am concerned seldom has it been in the background, and it has been a story of uninterrupted success. The circulation has increased each year, until now it is now nearly treble that of the first one. The number of pages have greatly increased too, (a total of 1135 excluding this one,) finding room for well over 100,000 words, many more than that of the average novel. Altogether probably more than a million words by the time this one is published, every one of them dealing with the same subject, an impressive achievement in very truth. And never through the years have I had to hunt for words, the very reverse in fact, for excellent articles have always had to be held over. It really has been remarkable as you will all agree.

The price has increased too, of course, that was inevitable, but when one takes into account the many more pages the increase is slight. Anyway no one has complained; I don't think anyone has dropped it because they thought it cost too much. In fact I believe the majority would cheerfully pay up even if it went up to a guinea.

Getting out those from No. 2 onwards has not provided the excitement and qualms experienced with the first one, but there have been moments of anxiety and problems. The days of the paper famine, for instance, when we had to scrounge round for odd reams here and there. As ever members of the clan came to the rescue. Then there was the occasion when on returning from a glorious holiday in London I was told by Mr. Wood that he was shortly giving up business and going abroad. Gosh: I nearly had heart failure. I walked home in a daze, for duplicating agencies are not as plentiful as grocers or printers. I thought it might be possible to find someone to do the C.D. but what about a big job like the Annual? Well I lost some sleep over it but as you know there was no need to, for since then three Annuals (four with this one) have been turned out, by unanimous

agreement, much superior in appearance than those that had gone before. I still remember how my heart leaped when Mr. Gore-Browne, our present publisher, told me that besides the monthly he would like to tackle the Annual and could promise a good job. He has kept his word.

There was also the occasion when a great railway strike threatened just about the time the Annual was about to be mailed, but it was called off and the Annuals were delivered, as usual, in time for Christmas. And here a bouquet to the G.P.O. for of all the nine Annuals already published I can only remember three occasions when a copy did not reach its destination.

Through the years dozens of valuable and fascinating articles have appeared making our Annual as indispensable to collectors of old boys books as 'Wisden's' is to lovers of cricket. An outstanding example was John Shaw's lists of the 'imitation' stories in the "Magnet" and "Gem". This had earlier appeared in the late Joseph Park's 'Collectors' Miscellany', and with Joe's permission it was republished in the second Annual for the benefit of its large army of Hamiltonians. John's labour of love had evidently greatly impressed E.S. Turner, for in that best seller "Boys Will Be Boys" he terms it "a feat of literary research which may yet receive wider recognition."

Then, of course, for several years there has been the contributions by the members of the "Sexton Blake Circle". They have added tens of thousands of words to the saga of the long-lived sleuth of Baker Street. So much has been written that one would think there's nothing else to write about. But there is as you will learn.

Among our regulars we have that remarkable pair, Eric Fayne and Roger Jenkins. It's marvellous how they come along each year with something new for the special benefit of the hosts of Hamiltoniana.

Others - one cannot attempt to mention them all - just a few at random, J. Breeze Bentley, Geoff. Hockley, Gerry Allison, Bob Blythe, Len Packmen, Bill Lofts, Jack Wood, all experts in their own line. What a loyal band. Other editors of magazines not classed as professional have, I believe, to badger and beg for copy in order to fill the necessary pages, but not this one.

The Tenth Annual! My word! the thought of it gives one a thrill. Contributors, subscribers, to all of you who have made it possible, thank you, one and all.

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# Vernon-Smith's Feud

By J. BREEZE BENTLEY

Magnet No. 119, which appeared on 21st May, 1910, recorded an event of the highest importance in the Greyfriars saga, for on that day Herbert Vernon-Smith arrived at Greyfriars. He was the only son of Samuel Smith, a self-made man, who had acquired a fortune of no less than £3 million, by various rather dubious financial transactions, including a "corner in cotton", and large-scale money-lending. Having gained affluence, Samuel Smith added his late wife's name to his own, and became Samuel Vernon-Smith. He was a hard man, hard as flint, with an almost inflexible will, and utterly merciless, but he had one soft spot in his tough skin - a great affection for his son, whom he had spoiled by indulgence.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was the second most important character in the Remove Form, second only to Harry Wharton and, like him, a complex mixture of good and bad but, whereas in Wharton the good predominated and the bad points were only very human faults, in Vernon-Smith the bad predominated and the good points were frequently obscured; indeed, in the days of Red Magnets, they were rarely seen at all.

Vernon-Smith's coming was by no means propititious. He arrived in exquisite clothes, with silk topper and kid gloves, sporting a gold-tipped cane, gold watch and chain and a diamond tiepin - tipsy. The Removites who witnessed this staggering arrival were just recovering from their surprise, when Horace Henry Samuel Quelch bore down on him, and whisked him before the Head - to be expelled, everyone confidently imagined. But this did not happen. Unknown to Mr. Quelch; Dr. Locke had incurred an enormous debt when employing detectives to search for his long-lost daughter, Rosalie, and owed the money to Samuel Vernon-Smith; by reason of this Herbert escaped expulsion and was merely reprimanded and sent to the Remove dormitory to sleep it off!

Having sobered up, he wended his way to the Rag, settled himself comfortably in an armchair - not being afflicted with any of the humility of new boys - and lit a cigar! Wharton, very mildly told him that it was "against the rules". Vernon-Smith was not impressed. "... I always smoke at home. My pater lets me do as I like...." "You can't smoke here." "I can do as I like. The Head is an old friend of my pater's and I assure you that he won't interfere with me." At that, Wharton jerked away the cheroot, and threw it in the fire.

At that time averse to fighting, Vernon-Smith made no fistical rejoinder, but he soon made another attempt to smoke, and ran into trouble with Mr. Quelch.

Then Loder caught him at his box, looking for further supplies and annexed boxes of cigars and of cigarettes and a couple of bottles of champagne. He and his cronies spent an enjoyable evening sampling the loot.

At supper, Vernon-Smith declined to eat the bread and cheese supplied by the kitchen, and made his way to the dormitory, to get richer fare from his box.

Bulstrode, Skinner, Snoop and Stott raided him and, encountering opposition, ragged him. Vernon-Smith, enraged and without scruples about sneaking, appealed to the Head, who asked Mr. Quelch to investigate the matter. He suggested to Vernon-Smith that he would be wise to drop the complaint, but Vernon-Smith was too angry to take the hint, and they arrived at the dormitory just as Bulstrode lifted his glass of ginger-beer and said "Here's to the founder of the feast! The Bounder of Greyfriars." "Good", said Skinner, "of all the unspeakable bounders that ever bounded, I think Vernon-Smith is the unspeakablest."

And so Vernon-Smith acquired his nickname, which he never ceased to merit. (Incidentally, the raiders got off with a mere 100 lines apiece.)

The following day, Vernon-Smith refused to get up for breakfast and fell foul of the prefects and Mr. Quelch; in class, he failed dismally, not because of inability, but because (as he admitted) he had worked with his private tutor only when he felt inclined to do so. In the afternoon, ordered to the cricket field by Loder, he turned on him and stunned him with a cricket ball, and cleared off. He was brought back by Wharton and Co. but would not follow Mr. Quelch to the Head's study, and when seized by the irate Form-master, promptly hacked his shin! That brought matters to a head; Dr. Locke simply had to tell Mr. Quelch why the Bounder could not be expelled, and in return received loyal backing from the master of the Remove.

The realization that Vernon-Smith was not to be sent away, made the Remove - or rather the better-natured part of it - decide to educate the Bounder, at Wharton's suggestion. Next day, the course of re-education began. When Vernon-Smith would not respond to rising bell the Remove pulled him out of bed; when he refused to dress, Bob Cherry, Bulstrode and Russell turned him over, and Wharton swiped him with a belt. Vernon-Smith called him a coward, whereupon Wharton made him put up his fists, and fought him to a standstill. Mr. Quelch happened to look in, and enquired the cause of the noise, but when told that Wharton was "keeping order" he just faded away, and left him to it.

At lunch-time, full of bravado, the Bounder smoked a cheroot at the open study-window: Harry Wharto and Co. promptly lit a fire and burned his entire stock!

That afternoon, a case of champagne arrived, which Trotter carried to the upper boxroom. Bunter, as might be expected, sniffed it out, and on being kicked out by Vernon-Smith, reported the matter to Wharton - very self-righteously, of course. The Captain of the Remove forced the door, and the whole case was poured over the Bounder till his clothes reeked of the stuff.

That evening Vernon-Smith was made to write his imposition for Mr. Quelch by the simple yet effective method of 'cricket practice', i.e. braying him with a stump until he got on with the task. When he delivered the imposition, he told the circumstances in which he had done it and demanded condign punishment for the Famous Four.\* Getting no satisfaction of Mr. Quelch, he set off to brow-beat the Head, but was waylaid by Harry Wharton & Co., and in the dormitory he was made to run the gauntlet till he agreed to apologise to Mr. Quelch for his bad behaviour. The apology was made on the morrow.

In this way, it was driven home that the Remove was not prepared to tolerate anyone who received preferential treatment from the masters, but the 'education' of Vernon-Smith laid the foundation of a deepseated dislike, nay hatred, of Harry Wharton & Co. which was destined to lead to a bitter struggle

\* At that time: Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Hurree Singh.

between them and the Bounder.

The general dislike that Vernon-Smith's behaviour engendered, isolated him from the Remove, and he quickly realized that for life at Greyfriars to be bearable, he must have some friends, acquaintances or, at least, cronies. So in Magnet No. 122 he lured Peter Hazeldene to himself, and proposed "a little trip" with Skinner and Stott. Marjorie told Harry Wharton that she had seen them going into the garden of the "Cross Keys", and on his walk back to Greyfriars, he came upon the festive quartet in the act of toasting Marjorie in champagne. Vernon-Smith got a thrashing on the spot. (One shudders to think what would have happened if Bob Cherry had caught them.)

In the following numbers, Col. Wharton took the Co. and Hazeldene to Switzerland, where the Bounder came across them, and, with the connivance and help of his father, got Hazel to leave his friends, and stay with the Vernon-Smiths. At the casino, Hazel very quickly lost all his money and then stole some from Mr. Vernon-Smith. Col. Wharton then intervened and after a particularly direct talk with Samuel, straightened it all out.

In Magnet No. 125 Alonzo Todd arrived, and Vernon-Smith took a back seat for a few weeks, but in Magnet No. 135, when Bob Cherry was momentarily acting as Captain of Football, he greatly astonished Bob by offering to play in the team, at centre-half. He explained that he had been coached. Bob wouldn't believe him, whereupon the Bounder offered him a fiver for a place! Harry Wharton wisely suggested that he be given a trial, and that led to his inclusion in the team. In the match he played brilliantly. Then it turned out that he had been attracted by the charm of Marjorie Hazeldene, and wished to impress her, when she came to see the game.

His objective achieved, he promptly dropped practice and in Magnet No. 148, Peter Hazeldene was dropped because of association with Vernon-Smith and general slackness. It grieved Harry Wharton to do this, but there would otherwise have been in trouble in the team. In return, the Bounder did his utmost to stir up had feeling between Hazeldene and Harry Wharton. Caught smoking by Hazel, Vernon-Smith boasted "Loder would take no notice, anyway. I get his smokes for him in the village. Besides, I don't care if I get lines. I get them done at a 'bob' for fifty." Subsequently, when Hazel was being unpleasant to Wharton, his evil mentor egged him on to strike "the coward's blow", so that a fight ensued, in which Hazel got knocked out. This widened the breach, and in Magnet No. 149 Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent coming across the Bounder and Hazeldene on the footpath by the Sark, after lock-up, suspected them of pub-haunting and made them return to Greyfriars. Later, the Co. raided and broke up a gambling school, run by Mr. Cobb of the Cross Keys, and attended by the Bounder and Hazel.

In return for this "shepherding" Vernon-Smith lost no opportunity of gibing at Wharton, as when in Magnet No. 151, Wharton bumped accidentally into Alonzo Todd and knocked him down; Vernon-Smith's comment was "hit a chap you're own size."

Johnny Bull arrived in Magnet No. 151, and shortly afterwards \* was given £500 by his eccentric Aunt Tabitha. Vernon-Smith promptly offered "to show him life" and was given half a minute in which to "get out of the study". Then / Johnny received a letter from his wastrel cousin, Lucas Crane. Vernon-Smith, knew him, of course, and, undismayed by his rebuff, offered to shew Bull and Crane "the highlights of Friardale". Johnny lashed out again, and that was that.

As yet, the Bounder had no real friend in the Remove and, as Frank Richards put it  $\phi$  "(he).. felt his isolation... no one shewed a desire for the company of Vernon-Smith. And he did not like it. It had always been the Bounder's boast that he was sufficient to himself... that if Greyfriars did not like him, Greyfriars could go its way, and he would go his..." Yet, in fact, he wanted to be in the centre of things... on his own terms."

It was the desire to shew off that led to trouble in Magnet No. 166. On the way (Ch. 18 p.22) to meet Marjorie, Clara and Harry Wharton & Co., the Bounder cycled down a hill at top speed, intending to pull up in the minimum distance and impress the girls with his fearless competence. But unfortunately for him, a farm cart pulled out from a side-road and he crashed into the hedge and wrecked his bike. Rather than be left out, however, he managed by dire threats of abandoning him to the tender mercy of Cobb the bookie, to persuade Hazel to lend him his bike, so that he could go on the ride. Frank Richards' comment was revealing. "The deadly earnestness of the Bounder was a surprise to Hazel. He did not understand the savage, determined nature of Vernon-Smith; the deep, galling effect anything like defeat had upon him; the deadly resolve which could baulk no obstacle in the way. Vernon-Smith would have spent every penny he possessed, and undertaken any sacrifice, rather than be defeated in the carrying out of this project, even if the project itself had been nothing at all to him." And so he rode off with Harry Wharton & Co. and the two girls; but the trip was not a success; an awkward constraint fell upon the party, and when they stopped for tea, Clara Trevlyn punctured his tyres with a pair of scissors and he had to walk home!

In Magnet No. 168, Vernon-Smith turned his attention to cricket and had private coaching from a professional, so as to be able to further his position in the Form. To quote Frank Richards once again: "The antipathy between Wharton and Vernon-Smith was deep and keen. Vernon-Smith, as a rule, did not care two-pence about cricket, but he cared very much about having his own way, and for cutting an important figure in the school. And there was another reason, too, why he wanted to play for the Form Eleven in the next match (against Highcliffe). It was likely to be a difficult and trying match, and it was like the Bounder to want to shine forth on an important occasion, and then to let the matter drop. And Marjorie Hazeldene was to be there, too, and the Bounder was possessed by a curious desire to shine in the eyes of Marjorie Hazeldene."

When Harry Wharton was pondering over the problem, Bulstrode tried to stir up trouble by an untimely inquiry as to whether Vernon-Smith was to play. Despite his annoyance, Wharton put him in the team. Then Ponsonby & Co. tried to get the Bounder to lose the match, which he refused to do, and in the morning, he bowled with considerable success. Ponsonby, having made big bets on the match, lured Vernon-Smith away during the lunch interval, and left him tied up, but he escaped in the nick of time, to help Greyfriars to victory. Naturally, his stock went up considerably in the Remove.

In Magnet No. 170, Hurree Janset Ram Singh, as Nabob of Bhanipur, set off for India to attend the great Durbar at Delhi, and as he took leave of Wharton, warned him that George Bulstrode, who had been Captain of the Remove before Wharton's arrival, was seeking to regain his old position. The challenge was not long delayed for George Bulstrode picked a quarrel with Wharton shortly after the captain of the Remove had plunged into a stream to assist Frank Nugent, and in the fight that followed, Wharton was seedy and was beaten. Annoyed by constant badgering, Wharton told Bulstrode that, if a majority of the Form demanded it, he

would resign, and Vernon-Smith, by urging that a new election should be held, and by concealing the fact that Wharton would not stand for re-election, got enough of the Removites to support his plan. When he had resigned, his friends asked Wharton to reconsider his decision, but he wouldn't canvas for votes, and so many of the form refused to support him, and Bulstrode got in. Vernon-Smith strongly backed Bulstrode, whom he thought would prove a complaisant captain but therein he made a grave miscalculation, for Bulstrode obstinately refused to permit smoking in the studios and on that account rowed with the Bounder.

In Magnet No. 181, matters came to a head between Dr. Locke and Samuel Vernon-Smith. Herbert Vernon-Smith was discovered, half-drunk, by P.C. Tozer, after lockup, in the village, and brought to Greyfriars. The following day, he was publicly expelled, but returned the same afternoon with his father, who asked Dr. Locke to re-admit him. The Head's indictment was severe: "He has smoked, drunk, and gambled, and he has been flogged for these offences. But the flogging was of no use. Now, at last, he has passed the furthest limit - he was found in a state of semi-intoxication, unable to get home, and was brought here by a policeman." "Boys will be boys." "I have no objection to boys being boys," said the Head drily. "What I object to is their being brutes and blackguards." "Come, come," said the millionaire, "I dare say Herbert has been a little reckless..." "He has been an utter, incurable, unmitigated blackguard from the first day that he came to the school." In vain did Samuel Vernon-Smith plead for his son: the Head was adamant. Then the millionaire tried threatening. "I shall foreclose on the debt that you owe me." Still the Head, though faced with ruin, would not budge, and the Vernon-Smiths retired to the Courtfield Arms for dinner, intending to return later. Both imbibed champagne and, unfortunately for them, the chauffeur had like tastes, and drank whisky too freely, so that on the return journey, they crashed through the level-crossing gates in the path of a train. Bob Cherry witnessed the accident, climbed the signal post, broke the spectacle and held his red scarf in front of the lamp. The train pulled up only two yards from the wrecked car! When Samuel Vernon-Smith recovered consciousness, he offered Bob Cherry any reward that he might claim. At Solly Lazarus' suggestion, Bob asked that the bonds that Dr. Locke had signed be burned. Samuel Vernon-Smith could not understand how anybody could act so disinterestedly, but he stood by his promise, and burned the papers. The Head could not let such an act go unrewarded - he offered to take Vernon-Smith back, - if he would promise to reform.

The Bounder, to whom promises meant nothing, gave his word.

In the following Magnet (No. 182) Percy Bolsover arrived at Greyfriars and quickly became a catspaw for the Bounder.

In Magnet 191, Bob Cherry's wayward cousin, Cyril Vane, arrived, and Vernon-Smith took great delight in leading him on the downward path, and in making things generally awkward for Bob. Vane landed in difficulties with Cobb the bookie and was recalled to his father's bedside. He returned to find that the Bounder had quixotically paid Cobb and to receive the sardonic warning "You'd better keep clear of him, - and of me, for that matter. You're not the kind of fellow for a wild time, Vane."

In the following story (192), owing to Mark Linley's being crooked, Bulstrode asked Vernon-Smith to fill his place; the Bounder asked, in return, for a regular place in the team. Bulstrode thereupon surprised him by stipulating that he promised to give up smoking. The Bounder's refusal led to a fight, and withdrawal of the offer. Later, Ponsonby & Co. arranged that Wharton and Cherry be

waylaid by roughs from the Cross Keys. Vernon-Smith, as might have been expected, was in the inn at the time and overheard the plot; before the match he got Ponsonby into his study, and demanded the whereabouts of the missing players; when Pon. refused to talk, he knocked him down, tied him up and gagged, then gradually piled the study furniture on top of him till he could stand the pressure no longer and, fearing suffocation, caved in. Having restored the missing footballers, the Bounder offered to play himself, did so, and the match was won.

In Magnet No. 193, when Mauly negligently left a banknote in a book that he lent to Frank Nugent, and the note disappeared, Vernon-Smith accused Nugent of theft. But later on he realized that he was on the wrong tack and kept careful watch, with the result that the loss was fixed on William George Bunter, who had found the note and kept it in the hope that a reward would be offered.

At this stage, the Bounder had shewn signs of better feeling, but in Magnet No. 211, George Bulstrode (who had been Captain of the Remove since Magnet No. 170) resigned in face of the pressure put upon him by those who laid the defeats of team on his bad temper in the field. This provided the Bounder with the long awaited opportunity to become the Captain of the Form, and he put up in opposition to Harry Wharton. Vernon-Smith entered into the contest full of zest and enthusiasm. Money was spent lavishly to win support and the Bounder even went so far as to offer Harry Wharton £25 in compensation if he would "stand down". The reply was a punch on the nose. But Vernon-Smith turned even that to his advantage. Nugent, Bob Cherry and Bulstrode walked in and the Bounder, mopping his nose, said "I came here for a friendly talk; if you say there was anything more than that in it, you're a liar. You've knocked me down. You'll answer for it." This made the others feel that Harry Wharton had picked the quarrel. A great fight in the Gym. followed, which Harry Wharton won, but from which Vernon-Smith gained kudos from sticking at it so long!

The election was arranged for Tuesday, but, hearing that Inky was returning from his long trip to India on that day, the Bounder cunningly got the Head to advance the election to Monday - "to minimize the bad feeling in the Remove." As a counter-measure, Johnny Bull wired Inky to come at once. He arrived on the Monday, found the school gates locked early - by Loder's order at Vernon-Smith's request, and had to climb the wall to get in. He got there just in time - to enable Harry Wharton to get in by one vote.

But the Bounder would not admit defeat. He whipped up the opposition and (Magnet 212) they refused to acknowledge a captain who had got in by so small a majority. Wingate intervened and the rivals accused one another of sharp practice: Vernon-Smith was charged with bribery and Wharton with having wangled in by the vote of a boy who had been absent for many months. Wingate then proposed that three tests be set, the winner to become captain, and they agreed. Just then, Nugent minor came in with the news that Marjorie Hazeldone had disappeared. (This was the third or fourth time, to date, that the unfortunate girl had suffered this fate.) To find her, or help to do so, was made the first test. Both candidates got to work and Harry Wharton won.

For the second test, Frank Nugent rather cheekily suggested "downing the Fifth" and Wingate good-humouredly agreed. There were several tussles, which usually ended in the Fifth's favour. Then Vernon-Smith vowed to make the Fifth play the Remove at football. He lured Blundell into the Cloisters, and with the aid of Bolsover and Snoop, overpowered him and shut him up in the cold, underground monk's prison-cell, and left him there until he gave in, which he did with

the bitter rejoinder "You're a young scoundrel - if you don't end up your life in prison, I shall be astonished." The match was played under Vernon-Smith's captaincy and won by the Remove: Round two to Vernon-Smith.

The third test was suggested by Vernon-Smith. The Highcliffe Fourth had challenged the Remove to a sports competition, and he suggested that the more successful rival be deemed to be the winner. But now Vernon-Smith's unscrupulous nature came into full play. He asked Bolsover major to pick a quarrel with Wharton just before the contest, so that the resultant fight would render him unfit; Bolsover, who hitherto had backed Vernon-Smith very loyally, would not agree - in part because the Bounder had not played him in the match against the Fifth - and split to the rest of the Form. Next he tried to get Bunter to drop Wharton, but Dicky Nugent overheard them, and told his major, with the result that Bunter got his own medicine. Finally, he asked Wharton to "have the gloves on" before the contest and tried to foul him with a hit below the belt. In the actual sports, Wharton won the half-mile and Vernon-Smith the cycle race, but in the boxing, Wharton won his contest while Vernon-Smith got knocked out. And so Harry Wharton's election was confirmed, and the Bounder's trickery reduced his reputation in the Form to a very low ebb.

Though defeated, the Bounder was undismayed and he bobbed up again in Magnet 217, when he shut Harry Wharton in the vaults, and suffered a heavy defeat in the fisticuffs that followed.

In Magnet No. 225, he was playing cricket for the Remove, very successfully.

In Magnet No. 234, several of the Remove spent August Bank Holiday in Blackpool, of all places. By curious coincidence, Harry Wharton & Co. went with Lord Mauleverer, and Vernon-Smith with Bolsover. The Bounder plied the Remove bully with champagne and when this made him first pugnacious and then stupidly somnolent, Vernon-Smith coolly left him to his fate. He was found by the chums and looked after by Mark Linley, who was so unappreciative of Blackpool's charms that he had taken with him a Greek text to read!

In Magnet No. 240, Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, keen for Loder's blood, arranged with Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull to blacken faces and give him a caning in his study, late at night. Vernon-Smith overheard the scheme, and with Snoop and Stott, raided the tuckshop, with blackened faces, let Mrs. Mible see them, and so hoped to land the Famous Four in trouble. It nearly worked. Mrs. Mible cried out for help against burglars, Harry Wharton & Co. partly washed, rushed out, and Loder came forward and told Mr. Quelch that, coming in from the disturbance, he had encountered four juniors with blackened faces in his study. This neat perversion of the truth landed the chums in trouble, but Bunter had observed the return of Vernon-Smith & Co. in advance of the rest of the Form, and tumbled to the trick. He blackmailed them into letting him have the stolen tuck, but could not resist the temptation to fill his pockets with it, so that he was found out, and the truth revealed. Vernon-Smith was flogged, while Snoop and Stott were caned.

In Magnet No. 243, Vernon-Smith again shewed his venom. Mauly, sleep-walking, hid his own money in Cecil Temple's trunk. This provided an opportunity for thinly veiled allusions to the poverty of Linley and Penfold and suggestions that they were probably guilty of theft. This brought down Wingate's wrath on his head.

Further trouble was caused in No. 245, when Nugent's father and mother

were at cross purposes, and the Bounder wrote a skit which parodied them! Harry Wharton & Co. burnt the costumes and other props, to scotch it.

The warfare between Vernon-Smith and Harry Wharton & Co. came to a head in the next stories, when the Bounder made an all-out onslaught on the Captain's position, first by ridicule and then by deliberate deception and cunning intrigue.

In Magnet No. 247, Harry Wharton called a scout meeting in the Rag and, quite naturally, would not admit Vernon-Smith, Snoop and Bunter, who were not members of the scouting fraternity. At the meeting, he announced that, on the morrow, there was to be a contest with the Fourth: the Remove to defend Greyfriars against an attack by the Fourth. Then, quite suddenly there was a cry of "Fire" and smoke poured in at the doorway. At once, the Scout meeting broke up in disorder and the members rushed to the window, and jumped out. Outside, they were mortified to find that they had been hoaxed by Vernon-Smith, and the rest of the school treated it as a great joke that Boy Scouts should 'run away' and thus be caught 'unprepared'. Even the fags of the Second joined in the leg-pulling.

That evening, the Bounder stood some of his followers - Bolsover major, Snoop, Stott, and Bunter - a feed, and told them that he was going to "down" Study No. 1, and make himself Captain of the Remove.

Next day, just as the Scouts were setting off, Bunter's ventriloquism caused trouble. In the woods, Snoop sneaked up to learn the code-signal, but was observed, so that when Ponsonby & Co. and the Bounder tried to cause trouble, the Famous Four bowled them over. All except Pon. left Vernon-Smith, but they discovered the new signal and used it to lure first Wharton and then Bob Cherry into a thicket, where they overpowered them. At this point, Pon's nose came into violent conflict with Bob Cherry's fist and he retired from the struggle, but the Bounder carried on alone and managed to trap Nugent and then Mauly. He then tied them in twos, back to back, and left them to stagger to Greyfriars, which they did not reach till after lock-up, so that their ringing of the bell brought them an audience.

When untied, Bob Cherry was all for bumping Vernon-Smith, but Loder intervened (Ch. 13 p.17) and accused him of lack of sportsmanship in not being able to stand a ragging without bearing malice. Then it came out that Vernon-Smith had tricked Wharton and Cherry with the aid only of Pon. and had overpowered Nugent and Mauleverer single-handed. This raised his reputation and produced a storm of chivvying of the "scouts who were caught unawares."

This triumph of Vernon-Smith increased his following, Trevor and Elliott joining his party.

Then Hazel coolly told Harry Wharton & Co. that he was going to take Vernon-Smith with him to Cliff House. This enraged Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent suggested that they waylaid the Bounder, and dressed him up in pierrot's clothes. But, as so often has happened, Bunter was tying up his shoe lace outside the door and the plan miscarried completely: the Bounder, with the assistance of Bolsover major, Snoop, Stott, Trevor and Elliott, ambushed the Famous Four, dressed them in pierrot costumes, tied them together, and made them walk along the path to meet Marjorie and Clara. Those heartless creatures, laughed! Never had Harry Wharton & Co. been so discomforted.

In the following story, the Vicar of Friardale enlisted the help of the School in running a bazaar. Each form agreed to run a stall, but the Bounder

insisted on running one of his own, and, with the aid of Hazel, got Marjorie to help. On the day, Pon. maliciously set fire to the fireworks on the Remove stall, thereby wrecking it. But Harry Wharton & Co. marched off with Marjorie and Clara to tea, only to be japed by Bunter's ventriloquism, which made the Vicar think that Wharton had insulted him. Bob Cherry made Bunter own up, to straighten things out.

Next day was November fifth and the irrepressible Bob planned to exhibit and then burn an effigy of Vernon-Smith, but the wily Bounder went one better, lured Bob Cherry into the Form room, - another bit of ventriloquism - and got him dressed up and wheeled round the Close as a guy!

In Magnet No. 249, there was more trouble, because Harry Wharton, incensed by the Bounder's ragging of the Co. and by his association with Ponsonby & Co., high-handedly refused to play Vernon-Smith in the Remove team, and curtly snubbed a deputation of the less important Removites who sought to back the Bounder's claims. In answer, Vernon-Smith organized a rival XI and challenged Harry Wharton to play them. He would not agree to do so, a wordy argument followed, and Wharton lost his temper, and bowled Vernon-Smith over. Then Wingate intervened, and ordered the match to be played. Wharton so far forgot himself that he checked Wingate, and got a detention for the next half-holiday, - the date for a match with the Fourth.

The team were, naturally, upset, and tried to get Wharton to "ask off" but, in perverse mood, he refused to do so. This gave the Bounder his chance: he himself asked Wingate, and so made himself appear magnanimous and Wharton churlish.

After the match he learned that the Bounder had begged him off, and was furious, which did not improve his standing with Wingate or the team.

When the match against Vernon-Smith's XI came off, the Bounder played eight Removites, two Highcliffe juniors and a former professional - then a barman at the Cross Keys - and scored a victory 6-3.

"The Bounder grinned at Wharton as they came off.

"Well, the best team wins," he remarked.

"You couldn't win honestly," said Wharton.

"What was wrong with the play, then?" said the Bounder cheerfully. "Coker, did we win that match fairly?"

"Of course you did," said Coker. "The match has been won by the Crusaders, and well won, too."

"Take it like a sportsman, Wharton!" advised Stott.

"Yes, be a sportsman for once," said Bolsover major.

Wharton turned away without speaking. Whatever he said would only be taken as indicating bitterness at his defeat; he had been outwitted, if not outplayed, and silence was his only resource. "

In Magnet No. 250, Vernon-Smith carried his campaign one step further. Knowing full well that it would get Frank Nugent's back up, he asked Dicky Nugent to accompany him on a "little excursion". The vain attempt made by Frank to dissuade his brother made him late for class, and he got a detention. After class, he tackled Vernon-Smith and asserted that he would not let Dicky go with him. The Bounder smoothly told him to 'mind his own business' and was promptly knocked down. Mr. Quelch intervened to enquire the cause of the trouble. Vernon-Smith cunningly stated that Frank objected to his taking Dicky on a "botanical

excursion". Asked why, Frank stated that Vernon-Smith is 'not a fit chap for a kid to associate with' but, unwilling to sneak, he would not say why. Mr. Quelch thought this unreasonable, called Dicky and, hearing Vernon-Smith's story substantiated, told Frank to apologise to the Bounder. He refused to do so, and was caned for it.

Then Harry Wharton tried to get Vernon-Smith to leave Dicky alone, and the Bounder replied, scornfully "You say I'm against No. 1 Study. Well, I am! And I mean business - business all the time. I'm going to be top dog in the Remove, and I'm going to down No. 1 Study. If you want to make peace, I'm willing to grant conditions." "And what are the conditions?" asked Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "In the first place, you'll have to resign the captaincy of the Remove and recommend me as your successor, and vote for me at the election, stop interfering with me and my friends when we go out at night, and leave the Cliff House girls alone - Marjorie Hazeldene is going to be my chum, not yours... If you agree... it's peace between us... if not, I'll drive you and all your pals out of the school." They parted on fighting terms.

Harry Wharton, worried about his chum, played badly that afternoon, and the Remove could merely draw with the Shell.

Then Vernon-Smith tried to draw Hurree Singh away from Wharton by telling him that his place in the Famous Four had been taken by Johnny Bull. The Nabob gently drew him on, to turn him down flat. In Study No. 1 afterwards, he suggested that the Co. rename itself the Famous Five, and so that well-known firm came into being.

Frank Nugent challenged Vernon-Smith to a fight - but the Bounder had undergone strict training - and won easily, Wingate stopped the fight. Later he asked Vernon-Smith the cause of the trouble, and was told that Study No. 1 would not let the past die. He'd personally like to be on better terms with Frank Nugent - 'especially as he's under some bad influence outside Greyfriars.' He's like to get at him through his minor and stop him from going to the dogs! Thus did he craftily sew the seeds of suspicion and mistrust. Then he spread the rumour that Dicky Nugent was going to the Cross Keys that night and late on, got out of bed to be intercepted by Frank. With well-simulated reluctance, the Bounder got back into bed and Frank made his way to the Second Form dormitory - to be caught by Mr. Quelch, whose suspicions are aroused. In consequence, word was given that Frank Nugent must not be given a late permit. Then he found Dicky going out with a pass from Loder, followed him, and looked for him at the Cross Keys, to be caught by Mr. Quelch, taken before the Head, and expelled for pub-haunting!

Magnet No. 251 saw steady deterioration of Harry Wharton's position. Led by Bolsover major, Vernon-Smith's friends asked Wharton to play the Bounder in the football team, but the Captain of the Remove, angered by the expulsion of his chum, refused to do so. A riot in the Rag followed, in which all except Bunter, Bulstrode and Lord Mauleverer took part - Bunter because he was too big a funk, Bulstrode because of indecision and Mauly because of inertia, although, as he later explained to Mr. Quelch, who inquired into the matter, "he was just going to begin." Appeal was made to Wingate, as Head of Games. He advised Wharton to play 'Smithy', but he refused. Then Bulstrode suggested that the team should refuse to play unless Wharton climbed down, whereupon Johnny Bull bluntly told Bulstrode that Vernon-Smith was using him as a catspaw. They came to blows about it.

Then Bulstrode, Russell and Morgan resigned from the team, and the next match was badly lost. This annoyed those who had not played, because they did not like to see the Remove beaten, and also those who had played, because they felt that they had been shewn up as poor footballers, so nearly everybody blamed Wharton, and threw stones at his study window (which, for this one occasion, had been brought to the ground-floor, for convenience). At this point, Johnny Bull pushed his way through the crowd, and accused George Bulstrode of causing the defeat by backing out of the team. He challenged him to fight and when told "this is a ragging, not a fight, and you're not going to interrupt" went for him. The Head intervened, told Bull that he must learn to curb his temper and threatened him with expulsion if he fought again.

That put Johnny in a difficult position and he was taunted by Snoop, Stott, and others. Wharton, in vain, warned him that the Bounder was behind it all, stirring up trouble: Bulstrode called him a funk and that did it; Bull could not be restrained, the Head came in, and the second of Vernon-Smith's victims left the school!

In the next story, Billy Bunter found out that Mark Linley's people were desperately short of cash, on account of illness, and reported this to the Bounder. Linley's method of raising cash was to enter for the "Noble Scholarship" value £25, and the Bounder generously offered to withdraw from the examination and leave him a clear field, if he would throw in his lot with the Bounder against Wharton. This Mark Linley refused to do. Vernon-Smith therefore had the impudence to lead a deputation to the Head, asking him to debar Linley, because he had already won several prizes (many schools would, of course, have done so as it was never the intention of benefactors to subsidize the families of poor scholars). The Head tartly refused to do so.

Vernon-Smith then got his pals to interrupt Linley's swotting and to set fire to his books, but Wharton stopped this kind of persecution by threatening to report to the Head. The Bounder was not to be stopped, however; he got a pal in Liverpool (Linley's home town) to send a wire calling him home because his sister was ill. This made Mark miss the examination, and so he gave up his place in the Remove to go out to work: Round three for the Bounder!

In Magnet No. 253 a South American, named Diaz, called on Vernon-Smith and asked him to intercede with his father, who had swindled Diaz out of a Peruvian silver mine. The flint-hearted Bounder merely shrugged his shoulders, and told him to 'go away'. Instead, Diaz went for him, and had to be pulled off by Harry Wharton & Co.

Further football trouble followed, because Harry Wharton refused to budge from his now untenable position of not playing the Bounder and any of his cronies. When threatened with a further appeal to Wingate, he resigned in favour of Bulstrode, but would not agree to play in the team. This, naturally, lowered his stock, and after the next match - in which Vernon-Smith played at the top of his form, and scored 3 out of 4 goals - he would have been ragged by Bolsover & Co. but for the interference of Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh.

During the disturbance, Vernon-Smith set off for the village, and after it, Wharton went to meet him, forced him to fight, and after both had been badly damaged, the Bounder lay helpless on the ground. He disdained help from his rival, and Wharton returned alone. His statement that Vernon-Smith couldn't come in, caused some alarm, and when, an hour later, Vernon-Smith still did not arrive,

Wingate and Courtney went to look for him. They found him insensible, having been savagely attacked with a cudgel. Diaz had come across the Bounder as he lay helpless at the roadside. Back at Greyfriars, judgment was withheld till Vernon-Smith recovered consciousness; when he did, he did not miss his opportunity - he blamed Wharton, and the Captain of the Remove was expelled; his enemies rejoicingly drummed him out of the school.

In Magnet No. 254, the Bounder malingered after the alleged attack by Harry Wharton, much to the disgust of Bob Cherry, who vociferously asserted his mistrust of Vernon-Smith and his faith in Harry Wharton. Vernon-Smith asked Bob to see him in his study and there boasted that he had reduced the Famous Five to the Famous Two, but was willing to let Bob and "the nigger" remain if Bob would pipe down about Wharton - otherwise he'd be driven out, too. "Do you want me to give you a hiding now, without putting it off till you've done malingering," asked Bob Cherry, thickly. "You dare not touch me!" That did it. Bob snatched the dog-whip that was lying on the study table, and used it. For this, he was expelled.

But, unlike the others, he wouldn't go. With Hurree Singh, he purchased a big stock of food from Mrs. Mible, and in the small hours established himself in the Old Tower. Thus began "Bob Cherry's Barring-Out", one of the most stirring events in the history of Greyfriars. (The story is, incidentally, one of the most sought-for Magnets.)

Wingate and the Head both failed to talk them into surrender, then Wingate, Loder and Courtney tried to effect an entry and were repelled. P.C. Tozer tried next, and was driven off with a redhot poker!

That night, Harry Wharton, Johnny Bull, and Frank Nugent turned up, in response to letters from Bob Cherry, bowled Gosling over, and joined the garrison. Their return greatly perturbed Dr. Locke, who feared that a miscarriage of justice had been occurred, but could do nothing about it. But in the afternoon, a dramatic event took place. Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith drove into the school at breakneck speed, with urgent enquiry about his son's well-being. The man Diaz had attacked him in his office, and when apprehended by the police, had boasted of beating up Herbert Vernon-Smith. Thus, the Bounder's duplicity was revealed. But he did not lose his wits. Though Harry Wharton was cleared, the rest were not... and he bargained with the Head to make a clean breast of it if he were not expelled - and got away with it.

Thus ended Vernon-Smith's Feud, which is without parallel in the history of the Magnet, Gem or Boys' Friend and the eight stories (247-254) are, I maintain, the greatest of all the series ever written by Frank Richards.

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WANTED to complete collection. Magnets Nos. 1x to 6x, 90, 100x, 110x, 163, 207, 217, 263, 273, 283x, 288x, 308x, 312, 334, 664, 668x, 942, 948, 973, 974, 992.

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# THE MAN ..... ..... WHO LIVED ADVENTURE

By GEOFF HOCKLEY

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The year 1908 was a bumper one in the long history of Cassell & Co's famous boys' weekly, "CHUMS". Founded some sixteen years earlier, it had gone from strength to strength, and at the period we refer to it was firmly established in the affections of boys the world over. If you are fortunate enough to happen across a "CHUMS" Annual for the year 1908, note that the fifty-two weekly numbers bound between those sturdy scarlet covers make up a total of no fewer than 1140 pages of reading calculated to enthral any boy -- the largest Annual in the forty-seven years life of the famous old paper. But in addition to its size the 1908 volume has another claim to fame, for in that year a new author joined the ranks of its many illustrious contributors. He was no armchair adventurer, this man who had started on the bottom rung of the ladder as apprentice on a wind-jammer in the nineties and now wore the gold braid of a captain. Frank H. Shaw knew whereof he wrote, and his knowledge imparted an air of authenticity to the stories which for nearly twenty years regaled boys the world over -- stirring yarns of heroism and adventure by land and sea, of patriotism and sacrifice, of battles and treasure-trove, "from the snows of far-off northern lands to sunny tropic scenes".

A detailed study of Shaw's work during the twenty-odd years in which it appeared in "CHUMS" would require more space than our indulgent Editor could possibly allocate -- in fact, the subject could fill a complete "Annual" -- so in the course of this article I shall endeavour to touch upon the highlights of a few of his most popular stories from the years 1908-1914, a period which contains some of his best work, and in which he became firmly established as one of the most popular writers of boys' literature. Let us, then, commence by opening our 1908 "CHUMS" Annual and taking a fond backward glance at his first story, which "rang the bell" with readers in no uncertain manner and was the forerunner of many more tremendously popular yarns from his pen -- "THE PERIL OF THE MOTHERLAND". Shaw's never-to-be-forgotten war stories have already been touched upon in these pages by the late Peard Sutherland, another admirer of this author's work, but I feel that no apology is necessary for a further examination of what are probably the finest tales of their type ever to appear in a boys' periodical. Shaw, of course, wrote many other fine yarns in addition to his war stories, and I will refer to these later, but it was his "Motherland" tales which first set him on the high road to popularity as a boys' author.

The "Britain Invaded" theme was by no means a new one. Our Editor's study of this subject in the 1954 "ANNUAL" covered the field in detail, and one gathers the impression that literally millions of words have been expended in portraying the horrors of ravaging foreign forces laying waste our tight little isle. The "Boys' Friend", in particular, published some fine invasion yarns, but none carried the stamp of realism as did Shaw's war stories.

For the cover of No. 815, in which the first instalment appeared, artist

Fred Bennett contributed a spirited drawing depicting a battered British cruiser ramming a Russian battleship (yes, the Russians were the villains of the piece). The story opened with a terrific battle between a solitary British cruiser, the "Cyclops", and a fleet of ten Russian ships, and when the smoke of battle finally cleared, the gallant "Cyclops" and half the Russian fleet were at the bottom of the Atlantic. Floating on a grating was the sole British survivor -- Jack Tremont, the youthful midshipman who in the long run was to bring Britain out of the jaws of disaster into the light of a crowning victory.

Also playing leading roles in the titanic struggle against the invaders as the story developed was Jack Tremont's brother Ted and his father, Sir Edward Tremont, designer of the "Duck", a remarkable airship-submarine, which wrought terrific havoc among the invading forces on land and sea. In spite of dogged resistance, the defenders were pushed back by the Russian hordes in a series of sanguinary battles, until half the homeland was overrun. After London had been laid waste by a Russian air fleet, King Edward ordered the capitulation of the city to save further useless slaughter, and Sir Edward Tremont and his sons made for Scotland, where thousands laboured frantically day and night on the construction of a fleet of "Ducks" with which to strike back at the invaders. The story ended on a sombre note:

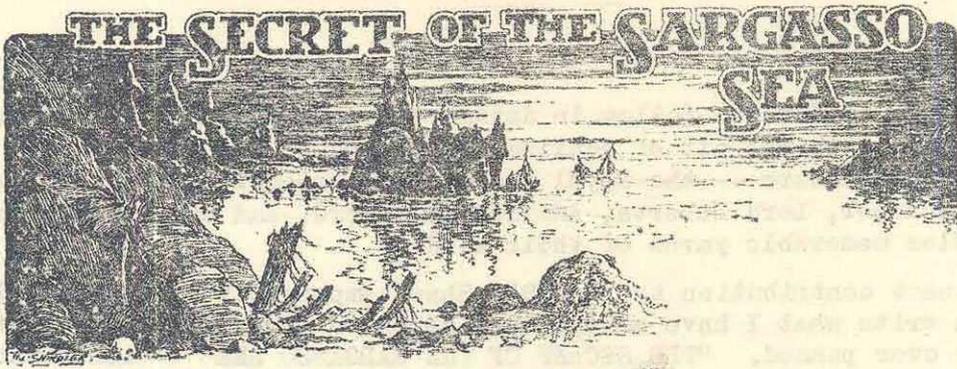
"And so London fell in ashes before the might of Tsardom. Would she ever rise again in all her old majesty and pride?"

"THE VENGEANCE OF THE MOTHERLAND" was even more thrilling than its predecessor. The Japs had joined forces with the Russians, but their fleet was smashed by a smaller British naval force at Trafalgar on Christmas Day, 1911. The scene shifted to the Glasgow shipyards, where the Tremonts had arrived in the nick of time to foil a Russian spy's attempt to dynamite the nearly-completed fleet of "Ducks", only to find that a Russian air fleet was approaching to bomb the yards. A terrific serial battle ensued, in which the "Duck" routed the Russians. Learning from a captured spy of a plot to abduct King Edward from the country house in Essex to which he had been spirited when London fell, the Tremonts again took off in the battle-scarred "Duck" and succeeded in effecting a last-minute rescue of His Majesty. Another impressive cover drawing by Fred Bennett, entitled "A THRILLING MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF OUR LAND", depicted the King farewelling his retinue from the deck of the airship, with Jack Tremont plucking anxiously at his sovereign's arm, while a handful of British troops hold off the approaching Russian ground forces.

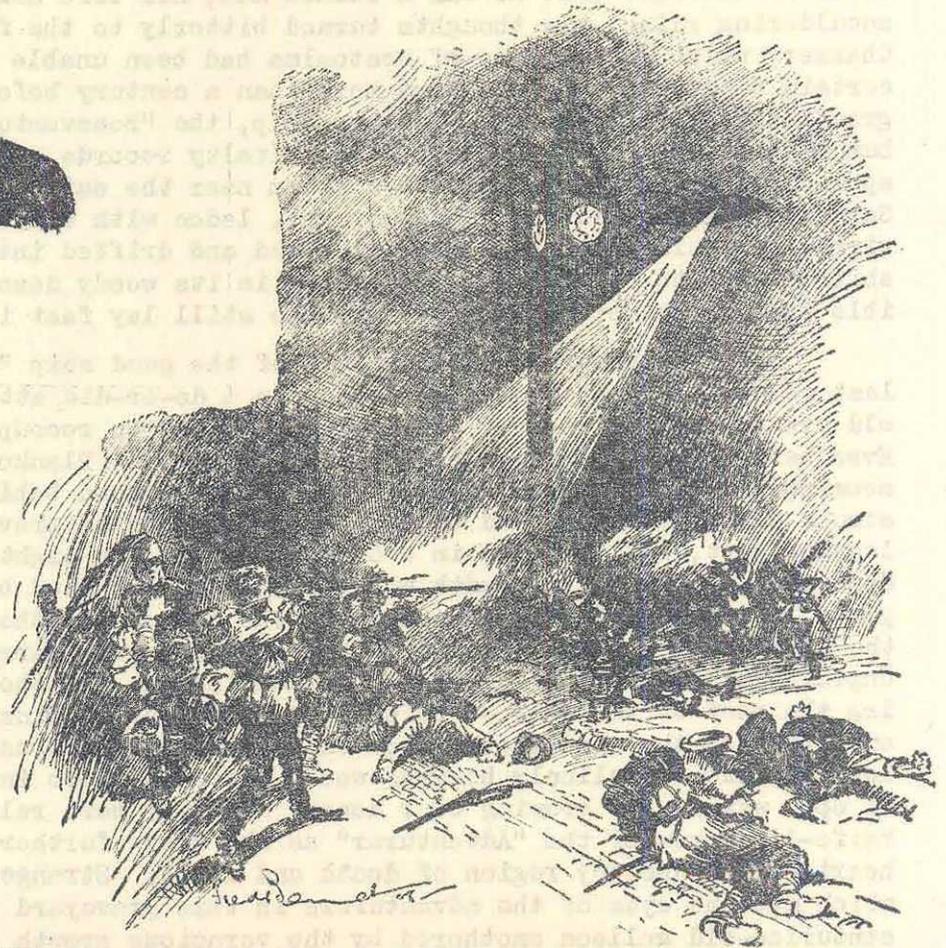
Meanwhile, in battered London, the conquerors were being harrassed by guerilla bands calling themselves the "Avengers", and finally the city shook off the foreign yoke when soldier and citizen alike arose to smite the foe while an army under Kitchener fought its way into the metropolis and the newly-built air fleet shot the enemy from the skies overhead. But many months of bitter conflict ensued before the final rout of the invaders and the departure of a combined naval and aerial expeditionary force which reduced Kronstadt to ruins and forced the ignominious surrender of the Russians. The story ended with the knighting of Jack Tremont in Westminster Abbey while joy-bells pealed and rejoicing crowds thronged the streets.

"And so, out of the ashes of her temporary defeat, Britain arose triumphant, monarch of the world."

Shaw's ability to paint his war scenes on a very broad canvas, and at the



← CAPTAIN FRANK H. SHAW  
from a photograph 1909



A constant rain of bombs fell upon the packed masses of the Russians as they clustered to oppose the oncoming British on Westminster Bridge

same time allow his readers to follow in detail the doings of his most prominent characters, coupled with the air of realism he invoked by the introduction of actual people as characters -- the Royal Family, and celebrities of the period such as Lord Kitchener, Lord Roberts, Admiral Beresford, and others -- made the "Motherland" tales memorable yarns of their kind.

In his next contribution to "CHUMS", Shaw temporarily forsook the invasion theme to write what I have always considered to be one of the finest adventure yarns ever penned. "THE SECRET OF THE SARGASSO SEA" -- isn't the mere title enough to set one a-quake with delightful anticipation? What visions of strange perils and brooding mystery it conjures up! From the opening chapter, ushered in to the clamour of fire alarms in the manufacturing town of Plankchester as Montcalm's Mills crumble in a holocaust of fiery destruction, to the closing scenes of the uncanny submarine upheaval which frees the adventurers from a lingering death in the clutches of the sinister Sargasso, the reader is gripped by the tenseness of the narrative.

The scenes of the destruction of Montcalm's Mills at the hands of a hired incendiary in the pay of the scoundrelly Jasper Pettigrimes, and the rescue of young Gerald Montcalm by his young sailor friend Harry Lorton after Gerald had been left by a mysterious assailant to perish in the flames, opened the story with a splendid punch, and the plot developed fascinatingly. When Henry Montcalm awoke to the fact that he was a ruined man, his life achievement a pile of smouldering ruins, his thoughts turned bitterly to the fast fortune lying in Chancery which generations of Montcalms had been unable to claim for the lack of certain documentary proofs lost more than a century before with great-great-grandfather Roger Montcalm when his ship, the "Bonaventure", disappeared from human ken. The "Bonaventure", old Admiralty records revealed, had been last spoken by an English frigate in a storm near the outskirts of the dreaded Sargasso Sea. Could the "Bonaventure", laden with a cargo of mahogany and virtually unsinkable, have been disabled and drifted into this graveyard of lost ships, there to be clutched inexorably in its weedy desolation? And was it possible that after more than a century she still lay fast in its maw?

So came about the fitting-out of the good ship "Adventurer" with the last remnants of the Montcalm fortune in a do-or-die attempt to solve a century-old mystery and to recover the evidence needed to recoup the family fortunes. Even before the expedition finally steamed out of Plankchester Harbour on its seemingly hopeless quest, however, the unknown hand behind the mill disaster struck again with fire and explosion in attempts to prevent the "Adventurer" leaving port, and finally, in a Channel fog on the night of departure she escaped destruction by a hairsbreadth when deliberately rammed by a mysterious steam yacht. Many were the perils faced by the company of the gallant little ship -- the mill-owner's sons Gerald and Roger, their chums Harry and Will Lorton, old Captain Fallows, the giant bosun Tom Beddington, and the few picked men comprising the rest of the crew -- before the "Adventurer" finally hove in sight of the outskirts of the strangest region on the globe, the dreaded Sargasso -- a limitless expanse of sullenly heaving weed, here and there interspersed with patches of open water, but growing ever denser and ever more reluctant to part under the knife-like prow of the "Adventurer" as she drove further and further towards the heart of the uncanny region of death and decay. Strange indeed were the sights which met the eyes of the adventurers in this graveyard of the sea -- here a centuries-old galleon smothered by the voracious growth and her outlines barely

barely recognisable as a ship -- there, the rusted, weed-encumbered hull of a modern tramp steamer -- here, again, the rotting hulk of what once had been a proud East Indiaman -- derelicts great and small, all held relentlessly until their final dissolution in the clutch of the sinister Sargasso. Strange and uncanny perils abounded -- giant crabs and other even more hideous marine monsters -- and once, pulling alongside a weed-infested hulk, the "Adventurer" was invaded in the dead of night by a gigantic octopus from its lair in the ancient vessel. But alas! no "Bonaventure" -- and the spirits of the gallant little company fell day by day under the spell of the terrible region of decay and desolation, until

"Derelict right ahead!" rang Harry Lorton's voice from the crows-nest. 'She looks like an eighteenth-century craft!'

"Before sunset they had drawn so close to the vessel that they could distinguish her every outline. More than that, the declining sun shone on her bow, and sparkled therefrom on letters that seemed to be cut in gold. Harry studied these letters carefully, then:

"Hurrah! She's called the "Bonaventure!" he yelled to those on the deck below."

The "Bonaventure" of Plankchester she was, and it was with a sense of awe that the boarding party, after hacking away the all-pervading weed, stood on the warped and splintered deck of the sturdy merchantman which had once been the pride of old Captain Roger Montcalm's heart. Battered and defaced by decades of storm and sun, dismantled and weirdly festooned by the enveloping marine growths, she lay fast in her century-old tomb, herself a tomb for her ill-fated crew. With beating hearts the party descended the rotting stairway to below-decks, where huge spiders scuttled away before them in the gloom, and dimly-seen human skeletons lay in the dank and noisome alleyways, until, finally penetrating to the gloom of the huge stern cabin, a strange and awesome sight met their eyes. Here, at an oaken table, sat the mortal remains of old Roger Montcalm himself, grinning skull cradled in fleshless arms, a rusted pistol under one bony hand, and a decayed and musty leather-covered book clasped in the other. Reverently the explorers disengaged the diary, for such it proved to be, from the skeleton grasp, and the faded and almost indecipherable writing on its mildewed pages told a strange and terrible story of heroism and fortitude. The "Bonaventure", old Roger Montcalm had recorded, had been dismantled in a hurricane and had drifted into the clutches of the dreaded Sargasso, from which all efforts to free her had proved unavailing, and after months of despairing struggle, during which she had drifted further and further into the weed, the ship's company, with water and provisions at an end, had resigned themselves in dull despair to their terrible fate. "I am deeply concerned (the gallant old seaman had written) to remember that many papers, which I have always kept on board this ship, not placing any faith in banks or vaults ashore, may now never come into the hands of my son. These papers do tell of a great inheritance; and without them, no man may claim it. These papers lie in the strong oaken box in the locker in my cabin. There they shall stay until the sea gives up its dead; but I much sorrow to think that my son's hands shall never touch this wealth."

Alas! at what seemed their moment of triumph, the hopes of the little band turned to despair, for nothing remained of the precious documents save a pulpy and unrecognisable mass which crumbled at a touch, and bitter indeed were their

thoughts as they realized that the perils they had faced had been in vain. With heavy hearts they bade farewell to the ship of death and pointed the "Adventurer's" bows towards home. But from that day on it seemed as though a malignant fate hovered over the gallant little ship. First, a strange malady, bred perhaps by the foul miasma of the unholy region, laid low her crew, and they scarce had the strength to go about their daily tasks, but worse was to come. Racked by the weeks of driving the ship through the morass, the strained engines slowed until all headway was lost, and she lay motionless in the clutch of the voracious growth while sick and exhausted men worked frantically to rectify the trouble. The weed grew almost as they watched -- and when, after days of toil, steam was at last turned on to the engines, the "Adventurer" shuddered and refused to budge an inch. They were trapped in the Sargasso!

Despair gave way to a dull apathy after fruitless efforts to free the ship. Weak, exhausted, their water running low, it seemed as if they were doomed to share the fate of other victims of the terrible waste. The author conveys, with convincing realism, the aura of death and decay, the frightful desolation, and above all, the appalling loneliness and solitude of the strange and sinister region. How the "Adventurer" was finally liberated by a strange undersea earthquake -- the appalling monster which was hurled to the surface from unfathomable depths by the submarine upheaval -- how the party, their hopes high after being so miraculously delivered from a slow and horrible death, sighted and boarded an ancient galleon liberated from her age-long prison by the same strange disturbance -- how, before the ancient vessel plunged to the depths, they transferred the vast treasure with which she was laden to the hold of the "Adventurer" -- all this is too long to recount here. Suffice it to say that the cry was "home". Up and away, past the ruffled waters of the trade seas, up into the long calms of the doldrums, and past them, sighting a liner that gave them ample stocks of food, until the cliffs of old England hove in sight. What need to tell of the rejoicing their arrival caused? What need to tell of the tremulous joy of Henry Montcalm as his sons proudly displayed the treasure they had won, and he realised that his good name was saved, thanks to the daring of the adventurers who had solved a secret and found a fortune in the depths of the Sargasso Sea.

All Shaw's stories, with one notable exception, were laid in the present or the future. "IN THE DAYS OF NELSON", which followed the "Motherland" stories, proved that the author could spin a yarn of the brave old days with the best of them. No better tale of the period was ever written than this pulse-stirring yarn of the adventures of young Hal Mainwaring under two flags -- the infamous Jolly Roger and Nelson's ensign. Suspecting that he was being cheated out of his father's estate by his unscrupulous uncle and guardian, Sir Jervis, Hal found himself forced to go to sea, not in a King's ship, as had been his boyhood dream, but in the privateer "Sea Hawk" of dubious reputation under the scoundrelly Captain Bondser. "See that the boy never returns to England alive, or I'll weave the rope that will hang you!" wrote Sir Jervis to Bondser. Ere many weeks at sea had elapsed the "Sea Hawk" emerged in her true colours, and the horrified Hal found himself an unwilling member of the crew of the "Flying Terror", scourge of the seas, with the skull-and-crossbones brazenly flaunting from her main. Many were the infamies of which Hal was a shocked witness, until Nemesis overtook the "Flying Terror" and the few survivors of her cut-throat company dangled at the yardarms of a British frigate -- a fate from which the lad escaped when even as the noose tightened around his neck he was identified by his boyhood chum Dick Mostyn, a midshipman in the "Minerva". Hal Mainwaring's subsequent adventures

under Nelson's flag, and his slow progress to promotion in the years that followed, would take too long to recount here, for it was not until Trafalgar had been fought and won that Captain Sir Henry Mainwaring, K.C.B., returned to claim his rightful inheritance and endow his boyhood sweetheart with the good name which he had worked so hard to clear.

Outstanding even among the many stirring episodes in this fine story, the description of the long stern chase of the East Indiaman "Lady Mercedes" by the sinister "Flying Terror", the merchantman's gallant resistance, and the subsequent destruction of the pirate by the frigate "Minerve", excels even a Horatio Hornblower epic. The story, incidentally, was splendidly illustrated by the peerless Paul Hardy.

From the advent of Jules Verne's celebrated "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea", submarine exploration has always been a fascinating subject, and Captain Shaw exploited its possibilities to the full in "EXPLORERS OF THE DEEP", which appeared in the 1910 volume under his by-line of "Grenville Hammerton". Few readers, however, could have been misled as to the identity of the author, for the style was unmistakably Shaw's. The saga of the giant submarine "Unconquerable" and the perils and marvels encountered by her crew in their undersea quest for the fabled sunken continent of Atlantis provided thrilling fare. Strange and awe-inspiring were the sights disclosed by the giant searchlights of the "Unconquerable" as she traversed the sea-bed in that chill region of eternal night -- sights never before witnessed by human eyes. Here loomed up a ponderous three-decker of Nelson's day, fast in her last resting-place in the ooze of the ocean floor to which she had plunged a century before -- festooned with strange marine growths, her shot-shattered hull encrusted with barnacles, and her rows of grinning gun-ports the abode of weird denizens of the deep. Here lay the battered, rusted hull of a modern tramp steamer, a gaping hole in her bent and twisted bows, her lifeboats still fast in their davits -- mute evidence of some tragedy of the sea. And here was the riven and shattered carcass of what once had been a proud Spanish galleon, from whose shattered stern windows uncoiled the colossal tentacle of some nameless monster as the searchlight illuminated the centuries-old wreck. And once, in the course of exploring a gigantic submarine cave, the mighty beam disclosed a swarm of uncanny creatures, seemingly half fish, half human, which gibbered ferociously at the explorers through the submarine's inch-thick glassite ports. It was a thrilling moment when, after weeks of cruising the uncharted depths and encountering strange perils and scenes almost beyond human ken, the searchlight came to rest on colossal shattered pillars in rows too regular for the handiwork of nature, and when the roving beam disclosed piles of Cyclopean masonry and the streets of a drowned city, the explorers knew that they had reached their goal. The exploration of the fabulous realm of lost Atlantis, the fearsome fate which nearly befell them in the ruined and monster-inhabited temple, and the strange and priceless treasures which they wrested from the shattered and crumbling palace of the Atlantean Kings -- all this is too long to detail here. Suffice it to say that "EXPLORERS OF THE DEEP" was Shaw at his best.

March 29 -- anniversary of the Indian Mutiny -- was "D-DAY" for "THE GREAT MUTINY OF 1911", when India's millions arose to overthrow the British Raj in a holocaust of fire and massacre. Nor was the revolt confined to India alone, for in London, Glasgow, Hull, Newcastle, Liverpool and other seaports, death stalked with unholy strides that terrible night as black, brown, and yellow fanatics were loosed in an orgy of looting and slaughter; and to wear a white skin

was to court death by knife or bludgeon.

In India, scenes were being enacted beside which the atrocities of '57 paled to insignificance as the native regiments revolted and joined the maddened populace in an orgy of slaughter and terrorism to drive the British into the sea. Gallant deeds and heroic sacrifices there were without number as the whites and the loyal Ghurkas fought tigerishly against overwhelming odds. Playing leading parts in the desperate struggle were the Collingwood brothers, Jack and Cyril. When the story ended, India was aflame from end to end, and a handful of fugitives were fleeing desperately for Bombay, the only city still in British hands.

"We had to cut our way through, and we're being pursued," said the subaltern. "India's done for -- there's not a city left in our hands."

"There's still Bombay," said Cyril calmly. "And there's England behind Bombay." And they rode forward towards the sea, leaving behind them what seemed a conquered land.'

"THE GREAT MUTINY" (which incidentally was written under the by-line of "Frank Cleveland", another of the author's "aliases") was the prelude to an actual invasion story, "THE TERROR FROM THE EAST". Emboldened by the Indian revolt, China and Japan joined forces in an all-out blitz against Britain, and a mighty armada blasted its way through a surprised British Home Fleet to land the yellow hordes at St. Ives on the Cornish coast. To and fro surged the tide of battle as Briton and Asiatic locked in desperate conflict. Portsmouth fell to the invaders after a terrific naval bombardment, and the Yellow forces, hurling regiment after regiment to destruction in the face of dogged resistance, surged on over their own dead to hard-won victories at the battles of Winchester and Guildford, and London itself was encircled by a vast and ever-growing force. Meanwhile, in India, the outnumbered British had been reinforced by Colonial troops as the Empire sprang to arms in the Motherland's hour of peril, and were exacting terrible toll from the mutineers, but the fate of India still trembled in the balance. The scene changed again to the Homeland, where the invaders were discovering that a Briton fights best when his back is to the wall, and every foot of ground was being bitterly contested. A second invasion fleet carrying supplies and reinforcements was sent to the bottom by a British fleet under the command of His Majesty King George V, and heartened by the tidings, the defenders turned on the invaders with renewed fury. Cut off from supplies and reeling under the British onslaught, the yellow troops fought frenziedly, but the tide had turned, and their remnants were soon being hunted and harried over the length and breadth of the island. Soon, overtures of peace were made by the enemy, simultaneously the revolt in India collapsed, and "CHUMS" readers were able to draw breaths of relief after suspenseful instalments running from June, 1910, to February, 1911!

Shaw took his readers to Russia in his next serial, "IN THE LAND OF THE GREAT WHITE TSAR". Knouts and nihilists abounded in this story of two boys, the son of a Russian nobleman and his English friend, condemned to Siberia after a travesty of a trial as a result of being falsely accused of participation in a Nihilist plot to assassinate the Tsar. The brutalities which they endured on the long and agonising trek to the dreaded Siberian wastes, their sufferings under the savage overseers in the terrible salt mines, their death-sentences as a result of turning upon their brutal guards, and finally their last-minute reprieve and the establishment of their innocence by direct intervention of the Tsar himself, made this a yarn chock-full of action and suspense. Paul Hardy again contributed some

highly effective illustrations.

Even before this serial had concluded, another from the pen of the industrious author had commenced under his favourite "alias" of "Grenville Hammerton". One wonders at the reason for the use of these various by-lines, for, whether they were an editorial dictum or a whim of the author's, no seasoned reader could have entertained any doubt as to the writer's identity. "BY RIVERSIDE AND SEA" was something of a departure from previous Shaw serials but was none the less thoroughly enjoyable. The adventures of young Syd Bolton, the dock lad who accidentally witnessed a murder and as a result found himself enmeshed in a strange series of events involving smuggling and other dark doings on the Thames, and his deliverance by the mysterious individual known to the underworld as "The Guv'nor", provided several weeks of entertaining reading.

The author was really hitting his stride at this period, for no sooner had the aforementioned story concluded than another commenced, but quality did not suffer for quantity. His work naturally varied, but it can be truthfully claimed that he never wrote a poor story. "FIRST AT THE POLE" was certainly out of the top drawer. This yarn of a dash to win a prize of a million pounds offered by a millionaire industrialist to the first Englishman to plant the Union Jack at the North Pole was certainly not lacking in excitement. The vicissitudes suffered by the expedition as the good ship "Enterprise" nosed her way deeper and deeper into the Arctic wastes were graphically described, and at the triumphant conclusion of the quest the reader felt that the prize had been fully earned. The "Enterprise" carried a midget submarine aboard, and its crew's hairbreadth escape from disaster when they encountered the great-grandfather of all devil-fish in a gigantic submarine cavern was one of the many highlights of a very fine yarn.

In direct contrast, Shaw's next story was laid in a setting of coral islands and palm-fringed lagoons. "THE BLACKBIRDER'S LEGACY" got under way with the foundering of the ill-fated "Middle-march" and the sufferings of the ship's two apprentices, the only survivors, in an open boat without water or provisions. Their boarding of a sinking derelict, the treasure map bequeathed to them by the dying man who was the ship's sole occupant, and their subsequent adventures in quest of the blackbirder's hoard, were narrated in the author's usual convincing style. As previously remarked, Shaw knew ships and the sea, and this story was one of the many in which his first-hand experience lent an air of almost documentary realism to the narrative. We shall see, however, that his next contribution to "CHUMS" proved not only his versatility as an author -- for he temporarily deserted his beloved sea to write (of all things!) a school story -- but that he also possessed a deep insight into the hearts and minds of boys.

The finest school story ever written? A formidable query, indeed, and countless, no doubt, would be the nominations for such an honour, for the authors who penned fine tales of school life were legion, and the doings of fictional schoolboys from the uninhibited Jack Harkaway to the immortal chums of Greyfriars and St. Jims, of Rookwood and St. Franks, have entertained countless thousands of boys. Yet, were I asked my own choice, I would name Frank H. Shaw's first and almost sole venture into the realms of the school story. Avast there, ye Hamiltonians! And belay, St. Franks lovers! Pause, ere reaching for antedeluvian eggs with which to signify your disapproval of my choice, for after all, am I not one of yourselves? Have I not sworn a mighty oath that I would crawl on all fours five miles over broken bottles if I knew that "Bob Cherry's Barring-Out" awaited me at the end? Yet "THE CHAMPION OF THE SCHOOL" will always linger in my memory

as the truest, most moving tale of school life I ever read -- a bold claim, but one which I will at least attempt to justify.

Spring Green Council School was poles apart from the establishment at which Jack Ambrose had received his education until the fateful day when financial reverses made it impossible for his father to pay any further Grammar School fees, and Jack found himself one with those whom he and his fellow-Grammarians had loftily referred to as "Council School cads". No ivied hall of learning was Spring Green, but a drab and grimy edifice sprawling uncouthly in the midst of a barren expanse euphemistically referred to as a playground, which in winter was a sea of mud and from which clouds of dust arose in summer, and where more than six hundred children of all ages and both sexes whooped, shrieked, fought, swore and cat-called until the bell summoned them to their classes. Small wonder that Jack's spirits drooped that first morning at Spring Green, and when, after he and his father had interviewed the headmaster, he was installed in the fifth standard, the lad's heart sank as he glanced around at the loutish faces and uncouth attire of some of his classmates. How different it all was to Grammar School!

The masters, too, were unlike Jack's former Grammar School mentors. Mr. Markles, the headmaster, ruled his unpromising flock with a rod of iron, and rarely tempered justice with mercy. Years at Spring Green had blunted any finer susceptibilities and dispelled any illusions he once might have possessed. Organised sport, too, was unknown at Spring Green, and as the weeks dragged by and spring made way for summer, Jack's thoughts turned wistfully to wicket and willow and the place he had once filled in the Grammar School eleven.

But there were some few flecks of gold amongst Spring Green's dross. True, there were cads like the loutish Maybrick, the bully who seemed to sense the ex-Grammar School boy's disgust at his vile language and vicious bullying, and in consequence lost no opportunity of venting his spleen on the lad. But on the other hand, Jack discovered that not all Council School fellows were deserving of the term which he had once so contemptuously applied to them. There was, for instance, the merry, irrepressible Harry Jackson, with whom Jack struck up a firm friendship as the months went by, and soon the two boys were regular visitors at each other's homes. Harry's adored elder brother, Will, loftily contemptuous of "school kids", finally unbent and gave Jack weekly boxing lessons after hearing of the boy's plucky but disastrous fight with the bully Maybrick.

Another of Jack's chums was the shy, studious, gentlemanly Bertie Harrison, the only son of his widowed mother, who welcomed her shy and diffident son's friendship with two such fellows as Harry and Jack, and who provided such marvellous repasts for the boys when they visited the Harrison household. All in all, Jack found life at Spring Green not so unendurable as he had first imagined it, but he sadly missed cricket and football as the seasons came and went.

But big changes were in store for Spring Green. Mr. Markles resigned, and rumours flew thick and fast regarding the coming new headmaster. At last the Christmas holidays were over: school began, and hundreds of curious eyes regarded the new head as he read the prayers on the first morning, and then introduced himself to Spring Green's pupils. Jack pricked his ears as Mr. Wilson talked: this man evidently knew something of a boy's feelings.

"And now", he concluded, "I want to take you into my confidence a little -- just a little, so that we all may know where we stand. When this post was offered to me, I was just considering another offer I had had; as master at a

school which some of my friends called a much higher-class school than this. I had had my dreams; and it seemed to me that a public-school offered a wider field and better prospects ultimately, and some of my fellow-masters swore that a Council School wasn't any good. When I told them that I'd been offered the head-mastership of Spring Green, some of my -- shall I call them friends? -- laughed. And that laughter decided me.

"The thought came to me -- why not show these scoffers, and myself too, that it can be an honour to belong to a Council School?"

Space does not permit me to record in detail the disappointments, the heartbreaks, and the few hard-won triumphs of the new headmaster during the first few months of his attempt to instal a new spirit in Spring Green. Many were the times he sighed wearily at what seemed an impossible task; but gradually, the barriers of ignorance and suspicion were dissolved. Even so, it was a task which would have made a man of lesser calibre give up, but he persevered, and his doggedness and sincerity bore fruit. A new spirit was abroad in Spring Green. Would that I could tell how cricket and football teams were formed, and how one glorious day a Spring Green eleven defeated Grammar School in a hard-fought match! How, too, Bertie Harrison brought honour to the once-despised Council School by winning the prized County Scholarship, or how Jack Ambrose fought and beat Maybrick the bully. But all these things take time in the telling, so we will pass over them to the day when Jack said good-bye to the school he had once despised but had lived to be proud to belong to, and exchanged a firm handclasp with the man who he and his fellows had come to respect and admire beyond telling. Let us also draw a veil over Jack's emotions when on that last day at school, and with his dream of a seafaring career on the point of being realised, he was made a presentation of a beautiful silver-mounted telescope by Mr. Wilson on behalf of all Spring Green's pupils, and was hailed as the boy who had done the most to pull Spring Green out of the mire. Just one more scene, a year later, and we bring this tale to an end.

"It was the beginning of a new year, and Mr. Wilson, as was his custom, had mustered Spring Green together to speak to it a few words of cheer. He looked at the rows of faces before him, and something of hopelessness entered his soul; there was the same old grind to be gone through, the same mess of material to be worked into shape, the same lessons to be taught. Sometimes he thought that he must falter beneath the strain. New faces showed everywhere; hardly one of the old crowd survived. They had gone forth to their allotted places in the world, but the headmaster remained behind, doing his best to fit these others for that endless battle; failing often, perhaps; and when these boys in their turn went from him, which of them would care that he had laboured with his heart and mind for their welfare? Not one -- not one. He passed his hand across his forehead and sighed.

"He saw the crowd of faces turn towards the door, and rapped with his cane on his desk. But a little hum of wonder arose: their attention was diverted. He turned to see a broad-shouldered lad walking steadily up the assembly hall towards the gallery. A boy who was almost a man, brown of face, sturdy of build, looking fearlessly before him. A boy clad in a neat nautical uniform, fingering a badge cap -- Jack Ambrose, without a doubt.

"Hand met bronzed hand in a hearty clasp. The headmaster smiled into that honest face, and met a smile as clean and glowing as his own.

"I only got back half an hour ago, sir," said Jack. "And I came here as soon as I'd shown myself at home. I felt as if I must tell you -- how much I owe you, sir. What you said about playing the game and -- and all that. I found out what you meant; and -- you helped me, sir, more than I can say."

"Thank God for that," said Mr. Wilson softly; knowing that his reward had come. And when Jack went away he turned to his work with a light heart, feeling that all was well.'

And that, readers, is my nomination for the best school story. Not one solitary barring-out does it contain, nary a crook masquerades as a housemaster, no lost continents are explored or treasure disinterred from South Sea Islands during the Christmas holidays, and Spring Green School didn't even boast a tuck-shop. Yet it remains, in my humble opinion, as the truest, most natural, and at times the most profoundly moving tale of school life as many of us must have known it. Read it, should chance ever bring it your way -- I can promise you some pleasant hours!

Having successfully repulsed invasions by the Russian, Japs and Chinese, Britain again found herself fighting for her existence, this time against the minions of the Kaiser, in "THE SWOOP OF THE EAGLE". The Editor, in the course of his weekly chat, delivered a little homily to his readers on the theme of the story. It was not his purpose, he said, to stir up strife between people of different nationalities, but the naming of Germany as the enemy in the story would be sufficiently obvious to those who followed the trend of international politics.

However, there was no lack of strife in the new story, which opened with a company of the Officers' Training Corps on night manoeuvres meeting up with the invaders who had slipped ashore under the cover of fog, and before the alarm could be spread the grey-clad legions had established themselves on a firm footing. It was the same old story of an unprepared, compacent England suddenly facing hordes of well-equipped and ruthlessly-disciplined troops, and black indeed was the outlook for the Homeland until the defenders rallied and inflicted the first reverse on the invaders at the historical Battle of Dickleburgh, but even so, the Germans battled forward to London in the face of dogged resistance. The Kaiser paid a personal visit to cheer his legions along and distribute a few gross of Iron Crosses, but it proved disastrous both to him and the German cause, for he had no sooner settled himself in his luxurious headquarters and pulled off his jackboots after a hard day inspecting the work of his troops than he found himself trussed up in an aeroplane en route for London, having been snatched from his hard-won slumbers by Sergeant Dick Reynolds and some kindred spirits of the O.T.C. This was the beginning of the end, for with the War Lord as a hostage, the spirit was out of the invaders, and the shattering defeat of an aerial armada of Zeppelins was the final nail in the invaders' coffin. Dick Reynolds received a V.C., the German Government a demand for a colossal indemnity, and the Kaiser his marching orders. After which, everybody turned to and cleaned up the mess.

The Editor of "CHUMS" made no explanations or apologies for his star author again naming Germany as the agressor in "LION'S TEETH AND EAGLE'S CLAWS", which commenced in the issue of December, 1913. Did both author and editor perhaps foresee that a grimly real clash of arms was inevitable, and that in a scant ten months time England would be engaged in a life-and-death struggle equalling or surpassing in grimness and ferocity anything which had appeared in the pages

of "CHUMS", excepting that the Homeland was happily to be spared the horrors of invasions? At all events, Shaw "went the limit" in this, the last invasion tale which he was to write for "CHUMS" until "THE RED DELUGE", more than twelve years later. "LION'S TEETH AND EAGLE'S CLAWS" certainly had everything -- battles by land, sea, and air, nor was the submarine menace forgotten. The story of the Carrington brothers' contribution to final victory ran absorbingly through the narrative -- the dashing Roy, appointed to H.M.S. "Empire" on completion of his naval training just before the outbreak of hostilities, and Gerald of the club foot who fretted at his own supposed uselessness but eventually covered himself with glory as a pilot on the Royal Flying Corps. Basically the tale followed the familiar pattern of near-defeat and final victory, but nevertheless it was crammed with action and incident and was fully up to the Shaw standard.

And so we come to the last serial which the author contributed to "CHUMS" before the outbreak of the Great War -- "SONS OF THE SEA", which commenced in March, 1914, and concluded in that fateful August of the same year. During those anxious years, Shaw served his country as faithfully and as well as his fictional heroes had done, on land, sea, and even in the air (one photograph taken in 1916 shows him piloting a naval seaplane) but he was spared to contribute many more fine yarns to the paper in which he had made his debut as an author of boys' stories. To-day, at the ripe old age of 78, fact and fiction still flows from his tireless pen, all with that tang of salt and spindrift and eloquent of the doings of the men who go down to the sea in ships. Hats off, readers, and three cheers for the man whose tales delighted us in our boyhood, and whose present work still fascinates many of those same boys, now fathers and grandfathers -- Captain Frank H. Shaw, the man who lived adventure!

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# MAGNETS OF THE ROARING 'TWENTIES

By ROGER M. JENKINS

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When the Magnet first donned the familiar blue and orange covers it assumed an appearance which was destined to last longer than any other in its history. These coloured covers, which ran continuously from 1922 to 1937, without doubt included the finest of Charles Hamilton's writings. It would not be accurate to claim that the period from 1922 to 1929 was superior to the 1930 to 1937 era, but there is no doubt that, during the 'twenties, the system of writing stories in series was fully developed for the first time, and some of these series remain unsurpassed today for their sheer vitality and ingenious use of new methods and situations. Some were written in a style which was subtly changed by the 'thirties; but the older style has the merits of forthrightness and candour, and even if the mellow humour of the next decade is lacking it is nevertheless still pleasing to read. There are indeed some collectors who esteem freshness and outspokenness higher than technical ability allied to mature dexterity, and it is these who find that this period, above all others, satisfies their requirements in a Greyfriars story.

It was during this period that Charles Hamilton switched his main interest from the Gem to the Magnet. From 1922 to 1925 the Magnet contained a large number of substitute stories - far too many, in fact - broken only by a few series and fewer single numbers written by the real Frank Richards. From 1926 onwards, however, the Gem was neglected in favour of the Magnet, and it was in this year, therefore, that the underlying genius in the Greyfriars stories first came into full flower, as the following review will attempt to expound. As usual, substitute stories will be ignored.

## 1922-Plus ce Change, Plus ca meme Chose

The first coloured cover Magnet (apart from the old double numbers which had red in place of the orange) was No. 770 dated 11/11/22. This was the third of the famous Congo series which ran from Nos. 768-774. The Congo series was in fact the first of the long foreign holiday series which henceforth constituted a unique feature of the Magnet. The juniors had been abroad before this time, of course, but never had Charles Hamilton permitted himself the luxury of a seven week series. Bob Cherry's cousin, Captain Corkran, was off to the Congo in search of a cache of buried ivory, and he was accompanied by the Famous Five and Bunter, whose services were required to impress the natives by making an idol speak. After a series of adventures, not the least of which was when Bunter installed himself as chief of a native tribe, they all returned to Greyfriars accompanied by the faithful Pickle Jar, a native who had attached himself to them just as M'Pong had insisted on returning with Tom Merry to St. Jim's from the Congo in earlier days. The English winter was too much for Pickle Jar, and he soon returned to West Africa.

No. 776 entitled "The Ghost of Mauleverer Towers" was the last of the

single number Christmas stories. It was also the last Christmas holiday which was not graced by the presence of Bunter. It was, however, the first holiday spent at Mauleverer Towers and the first introduction to Mauleverer's ne'er-do-well cousin Brian. There was a fine sense of atmosphere about this tale, and it must have brightened many homes over the festive season.

### 1923 - Hints of Greatness

The first contribution by Charles Hamilton in the New Year was a series in Nos. 779-784 (excluding No. 780 which was by a substitute writer). Jim Lee was the ward of his unscrupulous cousin, Ulick Driver, who wanted Lee to become friendly with wealthy fellows in order that he could receive invitations to spend week-ends with them, and thus instruct Driver about the geography of their homes. In order to frustrate the plot, Lee refused to become friendly with anyone, and was soon dubbed the outcast of the school. There was a fine dramatic climax, but the plot moved rather slowly in the beginning, and was not capable of much development.

"Bunter's Latest" in No. 787 was a pretence of dumbness, which was inspired by the generosity of the Famous Five towards a dumb beggar. This was a story with many amusing moments, but it was with the series in Nos. 793-799 that the Magnet really came of age, the first tale bearing the pleasantly quaint title "How Levison Minor Came to Greyfriars". The St. Jim's part of the story was fully told in the Gem: it will suffice from the Magnet point of view to state that Levison minor arrived, fell ill, and was considered to be in a serious enough condition to warrant sending for his brother. It was a first-rate series, full of splendid characterisation: Levison major had to try to live down his unsavoury past, and was the victim of plots by Skinner, Ponsonby, and Gadsby. In between whiles he encountered trouble when trying to help Hazeldene out of one of his usual scrapes, but the Bounder was able to come to his aid and repay an earlier debt. This was the first really long, varied, and dramatic series to appear in the Magnet; it was in short the first of what may be called the modern type of stories.

If the Levison series looked forward to some of the good things in the future, the next story by Charles Hamilton in No. 806 entitled "Lame Bunter" looked back to some of the good things in the past: Mrs. Kebble's marking-ink provided a bruise which deceived Mr. Quelch though not the school doctor. No. 807, "Mauleverer Means Business", was another of the old type of story, telling how he raised £500 to help a shell-shocked ex-serviceman. "A Split in the Co." in No. 808 also just failed to ring the bell, perhaps because the theme required longer treatment than a single Magnet story could provide.

There was no fault to find, however, with the Pengarth series in Nos. 809-812, the tale of the summer holiday spent in Sir Jimmy Vivian's haunted house on the Cornish coast. Bunter featured prominently at the beginning of the series, but he did not spend the holiday with the juniors, as would have been the case in later years. Incidentally, the Magnet and Gem stories were nicely linked in these days. Levison, Cardew, and Clive had decided to take a walking tour in the West Country and did not join Tom Merry & Co. in their Thames boating trip: so Cardew was on hand to render assistance to Harry Wharton & Co. at Pengarth, but the three St. Jim's juniors fell in with the boating party later in the Gem series - very satisfying continuity.

There next followed an unusual event - two successive series about a

temporary character, in this case Mick the Gipsy. He rendered Sir Hilton Popper a service, and realised his wish to go to school. The Greyfriars fellows were struck by his likeness to Aubrey Angel, and this was enough to make Angel the implacable enemy of the gipsy schoolboy; he even plotted with a gipsy to get him kidnapped. In the end it turned out that Mick was really Maurice Angel, Aubrey's brother, and Aubrey had the grace to repent. This first series was in Nos. 819-823; the second series was in Nos. 828-830, and constituted the Christmas holiday stories. Mick was no longer at Greyfriars, but returned temporarily to ask the Famous Five to spend Christmas with his brother and himself at Lochmuir, a castle in the Highlands, where they celebrated the festive season with only a phantom to keep them company. Charles Hamilton's one contribution to the Magnet between these two series was No. 826, featuring Bunter as "The Rebel of the Remove", a story which was subtitled "A Comedy of Errors in Twelve Acts. Now Showing - the Case of the Missing Cake!" But Bunter was, for once, innocent.

#### 1924 - On the Road to the Summit

Fishy was up to his old tricks again in No. 841, trying to make money by organising a treasure hunt. In complete contrast was No. 843 entitled "Pen's Pal" which dealt with the curious friendship between Monty Newland the rich Jew and Dick Penfold the poor cobbler's son. Another pair of stories providing an interesting contrast in styles were Nos. 846 and 848. The first one, entitled "The Barring of Bunter", related the punishment which the form awarded him when he exceeded the limit in grub-raiding: this was a story which had some very amusing touches. The other tale was "Too Clever of Skinner", a most ingenious story in which he attempted to outwit not only a dubious stranger but also his partner in crime, Snoop. His cunning over-reached itself, when it appeared that the sovereigns he had extorted from the stranger were counterfeit.

Out of the ordinary is the only description that can be given to the pair of stories in Nos. 854-855. Philip Blagden, who had been expelled from Greyfriars many years ago pleaded with Dr. Locke for the post of cricket-coach. In reality he wanted to continue his search for buried treasure in the vaults. The treasure was eventually found, but not by Blagden - he had gone to prison in the meantime, having been sentenced for a murderous attack on Mr. Quelch.

A fine trio of stories about a feud between the Bounder and Redwing in Nos. 858-860 was followed by the famous Sahara series in Nos. 862-869, one of the greatest of all foreign holiday series to appear within the pages of the Magnet. Ali ben Yusef, the Arab schoolboy, had become sheik of the tribe on the death of his father, and Major Cherry took some of the fellows out to Algeria with him to search for Ali when he was kidnapped. The culmination of their adventures was a remarkable sequence describing how Bob Cherry was tied to a camel which was then set loose in the desert, an epic which Charles Hamilton admits was inspired by "Mazepa". It need not be added that everyone, including Billy Bunter and the Cliff House schoolgirls, returned safely in the end.

Wally Bunter's last appearance in the Magnet was in No. 873 entitled "Both Bunters". Billy masqueraded as Wally, ate an enormous meal at the expense of the Famous Five, and then disappeared, leaving Wally to be mistaken for himself. Bunter also featured extensively in the series in Nos. 874-877, as the following extract will show:-

"I have decided, therefore, to administer a flogging," said the Head. "It will take place before classes tomorrow morning. This punishment, I hope, will

be a warning to you. You have been guilty of reckless prevarication, of disrespect to the prefects, and to your headmaster, and you have very nearly caused an innocent boy to be punished for your fault. This is very serious, Bunter."

"Is-is it, sir!"

"Do you not realise it is?" thundered the Head.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh! Yes sir! Certainly!" he gasped. "Awfully serious, sir! I-I was just thinking, sir, how - how frightfully serious it was."

Bunter, however, had an ingenious idea for avoiding a flogging:-

"If you please, sir," gasped Bunter, "c-c-couldn't you make it the sack -"

"Make it the sack!" repeated the Head dazedly.

"Yes, sir - make it the sack. You see I - "

"Boy! Do you mean that you would prefer to be expelled from the school?" thundered the Head.

"That's it, sir!" said Bunter eagerly. "Ever so much, sir!"

"Are you in your right senses, Bunter?"

"I-I hope so, sir."

"Are you impervious to a sense of shame - are you totally regardless of bringing disgrace upon your name and family?"

"Yes, sir! I mean" - Buntered stuttered - "I-I mean I'd rather go home, sir! You-you see, sir, I should have a few weeks at least before I was sent to another school - that would be so much to the good - "

"Bless my soul!" said the Head blankly.

"And then I might get into a better school than this - "

"A-a-a better school than Greyfriars!" gasped the Head. The mere suggestion that there existed a better school than Greyfriars seemed a good deal like profanity to Dr. Locke.

"That's it, sir. Very likely a much better one, with a headmaster who would know my value - "

"Upon my word!"

"So - if you don't mind, sir - I'd rather be bunked," said Bunter brightly. "Is it a go, sir? I-I mean, is it all right?"

After considerably more persistence, Bunter had his way, but he was disappointed to find his father had decided to send him, not to Eton or Harrow, but to work in an office, whereupon Bunter returned to Greyfriars under the delusion that he could take his place in the Remove again. A further disillusionment awaited him on this score, and he began camping in and around the school premises until a surprising turn of events enabled him to bluff the Head into forgiving him. This was a first rate series of its kind, with hardly a dull line in any chapter.

The series about Harry Wharton's fall from grace which followed in Nos. 879-888 was quite the most remarkable set of stories to appear in the Magnet during the period at present under review. The theme in itself was not a novel one, but hitherto it had never been accorded the dignity of a series, and never before had Charles Hamilton written a tragedy on so high a level.

According to dramatic critics, true tragedy consists not of a series of mishaps which befall a hero by chance, but of that hero's decline in fortune owing to the faults inherent in his own character. Harry Wharton was not a faultless character, and his tragedy began when he received at the very start of a football match a telegram from Colonel Wharton asking him to meet him at Ashford. He postponed his trip until after the match, and so missed his uncle,

to his bitter regret, for he subsequently learned that the Colonel had wished to say farewell before he left the country on a dangerous mission. Wharton confided this fact to the Co., and later blamed them when the story became generally known in the form and he was censured for not going to Ashford. It soon transpired that Bunter and Skinner had been responsible for the leakage, but the Co. resented being mistrusted by Wharton, whilst he was too touchy and worried about his uncle to apologise properly. The first story ended with a split in the Co.

It was in this series that Bunter's potentialities in helping along the plot were fully realised for the first time. Up to now he had been merely an ornament in the stories, but from this time onwards he was used to full effect. In No. 880 his tattling prevented a reconciliation, with the result that Wharton accompanied Vernon-Smith to Nice for Christmas, whilst in No. 881 Bunter destroyed a conciliatory telegram from Wharton to Nugent, with the result that Nugent was unaware of Wharton's change of heart. They met, quarrelled under this misapprehension, and fought at Stonehenge. Wharton then stayed with Jimmy Silver (a fact which readers of the contemporary Boys' Friend were able to verify), and it was now Nugent who refused the olive branch.

### 1925 - The Ascent of Everest

The first fortnight of the new term saw no improvement, with the result that in No. 883 Mr. Quelch deprived Wharton of the captaincy, but his edict was evaded the following week by Wharton's successful nomination of Mauleverer, who was quite content to do as his predecessor advised. Mauleverer ceased to act as a stalking-horse, however, after a match for which none of the Co. were picked ended in a colossal defeat, and No. 885 concluded with a fight between Wharton and Bob Cherry, the new captain. Left with no friends except Skinner and Co., Wharton soon found the downward path was easy, and the inevitable happened: he was sentenced to be expelled. No. 888 was the last, and finest, story in the series: Dr. Locke, who was shrewder than Mr. Quelch, could see that it was obduracy and recklessness, not viciousness, which had caused Wharton's downfall, and he decided to give him a second chance, having become convinced that Wharton had seen the foolishness of his ways. Mr. Quelch was deeply incensed with the rebel of the Remove, and could only acquiesce in silent rage to the Head's suggestion. Wharton found that he had to win the respect of his friends and form-master anew - not an easy task, but one which it is not necessary to say was successfully completed.

It is not difficult, even at this lapse of time and with the knowledge that Charles Hamilton used this theme with even greater technical success at a later date, to envisage what a tremendous impact this series had upon the public at the time: anxious readers, who were not quite so accustomed to series as were a later generation, wrote in shoals to Fleetway House enquiring about the erring hero of the stories. At this late date it may be seen that the 1932 series rose to greater technical heights, but the earlier series had the merit of the fresh approach, the new idea, and also possessed an ending which was far more rational and believable, whereas the ending of the later series was somewhat artificial and contrived. But whatever the relative merits of each, it may be declared without hesitation that the first series signified a landmark in the history of the Magnet.

After this series, the return to the normal type of story seemed somewhat of an anti-climax. A tale of the latest craze (crossword-puzzles) in No. 893 was

followed three weeks later by "Poor Old Bunter", a popular Magnet title. In this number we were presumably intended to sympathise with Bunter's plot to get leave from lessons ostensibly to attend the funeral of a relative, but actually to visit the theatre using Coker's ticket. With the aid of an onion, Bunter was able to produce some realistic tears, but somehow the plot misfired. "Bunter the Cavalier" in No. 897 showed that Mr. Bunter had forgotten the earlier Viscount Bunter episode. He was now laying claim to the lapsed de Bonterre baronetcy. Bunter discounted Skinner's tale that the first baronet was a cheesemonger who had purchased the title, and strutted around in high fettle, reminding Mr. Quelch that he was only a commoner. In the end, it turned out that Mr. Bunter was no luckier than before. It was Vernon-Smith who was "Playing the Goat" in No. 899. He was dropped from the Remove eleven, and played for Temple's team, only to find that Temple had no intention of giving him a fair show in the cricket match. This was a good story, but much too compressed for a single number.

The main interest in the Magnet was usually the characters and the background, not the story, which was nothing more than a vehicle for displaying the first two items. In the Ragged Dick series in Nos. 906-909, however, the plot assumed more than the usual importance. Sir Henry Compton, a wealthy landowner, befriended a waif and sent him to Greyfriars as his grandson, as part of a plot to stop a wastrel cousin from inheriting the estates. How the tangle was sorted out in a really surprising finish was told in a taut and dramatic series which is as noteworthy as it is unique.

The most remarkable feature about the Bunter Court series in Nos. 910-917 is the way in which the author managed to compose the most comical series of all without betraying an iota of affection for the chief character, Billy Bunter. He was still a character to be laughed at, but not yet a character to be sympathised with. The misfortune that eventually befell him was regarded as his just deserts (as indeed it was); but there was little mercy tempered with the justice, and Bunter succeeded in being downright unpleasant from beginning to end. Yet this in no way detracted from the hilarity of this justly famous series, which is too well-known to need much description here. Suffice to say that, by a combination of trickery and co-incidence (Charles Hamilton has remarked that the beginning of this series was the most contrived plot he had ever been forced to employ), Bunter took a furnished tenancy of the enormous Combermere Lodge, had its name changed to Bunter Court, and invited the Famous Five to spend the summer vacation with him. The whole place was run on tick from beginning to end, and Bunter borrowed from his guests to tip the servants when they became restive about their unpaid wages. Eventually, when the estate agent became suspicious, Bunter managed to lock him in the wine cellar, and Walsingham the butler soon joined him there. Finally D'Arcy discovered the prisoners, but Bunter succeeded in locking him in as well. The inevitable crash could be staved off no longer, and the last two numbers of the series were a description of Bunter on the run; they were in their way little masterpieces of characterisation, and perhaps even funnier than the scenes at Bunter Court. In the end Mauleverer was able to put matters right, and Bunter was saved from a nasty mess. This is a series to be savoured, and savoured again. It was not the Bunter of later years, but it was near enough to make little difference. Incidentally, the Schoolboys' Own reprint of this series in two monthly numbers was, like many similar reprints of Magnet stories of this era, very abridged.

A series centring around the Sixth Form always made a welcome change,

since such series were usually on a high dramatic level - the Sixth did not lend itself to comedy. The series in Nos. 923-931, which constituted Charles Hamilton's last contribution to the Magnet in 1925, was no exception to this rule; it was a very fine story relating how Loder plotted the downfall of Wingate through his minor in the Third Form. Loder scored all along the line - Wingate resigned his captaincy and prefectship, he was edged out of football, and later given a prefects' beating. Loder realised his long-cherished ambition, and became captain of the school, but his tactlessness, his vicious temper, and his pride proved to be his undoing. He even descended to roguery during the Christmas holiday in order to keep Wingate away from Greyfriars next term, but his cunning recoiled upon his own head. This type of series was typical of the Magnet of this period: Charles Hamilton did not write a lot for the paper, but nearly everything he did write was first-class.

### 1926 - The Switch from the Gem

The first story by Charles Hamilton in the New Year was published at the end of February, in No. 942. This was entitled "The Mystery of the Head's Study", and was a little comedy relating how Bunter became locked in that august apartment, and used his ventriloquial powers to imitate the Head's voice. This was followed by a series in Nos. 945-948 starring Pedrillo, the acrobat at Senor Zorro's circus, who turned out to be Hobson's long-lost cousin Peter. The charm of this series lay in the prominent featuring of Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell. Another short series followed in Nos. 956-957 which told the story of Billy Bunter's barring-in, whilst Nos. 958-959 dealt with a plot of Ponsonby's, and the way in which he was punished for his misdeeds. It may be noted that, from this time onwards, a story by a substitute writer became the exception rather than the rule: indeed, only 21 more substitute stories appeared in the Magnet in the remaining 14 years of its existence, and the switch of Charles Hamilton's main interest from the Gem to the Magnet dates from about June 1926.

The India series which followed in Magnets 960 to 970 has never achieved quite the same renown as the earlier Sahara series or the later China trip. It was perhaps not quite on the same level, though it had some fine moments. The first three weeks consisted of local attempts to kidnap Hurree Singh, and it was not until No. 963 that Colonel Wharton escorted his party out to Bhanipur, where we were privileged to meet Mook Mookerjee, the moonshee who had taught Hurree Singh his weird and wonderful English. After many adventures the treacherous uncle was dealt with, the nabob's kingdom assured, and everyone returned to England.

Two single stories came next: in No. 971 Coker was placed in a false position by Walker, whilst in No. 973 Hazeldene was "Asking for Trouble" again in a fine tale which also featured Wharton and Vernon-Smith at loggerheads.

The series of the year was undoubtedly the one about Bob Cherry in Nos. 975-979. Major Cherry was dissatisfied with his son's progress in class, and presented him with the ultimatum of winning the Head's Latin prize or leaving the school. Bob Cherry as the swot of the Remove was a novel role for him to play: he did his best to obey his father's wish, and succeeded in antagonising the whole form. This series was extremely popular in its day, and was rather in the nature of a minor variation on the Harry Wharton series of 1924/5, revealing as it did with a wealth of convincing detail how a series of misunderstandings, coupled with faults on both sides, could lead to a sustained rift between old

friends.

An innovation was a series centring around Coker, which formed the theme for the Christmas series in Nos. 981-984. Coker had been invited to spend his holidays with Aunt Judy and her brother Uncle Henry, who were then living at Holly House, but Poynings, the secretary, had other ideas, and Coker was kidnapped. The Head stated that anyone who wished to search for Coker could remain at school over the holidays. Potter and Greene packed their bags and left hastily, whilst Reggie Coker (who subsequently disappeared from the stories) left it to the Famous Five, who duly rescued Horace and accompanied him to Holly House, where further adventures were in store for them.

### 1927 - Smithy's Year

There were many different series about odd newcomers to Greyfriars, but none was so successful as the series about Richard Dury, the Game Kid, in Magnets Nos. 985-990. Having rendered Dr. Locke a service, he was given a place in the Remove, and succeeded in antagonising the whole form, not because he ate with a knife or dropped his aitches but because he thought his exceptional strength should have commanded for him universal liking and respect. Yet he was not without his pride, and was deeply gratified at being taken up by Hilton of the Fifth, and performed many services for his patron until he realised that his idol had feet of clay. Eventually he found that the call of the ring was too strong for him, and he left Greyfriars precipitately. This was a fine series, with plenty of action and drama as well as characterisation.

The Game Kid series was followed by a single story in No. 992 about a mysterious new master, and a series in Nos. 994-995 concerning Roger Quelch, the nephew of the Remove master. Roger was visiting Greyfriars to receive special tuition from his uncle, with a view to making the transfer from High Coombe, his old school, a permanency. But Roger had a propensity for practical joking, and in the end both uncle and nephew were equally pleased to be relieved of each other's presence.

The most famous single story about Billy Bunter is undoubtedly "Bunter's Brain-Storm" in No. 996. On the occasion of Roger's visit Mr. Quelch had ordered tuck for a tea party by telephone from Chunkley's stores, and Bunter was now seized of the brilliant idea of telephoning another order in his form-master's name. The order duly arrived, but Mr. Quelch returned unexpectedly early before Bunter had had time to remove the loot from his form-master's study. Nemesis soon caught up with the schemer, and matters were not improved when Bunter suggested to Mr. Quelch that he had been suffering from a brain-storm when he telephoned in his master's name. Mr. Quelch was, however, lenient, and sentenced Bunter to only thirty strokes of the cane. This classic story was the only one to be reprinted twice in the Schoolboys' Own Library.

The remainder of the year's stories were dominated by the inhabitants of Study No. 4, principally Vernon-Smith. The Dallas series in Nos. 997-1004 shewed the Bounder at his very worst. His father had befriended the orphan son of an old acquaintance, and had decided to send the boy, Paul Dallas, to Greyfriars. Overcome with groundless jealousy, the Bounder stopped at nothing to achieve the downfall of the boy whom he had mistakenly regarded as the rival for his father's affections. Eventually, Dallas's own father turned up, and Dallas decided to leave Greyfriars and accompany his father to South America. When Vernon-Smith realised that Dallas had not been trying to supplant him, he had the grace to

apologise, but it was too late to undo other ill deeds: he was still the outcast of the form, and Redwing had left Greyfriars, having become involved in Smithy's feud, and taunted by the Bounder with being at the school on the scholarship specially founded for him by Mr. Vernon-Smith (a reference to events in the far-off year of 1918). Despised and friendless, the outlook for Vernon-Smith was bleak indeed.

After a single story in No. 1005 about Bunter's attempts to redeem himself in the eyes of his form-fellows after having run away from Tubb of the Third, another first-class series about the Bounder followed in Nos. 1007-1009. Mr. Quelch was rapidly losing his patience with Vernon-Smith, and the series recounted how the rebel of the form succeeded in proving that the Head's guest, Captain Spencer, was in fact a criminal wanted by the police. The plot was well-knit, but especially readable are the passages in which Mr. Quelch is forced to admit that Vernon-Smith had performed a useful service in his activities which everyone else had hitherto believed to be baseless accusations.

A varied batch of single stories followed. It was Skinner and Bunter who were "Taking up Trotter" - under the delusion that he had come into a large fortune, whilst "Bolsover's Brother" in No. 1011 provided an interesting character-study of Mr. Wiggins, the absent-minded master of the Third Form. The complex nature of Vernon-Smith's character was further displayed in Nos. 1012 and 1013, entitled "The Bounder's Good Turn" and "Smithy's Way". His good deed was misunderstood, and he became at daggers drawn with Wharton, only to finish up with a change of heart after a surprising conclusion. "Smithy's Pal" in No. 1015 was, of course, Redwing who had returned from his voyage and was at Hawkscliff once more, while "Bravo Bunter" the following week was by way of being an intermission in the sequence of tales about Vernon-Smith: it was indeed an unusual story, shewing the Owl of the Remove in a new and not unwelcome role.

The most important feature of the South Seas series in Nos. 1017-1026 was the introduction of Soames who was destined to feature several times in the Magnet in coming years. At the commencement of this series Soames was Mr. Vernon-Smith's valet, and had been in his service for many years. The juniors were helping Tom Redwing search for Black Peter's treasure on a South Seas Island, and Mr. Vernon-Smith left them in the care of Soames, who soon showed himself in his true colours. After a number of hair-raising adventures the treasure was found, an escape effected, and Soames disappeared. Redwing was thus able to return to Greyfriars once again, this time on an independent footing. An opilogue to the series occurred in No. 1028 in which Skinner and Co. contrived to bag Study No. 1 before the return of the Famous Five, but Skinner's victory was short-lived.

The series which appeared in Nos. 1028-1034 (excepting No. 1030 which was by a substitute writer) was the last of the joint Magnet-Gem series: henceforth the two papers ceased to run in double harness and went their separate ways. The series in question was about Edgar Bright, who became known as the Toad of the Remove. The first number of the series dealt with the return of Redwing and the advent of Bright, who was admitted to the school only at the request of Sir Hilton Popper, whose lands were heavily mortgaged to Mr. Bright: the description of the baronet in the moneylender's toils was first-rate. The Levisons arrived at Greyfriars later in the series, Ernest attempting to discover the lost Will of a former Remove master which would save his father from ruin at the hands of Mr. Bright. He was of course successful in the end. The St. Jim's side of the story was briefer, and was as usual dealt with concurrently in the Gem.

A single number shewing Loder in a disgraceful light (No. 1035) was followed by what must be the most peculiar of all Christmas series to appear in the Magnet, in Nos. 1036 and 1037. It began on a note of farce, with Bunter expecting a valuable Christmas present from his uncle George, which eventually turned out to be a shilling edition of Dickens' "Christmas Carol". The story then switched to an entirely different level: Bunter was impressed with the story, and began to turn benevolent like Scrooge. He fell in with a millionaire philanthropist, who invited him to spend Christmas at a Park Lane mansion, continuing to perform charitable deeds. The second story saw a similar change of tone: Bunter began to tire of philanthropy, and the millionaire was shewn to be nothing but a crank in the estimation of the poor, his servants, and his relatives. He was taken ill and left for the South of France, having given Bunter carte blanche. His relatives, however, had other ideas, and Bunter was promptly ejected from the mansion. After which Bunter gave up philanthropy, and became his old self once more.

#### 1928 - Wider Still and Wider.....

The remainder of the Christmas holiday was spent at Wharton Lodge, where in No. 1038 Bunter befriended a gipsy waif and generously gave him several things belonging to other people. This was followed by a very readable series in Nos. 1039-1041 about a new Second-Form master who bore such a striking resemblance to an escaped convict that Billy Bunter denounced him in the confident expectation of receiving the promised £50 reward - an expectation which was unfortunately not fulfilled.

One of the best stories about Coker, written in sparkling vein, was No. 1042 entitled "The Boy Who Wouldn't be Caned". Coker was annoyed at his sentence and even more annoyed to learn that the rest of the Fifth resented it not because Coker mattered but because it impaired the dignity of the form generally. Nor did Coker make matters any better by telling Mr. Prout that the whole thing was quite impossible as he himself would realise when he came into a more reasonable frame of mind. This type of story, more than any other, is essentially readable and re-readable.

Skinner's greatest achievement was undoubtedly the way in which he contrived to get Mr. Quelch dismissed from Greyfriars at the beginning of the High Oaks series in Nos. 1043-1049. Charles Hamilton was always especially convincing in his description of the masters' relations with one another, and No. 1043 is a veritable jewel, demonstrating how, step by step, the misunderstanding grew between Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch until it culminated in the dismissal of the Remove master. The remainder of the series inevitably could not live up to this high level, but it is noteworthy for shewing Mauleverer in the lead, purchasing a large mansion called High Oaks to which the Remove decamped until the misunderstanding was cleared up and Mr. Quelch re-instated.

Henry Christopher Crum who featured in the Schoolboy Hypnotist series in Nos. 1050-1052 was definitely not a Greyfriars type, and gained admission to the school only because his father had hypnotised Dr. Locke. This was a series with some very funny incidents and a number of finely-drawn human touches, but somehow it did not add up to a coherent and satisfying whole - perhaps because the plot, as well as Crum, was not in the Greyfriars tradition. Much more delightful and traditional were the pair of stories in Nos. 1056 and 1057, concerning a stolen bike which was innocently purchased by Bunter (mainly on credit) and re-sold to

Fisher T. Fish: in the end it turned out to belong to de Courcy of Highcliffe.

"You do not know India", said the Eurasian, da Costa. "You do not know the East. You do not know Hurree Singh." Wharton felt a great gulf opening in front of him, though even then he did not realise what was in store for him in the famous da Costa series in Nos. 1059-1067. The new boy was the emissary of Captain Marker, the man who was to inherit £50,000 if Wharton were expelled from Greyfriars. At first da Costa felt he could not betray his new friend, but later after a misunderstanding he lost all inhibitions, and the series, which was set against a pleasant background of cricket, went on from climax to climax in its descriptions of da Costa's attempts to get Wharton expelled. This series was definitely one of the highlights of the period.

"Billy Bunter's Bookmaker" in No. 1068 was by way of being comic relief, and described how he lost the desire, acquired some weeks previously, to make a fortune by gambling. Billy Bunter was also the star character in the summer holiday series about Whiffles' circus in Nos. 1069-1076: the theme of this series was basically the same as that of the Bunter Court series - how a thoughtless impersonation lightly assumed could be sustained by Bunter for several weeks without regard to the inevitable reckoning. It began with Bunter dashing out of detention en route for the circus, hotly pursued by Mr. Quelch and Loder. Mr. Whiffles was bathing in the river, having naturally left his wig and his false whiskers with his clothes on the bank. Bunter, just as naturally, donned them by way of disguise, and retained them when he discovered that all the circus hands mistook him for the proprietor. Bunter was in the wrong, of course, and he was quite repentent, but the reader was clearly invited to sympathise with him - a paradoxical achievement of which no ordinary writer would have been capable.

Roger Quelch had in his time earned the title of the Joker of the Remove, but compared to Christopher Clarence Carboy he was (in the words of the quotation beloved of Charles Hamilton) as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine. The series in Nos. 1078-1082 went off to a flying start with Bunter meeting the new boy at the station and offering to stand him a feed at the Courtfield bunshop, but unfortunately Bunter's calculations went awry, and he was left to pay the bill himself, with nothing but a bad halfpenny in his pocket. No. 1078 concluded magnificently with an audacious attempt to jape Mr. Quelch, but the Remove master was more than equal to the occasion, and Carboy discovered that twisting the tail of the tiger was a risky business. A feud between Carboy and Wharton occupied the next two numbers, but high comedy returned with No. 1081, the finest story in the series. Bunter had found out that Carboy had had to leave his former school, Oldcroft, and Skinner was the leading spirit in the movement to send him to Coventry, until he found out - or thought that he had found out - that Carboy was the son of a multi-millionaire. How Skinner, Bunter, Fish & Co. tactfully dropped the sentence of Coventry and became friendly with Carboy, only to discover that Mr. Carboy was not a wealthy man at all, made a delightful episode inimitably described in Charles Hamilton's wittiest vein. Carboy's troubles ended the following week, and he returned to Oldcroft, but it must have been a long time before the Magnet readers of the day forgot this series, which deserves to be far more popular with collectors than some of the more renowned Magnet series.

Coker came to the fore again in Nos. 1084-1085 in which he threatened to punch Mr. Prout, and was then surprised to find himself expelled when this dire deed was done in the dark of his own study. Equally amusing was "The Form-Masters' Feud" between Mr. Quelch and Mr. Hacker in No. 1086, a distressing

occurrence which was brought about by Bunter's ventriloquism. Mr. Quelch did not recognise the imitation of his own voice, and was cross with the Famous Five for having been deceived by Bunter: "Did you suppose, when this absurd boy spoke in that gruff, unpleasant, ridiculous voice, that it was I who spoke?" Wharton had to admit that he did suppose just that, and was rewarded with the comment that he was a very stupid boy.

The Phantom of the Cave series in Nos. 1087-1089 marked the first re-appearance of Soames, and constituted a somewhat delayed sequel to the South Seas series: Redwing was kidnapped by Soames in an attempt to obtain Black Peter's treasure by another method, and the juniors spent part of their Christmas holidays searching for Redwing and Vernon-Smith who had also fallen victim to the kidnapper. Poor Mr. Grimes was, as always, well off the scent, but the intervention of the Famous Five naturally proved decisive.

### 1929 .... Shall thy Bounds be Set

It was Loder who was "Under Bunter's Thumb" in No. 1090, but once the incriminating evidence was destroyed Bunter had reason to repent of his amateur roguery. This was the only single story Charles Hamilton wrote for the Spring Term, for Nos. 1092-1107 were occupied with the account of the legendary Hollywood series. Mr. Hiram K. Fish persuaded the Head to allow a party of boys to accompany him back to Hollywood in term time, stressing the educational value of the trip, though Mr. Fish's intention was to use their services for nothing in making a film of school life. Quite a number of unforeseen events occurred - including Bunter blackmailing his way into quite another type of film - but there can be little doubt that Magnet readers were not sorry when the time came to return to England.

"The Shylock of Greyfriars" in No. 1110 was, of course, Fisher T. Fish, who over-reached himself in a vain attempt to bring retribution on Bunter for tuck-raiding. Nos. 1111-1115 formed a rather loosely-written series about Loder: the first two numbers related his feud with Wingate, and the last three saw his enmity transferred to the Famous Five. The theme brings to mind the 1925 series about Loder, which was on a far higher dramatic level, though the later series was better from a technical point of view - a not infrequent state of affairs so far as repeated themes were concerned. The term time stories were rounded off by a pair in Nos. 1116 and 1117, the first of which was distinguished by a very striking cover picture: these two stories related how a banknote for £10, which belonged to Stewart of the Shell, was blown away in the wind, and how suspicion of having found it and converted it fell upon Mark Linley.

The 1929 summer holiday series was split into two quite distinct sets of stories. The first part in Nos. 1118-1121 dealt with an ancient motor tricycle (nicknamed Methuselah) which Bob Cherry insisted would form an essential part of their walking tour through Surrey, Bucks, and Oxfordshire. This was Charles Hamilton at his brightest and best, and was undoubtedly the most endearing holiday series of all to appear in the Magnet during the 'twenties. In No. 1121 Bunter sold Methuselah to Gunner of Rookwood, and then departed in haste to escape the wrath of Bob Cherry. After this Bunter was missing for the remainder of the holidays (for the last time in the Magnet), and the second part of the series in Nos. 1122-1125 can be described only as grim. This constituted the well-known Ravenspur Grange series, which the editor requested be written on Edgar Wallace lines. It co-incided with a free gift and was undoubtedly part and parcel of the

stunt, but there is no doubt that the Magnet was not the place for four murders in a row. The Ravenspur Grange series is immensely readable, but it did not need the Famous Five at all, and should never have appeared in the Magnet. At any rate, Charles Hamilton was not happy about the experiment, and it was never repeated.

"The Boy Without a Friend" was the title of the first of a series of three stories in Nos. 1126-1128, and accurately described Julian Devarney, whose pride had not diminished when his father was ruined by a financier whom Devarney thought was a Jew. His anti-Semitism extended itself to Monty Newland, but there was a surprise ending to the story which made Devarney appear somewhat ridiculous.

The indignity which had been so narrowly averted in No. 1042 was actually visited upon Coker in No. 1129 entitled "Coker Comes a Cropper": he was caned, and decided to don an impenetrable disguise and inflict the same punishment upon Mr. Prout, but the scheme went awry, like so many of Coker's plots. This was followed by a very readable series in Nos. 1130-1131, in which Vernon-Smith played a notable part in exposing a new boy, Arthur Durance, who had come to Greyfriars under false colours.

"Skinner's Shady Scheme" in No. 1132 was to wreck Mr. Quelch's study and get Mark Linley blamed - another plot which misfired. Coker featured again in Nos. 1133-1134, in which he contrived to get the better of a blackmailer who was worrying Mr. Prout: those two numbers were aptly entitled "Blackmail" and "Fool's Luck" respectively.

Readers of a previous decade were re-introduced to Snoop's Canadian uncle, Mr. Huggins, in No. 1135. He had decided to remove his nephew from the school, but Snoop managed to avert the tragedy by displaying a little "Coward's Courage". The following week appeared a tale in a more humorous vein: the Famous Five and Peter Todd set out to avenge one of Bunter's wrongs at the hands of Walker. When their revenge had fallen upon Monsieur Charpentier by mistake they learned that Bunter had not been wronged at all, with the result that there were "Six in the Soup".

Billy Bunter at his most outrageous always makes amusing reading, but it is difficult to enthuse over "Bunter the Bandit" in No. 1137. In this story his head was turned by a cheap film, and he acted in a way which was somewhat out of character, in that his outrageousness was not prompted by some other event but seemed to be merely stupidity for its own sake. With this rather unsatisfactory story (which was far from being typical of the period), this review must close, since No. 1138 was the somewhat indirect commencement of the Courtfield Cracksman series which ran until No. 1151, well into the year 1930.

Conclusion

It is difficult to generalise about this period with its variety of styles and mannerisms. Perhaps the only safe conclusion which can be drawn is to state that, for the first time in its history, the Magnet had contained a large number of outstanding stories, many of them of first-class quality. The best was yet to be, but even if the Magnet had never lived to see the nineteen-thirties it would still have been judged a success on the basis of the 'twenties alone. The readers of this period had indeed grown accustomed to a steadily-improving standard of story-telling, and the future was not destined to disappoint them.

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WHEN George Orwell wrote his satirical article on "BOY'S PAPERS" in 1940, he complained, amongst other things, that at St. Jim's and Greyfriars sex simply didn't exist. "Even the bad boys" he said "are presumed to be completely sexless".

What he expected, in papers written for children, is not clear. Possibly he would be better satisfied today. Anyhow, he soon received his answer from Frank Richards.

"What would Mr. Orwell have?" he wrote. "The Magnet is intended chiefly for readers up to sixteen. It is read by girls as well as boys. Would it do these children good, or harm, to turn their thoughts to such matters? Sex, certainly does enter uncomfortably into the experiences of the adolescent. But surely, the less he thinks about it at an early age, the better. I am aware that in these modern days, there are people who think that children should be

## Ethel Cleveland and George Figgins

By GERRY ALLISON

told things of which, in my own childhood no small person was allowed to hear. I disagree with this entirely. My opinion is that these people generally suffer from disordered digestions, which cause their minds to take a nasty turn. They fancy they are 'realists', when they are only obscene. They grub in the sewers for their realism, and refuse to believe in the grass and flowers above ground - which nevertheless are equally real. Moreover, this "motif" does not play so stupendous a part in real life among healthy and wholesome people, as these "realists" imagine. If Mr. Orwell supposes that the average Sixth-Form boy cuddles a parlour-maid as often as he handles a bat, Mr. Orwell is in error."

After that, we can only echo the well-known cry so often heard during fights in the Remove, and chirrup - "Man down"!

No, the amount of so-called 'love interest' in the Gem or Magnet was very small. But what there was, was handled very delicately and simply. And also very sincerely.

Breeze Bentley gave various instances of platonic or sentimental attachments between senior boys at Greyfriars in the opening paragraphs of his talk on "Bob Cherry's Romance", which he gave to us at the November 1954 meeting. (See the C.D. Annual No. 8 for a printed version of this most interesting talk.)

Of course, at St. Jim's the great lover was dear old Gussy! As years go by, I grow to esteem Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, more and more! He was so simple, so honourable, such a true gentleman. He just could not believe anything wrong about anyone. And although his chums ragged him unmercifully, he never bore them any malice, and those "feahful thwashings" never came off!

But Gussy had a tender heart! Never was there such a lover - of the calf variety. But it was always so innocent, so tender, that one felt one's laughter turning to tears at times. Any talk on Gussy's "affairs" of the heart would extend over two or three meetings. He fell in love at the least provocation, and his range was very extensive. It included the Head's niece - a Miss Courtney; the Music-master's daughter in Rylcombe; the Vicar's daughter; the girl at the local tobacconists, and many others. And he once found himself in love with his cousin Ethel.

Ethel Cleveland was Charles Hamilton's most charming heroine. I know that at first there was a little doubt as to her surname, but after Gem No. 2 (1d series) "MISS PRISCILLA'S MISSION" she remained Ethel Cleveland, a cousin of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on his mother's side.

She was just a week or two younger than Gussy, but this was sufficient for the swell of St. Jim's to say on one occasion, in his most fatherly manner

"I shall wegard it as my dutay to keep an eye on you Ethel. As the eldah - "

"But you are only a few weeks older than I am, Arthur."

"That is a twiflin' mattah."

Ethel, we are told, was a serious and thoughtful girl, but with a fund of real humour. Her lines had fallen in cheerful places, and her young life had been a happy one. Not that she had been wholly without troubles. Her father's death - she could faintly remember that - and her mother's ill health, had cast their shadows upon the scene of her girlhood.

Her education at home was in the hands of her governess Miss Prynne. Little Miss Prynne was Ethel's devoted slave, and everything that Ethel did was right in her eyes. If Ethel had not been really a sensible and willing pupil her education would have been in a parlous state.

Ethel lived with her mother and Miss Prynne at Cleveland Lodge, which was a few miles from Wayland Junction. She had many friends in the country-side, including Miss Priscilla Fawcett of Laurel Villa, Huckleberry Heath, with whom she often went to stay.

Miss Cleveland was also a great friend of Mrs. Holmes, the wife of the Head of St. Jim's, and was a very frequent and welcome visitor at that school, where she was popular with everyone. But there was one boy at St. Jim's who regarded Ethel with a much deeper feeling than friendliness. He was not the kind of boy you would have suspected of any sentimental feeling. He was a tall lanky fellow, very keen on sport, rather untidy in appearance. He was leader of his house, and was beloved by the two members of his own Co, one of whom was a much cleverer lad, and more acute in every way. But the boy who regarded Cousin Ethel with such devotion was a born leader, and was followed most faithfully by his little Co. His name was George Figgins.

Figgins was a grand boy. He was one of the original scholars at St. Jim's, and was my personal favourite in the school. On one occasion I wrote to Mr. Martin Clifford to tell him so. This was his reply.

"I am very interested to learn that George Figgins was your favourite character. He was my own favourite too, and I couldn't help giving him front place in the first of the new St. Jim's books."

Figgins and Ethel Cleveland first met in  $\frac{1}{2}$ d "Gem" No. 20, "TOM MERRY'S DAY OUT", reprinted in "Gem" 1232 as "THE ST. JIM'S SPEED COPS".

It was Founder's Day, and the school had a whole day's holiday. Arthur Augustus was taking Blake and Herries for a drive in his governer's Daimler, and he invited Tom Merry and Manners to go along with them. Lowther and Digby were not at St. Jim's just then.

Lord Eastwood was living at Cressy Lodge - one of his country seats just then, and Cousin Ethel was staying with her uncle and aunt.

The plan was for the car-driven by the chauffeur - to call at St. Jim's, for the five juniors. Then they were to pick up Ethel at Cressy Lodge, and to run over to Huckleberry Heath where they were to picnic in the grounds of Laurel Villa. A delightful programme for a summer day. And of course, the five School House juniors put on quite a lot of "side" about taking out a lady for a motor run.

Figgins & Co. also had an outing planned - on motor cycles. Figgins and Kerr had one each, and David Llewellyn Wynn was riding in a sidecar along with Figgins.

Well, they had all the exciting adventures which you might expect. Amongst others, the car was pinched by a couple of car thieves called 'Enry and 'Erbert. Then Figgins & Co. retrieved the Daimler and returned it to their School House rivals. In gratitude, Gussy asked them to join the picnic. The New House juniors politely declined the invitation, but said they may join them later on at Huckleberry Heath.

The School House boys then picked up Cousin Ethel at Cressy Lodge and off they went to Huckleberry Heath, where they enjoyed a grand picnic. But when at last they returned to the car they found the spare petrol cans were missing and the tank empty.

Then, after alarm and consternation had prevailed for a while, a familiar voice was heard at the gate.

"Hallo! Anything the matter there, kids?"

It was Figgins & Co. They raised their caps politely to Ethel Cleveland and Miss Priscilla. Tom Merry ran hastily towards the gate. Here is the dialogue which ensued.

"Look here, Figgy".

"How do you do?" said Figgy.

"Have you - "

"Nice afternoon, eh?"

"Taken our - "

"But the evening's drawing in."

"Petrol"

"But I think it's going to be a fine night!"

"Have you taken our petrol".

"Your what?"

"Petrol! P. E. T. R. O. L! Petrol!"

"What do you think I want your mouldy petrol for?"

"A silly-ass sort of joke, perhaps!"

"Have you taken his sweet-scented petrol, Fatty Wynn?"

"No" said Fatty. "I've no use for it. But I think I saw a chap carrying some petrol cans."

"What did he do with them?"

"I think he must have hidden them."

"Look here, you chaps, there's a lady in the case! Miss Cleveland has got to get back to Cressy Lodge by dusk."

"That's what I hailed you for."

"What do you mean?" asked Tom, staring at Figgins, who was smiling in the most affable way.

"Why you see," explained Figgins, "I saw a chap with your petrol, and I thought the lady might like a lift home in a sidecar. Fatty Wynn will abdicate in favour of Miss Cleveland."

Figgins & Co. chuckled at Tom Merry's wrathful stare.

Tom understood now how the petrol had vanished, and why.

The School House had put the New House decidedly in the shade by having a motor-car out for the day, and taking a lady in the party.

Figgins had hit upon that device for getting level. It would be one for the New House with a vengeance, if Figgins carried off the lady under the very noses of the School House boys.

Ethel, who was a little curious, came towards the gates.

"Mind, not a word!" whispered Figgins. "Don't tell tales out of school you know. Mustn't row before a lady!"

Tom checked the words that were on his lips. He turned a chagrined face towards Ethel.

He knew his Figgins. Figgy would never give up the petrol unless he had his way, and it was impossible to "row", as Figgins said, before the girl. It would not be exactly the thing to tell Ethel that Figgy had raided the petrol. But to let Figgins have his way was distinctly exasperating.

"Introduce me, Tom" said Figgy in a stage whisper.

"Allow me to introduce Figgins & Co, Miss Ethel," he said - "Figgins, Kerr and Wynn, three horrid bound - I mean, three of the best. Miss Cleveland. Figgins & Co. raised their caps, and bowed. Ethel smiled.

"I am very pleased to make the acquaintance of Figgins & Co." she said gravely.

"You haven't told Miss Cleveland that I am quite at her service in this little difficulty," said Figgins.

The girl looked inquiringly at Tom.

"Figgins has offered to take you home in his sidecar, Miss Ethel," said Tom. "Fatty - I mean, Wynn, will stay, and come in the car when we - when we find the petrol."

"How kind of Mr. Figgins!" said Ethel, smiling brightly on the chief of the famous Co. of the New House at St. Jim's.

That "Mr. Figgins", and the smile between them made Figgins her slave for life.

Ethel took her place in the comfortable roomy sidecar wrapped in her motor-coat, waved her hands to her friends at the gate, and away they went, Mr. Figgins tooting his horn loudly.

Well, from thence onwards Figgins became to be generally acknowledged by

St. Jim's as the champion and Paladin of Cousin Ethel. It was rather surprising how even his rivals in the School House admitted his claim to be Ethel's especial Knight-errant.

There were two slight exceptions. Fatty Wynn never realised what was going on. Whenever Figgins went off his food when Ethel was visiting the school Fatty was certain that his beloved leader was ill, or at least sickening for something.

"It isn't like Figgy," he would say, to anyone who was about - often to Ethel herself. "I can't think why he won't eat anything. I'm certain he must be poorly." To Fatty at least, food was better than fondness.

And the other person who was never reconciled to Ethel's preference for Figgins, was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I weally can't undahstand it," he would say. "Figgins appeahs to wegard Ethel as his cousin, instead of mine. It's a gweat cheek on his part to monopolise my welations. I don't like it, and I simplay cannot undahstand why Ethel puts up with it!"

Poor old Gussy!

There was no doubt however, that besides Figgins's adoration for the girl, Ethel herself showed distinct preference for the Leader of the New House. There is not likely to be any article about Tom Merry being married to Ethel Cleveland, whilst it is quite understandable why Peter Walker linked Harry Wharton and Marjorie Hazeldene in wedlock in his article in the 1950 C.D. Annual "What Might Have Been", for in many Magnets, Wharton did appear as the devoted champion of Marjorie, in place of Bob Cherry.

But Ethel made it quite plain where her affections lay, although of course, it was always in the nicest and quietest way.

At that first Christmas Party at Laurel Villa, ( $\frac{1}{2}$ d Gem 37), a party which is as delightful to read about as any by the master of Christmas - Charles Dickens - we find Figgins again to the fore. The great snowball fight in the garden after breakfast was very enjoyable.

Cousin Ethel proved she was as good a marksman as anybody there. Indeed, she had the best of it.

She hurled her snowballs at all and sundry and received none in return. Figgins had constituted himself her chief of the ammunition department, and he kept her well supplied with snowballs.

And at the evening party D'Arcy at first felt rather envious for the preference Cousin Ethel showed for Figgins, but he soon found consolation in the smiles of Digby's sister.

I wish I could read all the series in which Cousin Ethel appeared. She always added that touch of interest to the story which brought our beloved author's power of writing to its very highest point. The only other character I can think of who had the same effect, is, very oddly indeed, Cecil Ponsonby of Highcliffe.

Whenever I am reading about Ethel Cleveland at St. Jim's, or Ponsonby at Greyfriars I am thoroughly enjoying myself!

This is what Roger Jenkins says about our heroine in his paper on "Those Beguiling Blue Gems". "Cousin Ethel made frequent appearances at the school in these early days. Although she was D'Arcy's cousin she seemed far more interested in Figgins. Even Tom Merry took second place here. Ethel Cleveland had a streak of playfulness which Marjorie Hazeldene never possessed at all."

Here is an excellent illustration of this. In Gem 34, Tom Merry, in Ethel's presence, referred to "that rotter Figgins". Well, Ethel paid him back delightfully, in her own way. She took Tom shopping with her!

First they called at the grocers. Tom waited outside ten minutes, and then gallantly carried Ethel's four parcels. Next a wait of seven minutes at the greengrocers, with the following to add to his load. A bag of potatoes, a bundle of carrots, a cabbage and a paper bag full of apples.

Tom began to look serious.

The next call was at the drapers, and a long wait of twenty minutes. Only a cardboard box this time, but a big one.

Then six minutes outside a stationers, although Ethel said, "I shall only be a minute here". Two packages for poor Tom.

A dairy next, and a bag of new-laid eggs. Finally a toy-shop.

Cousin Ethel emerged with three little boxes after only six minutes.

"I must carry these," she said.

"Oh, no!" said Tom, valiantly.

"Very well," said Cousin Ethel with a charming smile.

Tom Merry received the rest of the burden, and with Cousin Ethel, walked along the street, almost staggering under his load.

Bump, bump, bump!

Cousin Ethel looked round. The apples were dropping out of the bag. Already three big ones had rolled off the pavement.

"Look out!" yelled a voice.

Tom Merry stopped dead - and it was as well as he did, for he was on the point of stepping into an open manhole.

"Dear me!" said Cousin Ethel.

"It's all right" said Tom Merry hastily "I'll save them!"

He jerked the bag of apples a little higher up under his arm, and the bag of eggs broke loose, the top of the paper bag tearing in his fingers.

Crash!

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry.

The eggs were smashed to a pulp.

Cousin Ethel's face was a study.

"I-I'm awfully sorry, Ethel."

The girl laughed.

"Never mind, we must go back to the dairy and get some more.

Tom Merry shuddered. But back to the dairy they went, and a fresh bag of eggs was obtained.

By the time that shopping expedition was over Tom Merry almost regretted

his gallantry.

Ethel thanked him and took the parcels from him; and we read:-

"There was a rather curious smile upon Cousin Ethel's face as she walked up the garden path.

As Tom hurried back - very late - he thought, "I'm glad she didn't notice that I alluded to Figgins as a rotter!"

Somehow or other I gather that Ethel had caught that remark.

Now, such scenes as this, and there are others, put Cousin Ethel into quite a class of her own, as compared with Charles Hamilton's other girl characters.

It is obvious that her affection for Figgins is not a mere tepid liking, but something deeper. And more interesting still, she is able to stick up for him. Also, she exhibits a sense of humour, which is a very rare thing in any heroine I am sorry to say. Ethel's sense of fun is delightful, and almost unique. She often turns the tables on those who attack Figgins. Even Skimpole caught it once.

Besides these humorous stories, there are many dramatic and exciting ones about Cousin Ethel and Figgins.

A most thrilling tale is "THE BLACK HOUSE ON THE MOOR", Gem 185, reprinted as "THE HOUSE OF FEAR", No. 1388.

This yarn is inspired I imagine, by the famous Sherlock Holmes adventure, "THE SPECKLED BAND".

Ethel is held a prisoner, and in the climax is saved by Figgins, who has to kill a horrible poisonous snake. Rather melodramatic perhaps, but a good demonstration of Figgins' affection for his girl chum.

Perhaps the most famous story in this genre, is 'Gem' 223, "FIGGY'S FOLLY". This relates how Mrs. Cleveland is sent to Italy for her health, and it is arranged for Ethel to go for a year's schooling in France.

The news is like a thunderbolt to poor Figgins. Once again he can eat nothing, and Fatty Wynn is bothered to death.

"Tea's ready" said Fatty.

"I don't want any."

Fatty Wynn almost dropped his knife.

"You don't want any tea" he gasped.

"No."

"What's the matter with you."

Grunt!

"You must be ill" said Fatty Wynn anxiously, "a chap must be ill - or else dotty - if he wants to miss a meal."

Another Grunt!

Well, D'Arcy gets permission to go to London to see Ethel off at Charing Cross, and to take a companion with him. There is the usual competition, and D'Arcy tells Figgins it is "quite imposs" that he should be chosen. But Cousin Ethel says thoughtfully:-

"I should like you all to come - that would be pleasantest. But if only

one can come with Arthur, perhaps it would be fairer to choose a New House boy as Arthur is a School House boy.

"Bai Jove!"

"Than both Houses would be seeing me off" said Cousin Ethel sweetly.

So Figgins came too.

As the train was pulling out of Charing Cross, and Ethel and her Aunt were waving goodbye, a sort of madness came over Figgins, and to D'Arcy's amazement he jumped into the open door of the guards van.

From Folkestone he took a ticket to Boulogne and you can imagine Ethel's surprise when she sees him on the boat. However he comes in useful when Mrs. Quayle, Ethel's Aunt, is a little seasick, and finally manages to get a train ticket to Paris.

The scene on the train, where an elderly Frenchman - wearing corsets which creaked - tries to flirt with Ethel is very well known. Figgins is disgusted beyond words! He almost comes to quarrel with Ethel, and leaves the compartment in high dudgeon.

Perhaps, as might be expected, there is an accident to the train, and, at the risk of his life Figgins saves Mrs. Quayle from death as the carriages totter on the edge of a deep ravine.

He returns to St. Jim's a hero, and Dr. Holmes forgives him his escapade. Ethel and Mrs. Quayle return too, and the idea of the Paris school is abandoned.

My favourite series, and perhaps the best ever published appears in Gems 951-954. See also S.O.L. 218, entitled "COUSIN ETHEL'S CHUM".

This is a superlative yarn indeed, and relates how Cousin Ethel is suspected of the theft of a £10 note! The note belonged to D'Arcy, and disappeared from Study No. 6. It is later changed at the bank by Ethel, and all the evidence points to her having taken it. Rather than have the name of his girl chum dragged into an inquiry, Figgins makes a most noble sacrifice - of his own honour. The mystery is finally cleared up by Cardew, who plays quite a big part in the series. Very fine, powerful writing these Gems; perhaps the best ever printed. I think so, anyhow.

And now we come to the story which actually gave birth to the idea of this article. "COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS" B.F.L. 3d. No. 367. In this grand tale Ethel comes to St. Freda's School, when her mother is once again ordered South by the doctor.

Luckily this time, St. Freda's was not a very great distance from St. Jim's - about a two-hours drive in a horse and trap. In this story Ethel makes friends with a girl called Dolores Pelham - who is partly Spanish. This girl is a most interesting, subtle, and complex character, - something like Cardew or De Courcy.

There is one scene when Ethel and Dolores visit St. Jim's to see a football match - which bores Dolores to extinction. To while away the time she attempts to attract Figgins, who she has immediately seen is in love with her friend.

The drive home in the dark - with D'Arcy driving, and Figgins talking to the two girls, is one of the most enthralling psychological studies in all the writings of Charles Hamilton. I would put this book on a level with "The Boy Without a Name" or "Rivals and Chums". It was written about the same time, and these three books are all absolutely great stuff.

The contrasts between Figgins' honest simplicity, Dolores sardonic duplicity, and Ethel's affection for them both is a masterly piece of writing.

The final scene between the two girls is very illuminating too. Ethel reproves Dolores for her treatment of Figgins.

"It was wicked" - she says. "It was taking a mean advantage of Figgins to treat him as you did. If you don't like him - "

"But I do!"

"You do?" asked Ethel in astonishment.

"Si, Si" said Dolores. "Of course, I do! Isn't he a nice boy, and so brave and strong. I might even like him more than would please you, my Ethel!"

In one Gem, Martin Clifford says this:-

The friendship between Ethel and Figgins was very deep and sincere. Though as yet neither was old enough to think of anything more than friendship, there was something very special and tender in their regard for each other.

And so I think that Peter Walker made no mistake at all in his aforementioned article "What might have been" when he wrote this

"Here are two more," laughed Wharton. "Remember old Figgy? Mr. George Figgins."

"George Figgins," I said, "Well - well - well!"

Yes, there he was, tall, athletic, rugged and bronzed.

"This is my wife" he said, and a tall graceful woman smiled at me in a friendly way.

"You may remember her as Cousin Ethel," said Figgins.

"I do indeed," I said warmly. "To me you were always part and parcel of the Gem."

So there's a happy ending to our story.

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Items of Interest: Editors were apt to give wrong information on occasions. For instance in the Boys' Friend, No. 665, 7.3.14, it was stated in reply to a reader that Allan Blair had written "The Blind Boy" a serial which had appeared some time earlier, the editor was quite wrong for the author of that story was Sidney Drew.

In the "Boys' Realm" No. 112, 30.7.04, the editor in announcing the coming of a new school serial admitted, "I have not been wholly satisfied with the present one." That confession must be unique in the history of boys' weeklies. The story "Heir to a Million" by Allan Blair. It certainly appeared to finish abruptly.

(H.L.)

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#### YO-HO! FOR THE SPANISH MAIN

Further to Geoff. Hockley's article on "S. Walkey" in last year's Collector's Digest Annual, readers will no doubt be interested to know that in the A. Press Publication "The Comet" the above-named story is now (November, 1956) appearing in serial form under the title of "Pirate Gold". The story is the same, with all the original characters. The identical Paul Hardy illustration in the "Annual" accompanies the opening instalment ("Comet" No. 426 dated 15 Sept. 1956). The author's name is not given.

L. Packman.

# My visit to Mr. C.H. Chapman

By DONALD WEBSTER

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It was during a visit to a colleague, Mr. Frank Unwin, that I conceived the idea. Why not ask Mr. Chapman, whose drawings I so much admired in my youth (and still do today) if he would grant me an interview as I should be in his vicinity for a few days? I wrote to him and back came the reply - of course he would see me and would I come to tea.

It was a summer's evening as I approached the charming little house at Caversham, and as I passed the roses in the front garden I wondered what my host would be like, although I had seen photographs of him. The door was open but I knocked; and a fine upright gentleman with twinkling blue eyes came up the hall to meet me. Within five minutes we were chatting nostalgically over Red Magnet days and Mr. Chapman was highly amused at my reference to his drawings of Removites with clenched fists and drainpipe trousers. ("They were worn like that in those days y'know" he said.) They are still my favourite drawings for one could pick out each member of the Famous Five more easily than today. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent with their fair hair, and Harry Wharton dark by contrast. He mentioned how he had to make Bunter fatter than Johnny Bull to distinguish them.

All through tea (home made cakes, scones and jam prepared by Mr. Chapman's eldest daughter who, like her two sisters is engaged in the noble profession of nursing) we discussed the Magnet, and then we retired to what Mr. Chapman would refer to as his study. Here were caricatures of Frank Richards, Winston Churchill etc., adorning the walls, and I now sat opposite my host whilst he recounted early days at the A.P. - how he "followed" Arthur Clarke as Magnet artist - and he narrated anecdotes of Messrs. Garrish, Hinton and Down, remarking with a chuckle how on one occasion the latter almost ordered Mr. Chapman out of the office as an intruder until being told who he was. ("Mr. Down was appointed because he was a Public School boy and would add the necessary touch needed at Fleetway House" added C.H.C.)

My host then told me how he had been 'discovered' by Bob Whiter and how he had visited the O.B.B.C. and what wonderful work these Clubs had done to bring together chaps with a common interest in the old papers. Mr. Chapman's favourite Magnet series - like the writer's - is "The Water Lily" Series. He told me how some of the drawings were taken from local scenes and offered to cycle with me and show me, (pity I didn't cycle over!) but that's a pleasure deferred. He still loves cycling and walking, and used to be very fond of boating.

Personally I thought Mr. Chapman was at his prime in the year 1921. His drawings of horses in the Caravanning Series of that year intrigued me. I always admired his portrayal of Peter Todd, and it is interesting to note that in the earlier Magnets Billy Bunter was not always drawn with check trousers.

His passion for cycling nearly had disastrous results, for he was run into one evening by a car, and next thing he knew he was in hospital, and those famous hands were damaged. How lucky for us, he recovered their use! I may add the lady driver never even enquired after his health.

Mr. Chapman went on to recount how he was "in" at the selection of Billy Bunter on T.V. (how proud Frank Richards and he must feel having reached this stage, to see their creation on the T.V. screen).

I brought the question of his long awaited autobiography to Mr. Chapman, and he told me there was only a remote chance of this being written as the Publishers had expected him to subscribe financially towards same and he most certainly did not intend doing so. In any case, added Mr. Chapman, he is still kept extremely busy these days, but later perhaps - .

When I asked Mr. Chapman what he was working on at the moment he handed me a proof of a strip - "The Famous Five" he was drawing for "The Comet". "Nowadays youngsters are too lazy to read, so it is becoming strip cartoons instead" he added, but I gathered Frank Richards is not participating in this venture. Mr. Chapman is still like most of us mystified as to why the Magnet finished at the zenith of its career and thought there wasn't a book today to compare with it.

Well, like all good things, this interview had to come to an end, so after perusing some early Magnets and Penny Populars (one of his favourites) I made my way back to Reading thinking that to "hear much was to learn much" and how fortunate I had been to spend a few hours in the company of one of "nature's gentlemen". May he draw Bunter & Co. for us for many years to come.

(N.B. I'll be down again sometime for that cycle trip, through the Water Lily country, Mr. Chapman - thanks for your hospitality. - D.B.W.)

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Hearty Greetings

FOR A  
BRIGHT AND

Happy  
Christmas

from  
The



Proprietor  
& Staff

of

York Duplicating Services

# THE MAN FROM BAKER STREET



THE FIFTH ANNUAL FEATURE

compiled and contributed

by

MEMBERS OF THE SEXTON BLAKE CIRCLE

## C O N T E N T S

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by Bill Lofts

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It seems hardly believable that this time last year I was very ill and, in order to help me forget my troubles, typing the Blake Circle manuscript from my sick bed. The circumstances under which this - our fifth - edition is being prepared are much happier, and I only hope that the programme will give the reader as much pleasure as it has given me to edit, compile and prepare the manuscript for publication.

And now a few words on the contents themselves.

The Sexton Blake Circle was founded primarily, of course, for the purpose of providing useful statistics resultant upon research into Blake lore; on the other hand many readers have written me during the year expressing their preference for articles. Thus, in order to keep within our set purpose, and at the same time cater for the wishes of so many readers, this edition covers both articles and statistics.

It only remains for me to say on behalf of all members of the Sexton Blake Circle "Seasonable greetings to all our readers, and may you have the best of Health, Luck and Happiness throughout the coming New Year".

LEN PACKMAN, Chairman,  
The Sexton Blake Circle,  
East Dulwich, London, S.E.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE MYSTERY OF MENES

by Josie Packman

\* \* \*

One of the most fascinating and mysterious characters created by that inimitable writer G.H. Teed was Prince Menes, "The Man from Everywhere".

Although appearing in very few stories, such was the magnetism of Menes personality that those featuring him attracted the reader to a degree of absorbing interest equalled by but few other characters of the period.

For me to relate all the known details concerning this Man of Mystery would be quite a task. Fortunately the necessity does not arise, for we have Teed's own description of Prince Menes in the foreword to Union Jack No. 1067 "The Mummy's Twin", a tale of Modern Egypt.

Here, then, is all that is known of the history of Prince Menes:

"Old readers of the UNION JACK will doubtless recall the stories which appeared in this journal a few years ago under the general series title of 'The Vengeance of Ra', and which were comprised under the sub-titles of 'The Man from Everywhere', 'The Secret Hand', 'The Crimson Terror', 'The Invisible Ray', etc.

"For the benefit of new readers, however, it will be as well to give a brief review of the life, training, and character of that strange individual known as Prince Menes, the Man from Everywhere, supreme head of the ancient Order of Ra, which was founded by the earliest of the Pharaohs in Egypt, and which undoubtedly exists in all its ancient purity of ritual and belief at the present time, although its devious workings are necessarily of the most secret nature.

"Unquestionably it is the controlling spirit behind that strange and savage tribe of desert Arabs known as the Sonussi, with whom British troops came into contact during the Great War; and there is good ground for supposing also that the powerful Tut-Ankh-Amen, whose tomb was discovered last year by the late Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Howard Carter, was deeply involved in its activities.

"When the reader remembers that the East is still saturated with all the superstitions and strange practices of the past; that many, many things take place there that are never whispered of outside certain circles, and that the belief of Isis and Osiris is still as strong in Egypt beneath the crust, so to say, as it ever was, it will not be difficult to understand why such a strange human product as Prince Menes could be evolved even today. Also, it can be understood that the beliefs and practices which inspired him were as potent as they had been ten thousand years ago, when they had guided the first head of the Order of Ra, and whose re-incarnation Prince Menes was believed to be.

"In our land we may scoff at the theory of re-incarnation if we will, but after some years in the East the author feels no inclination to do so. There are too many uncanny things there to inspire any such levity of mind when one has once peered beyond the fringe.

"At the time Prince Menes first made his sinister force felt in Europe he was just thirty-five years of age. Up to that time his whole life had been entirely a form of intensive training for the work to which his life was to be

devoted. Born of a strange union - his father was a Russian duke and his mother a Chinese princess - he very early in life imbibed all the lore which two deeply cultured persons of two strange races could teach him. At the age of ten he wrote, read, and spoke Russian and Chinese fluently, and could have passed a senior test in the literature and history of both people.

"At the age of ten he was taken from the grand duke's big palace in the Crimea and given into the care of a priest of the Greek orthodox church. This priest had already secretly become a member of a strange Egyptian order known as the Order of Ra, and through certain studies he had made he was convinced that young Menes was the actual re-incarnation of the Prince Menes who had been the founder and first head of the order.

"As soon as the child came into his possession he fled with him to the Egyptian desert, where he was at once taken under the protection of the order. There he set himself to educate the boy along certain specified lines, and for the next fourteen years he devoted his every moment to this purpose. Being of a more than ordinarily intelligent nature, Menes proved an apt pupil, and by the time he reached the age of twenty-four he was deeply versed not only in the history of the Order of Ra and all its secret practices, but also in most modern languages and the literature and arts of every country that had left any mark on history.

"The next step was travel, and, on leaving Egypt, he and his tutor visited practically every spot on the globe, thus rounding off by direct contact with men and things the mind-training Menes had received.

"For six years they travelled constantly, and, on returning to Egypt, Prince Menes was again sent into the desert, where he became an active novitiate of the Order of Ra.

"He spent four years in deep seclusion with the inner circle of priests of the order, and, after passing through every step of each degree, was finally chosen as the supreme head of the order, and hailed as the direct re-incarnation of the first Prince Menes who had founded the brotherhood ten thousand years before, and also as the spiritual re-incarnation of the god Isis who, prophecy said, would dwell in the bodily temple of the incarnated Menes.

"By that time the direction of the activities of the order was placed in his sole care; and, since prophecy said that somewhere in the world the spirit of the goddess Osiris must also be dwelling in the bodily temple of the re-incarnated Queen of Isis, the prince resolved to search until he had found her.

"But first he resolved to embark on a campaign of vengeance, which was the result of things that had happened ten thousand years before.

"At that time the first Prince Menes was a twin-brother of the ruling Pharaoh, and there had been bitter strife between the two brothers, for the Pharaoh himself had wanted to be the head of the order as well as the ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt.

"But the priests had decided against him, and Menes had been chosen. The Pharaoh had intrigued for his brother's downfall, and, through the machinations of ten nobles, Menes had been betrayed and had been seized and imprisoned in a rock tomb.

"He had lived there for sixty years, and just before he died had issued a

prophecy which was still believed by the present-day members of the order. This prophecy was to the effect that when ten thousand years had passed, Menes, the Pharaoh, and the ten guilty nobles would all be re-incarnated on earth at the same time.

"While it was, of course, believed that each one would be re-incarnated many times during that long stretch of time, it would be ten thousand years before they would all walk on the earth again at the same time.

"And now, with the coming of Prince Menes, it was firmly believed that somewhere out in the world, in some human guise, were the ten nobles who had betrayed him centuries before, and it was Menes' first purpose to seek them out and exact vengeance for his betrayal. As for the Pharaoh who had been his twin-brother, he knew that their spirits would only rest tranquil when they had forgiven each other, and had become reunited in the circle of the Order of Ra.

"With that accomplished, it was his purpose to seek out the woman in whose body dwelt the spirit of Osiris, and when he had succeeded in that he believed that a new golden age would dawn for Egypt.

"Let it not be thought that this day is not looked for by the Egyptians. It is as much a part of their creed as is the belief of the Jews that eventually their race will fulfil the old Biblical prophecy and return to Judea to found a new kingdom of the Jews. And the unrest of recent years in Egypt is nothing more or less than the seething intrigue underneath forcing itself to the surface.

"Whether we believe the present-day Egyptians to be capable of building up a nation is another matter. But they believe it, and it is that belief which has kept alive the secret Order of Ra for ten thousand years - the oldest secret society in the world, and as pure in its ritual today as it was in the beginning.

"Such is Prince Menes. He is a composite of many members of that order, and his activities, while strange and sinister at times, were entirely within the range of human power, which, when controlled by an ascetic adept of the East, can be made to perform things quite beyond the power of the West to understand - as our own scientists today are the first to acknowledge".

Such are the details of Prince Menes, whose subsequent adventures were related in the Union Jack and Sexton Blake Library.

The first two stories, which appeared in 1917, were entitled "A Case of Re-Incarnation" (U.J. No. 722) and "The Secret Hand" (No. 723). These were followed by "The Case of the Crimson Terror" (No. 728) and "The Invisible Ray" (No. 731).

Some years were to elapse before another story of this mysterious Egyptian appeared - in Union Jack No. 1067, already mentioned.

In January 1925 two more Union Jack stories were published, "The Adventure of the Blue Bowl" (No. 1112) and "The House on the Cliff" (No. 1113), the latter being the last story featuring this character in the Union Jack.

Menes, however, joined forces with some of Blake's deadliest enemies, the stories relating to which were published in the Sexton Blake Library (2nd series) under the titles of "The Great Canal Plot" (No. 19) and "The Case of the Mummified Hand" (No. 35). In the latter - and final Prince Menes - story, in which the setting of his evil scheming is the heart of London, Menes makes his last bid for

the achievement of his purpose. For this he enlists the aid of 'The Black Eagle', Prince Wu Ling, Dr. Huxton Rymer and George Marsden Plummer.

But he reckoned without that faint streak of decency still remaining in Rymer, who warns Blake of the plot to kill him and then stage a rising of the malcontents in the Middle East.

Thus these schemes go awry and the mysterious Menes dies by his own hand, in the house of the 'Black Eagle'.

To relate the details of each one of the stories would take too long; furthermore, readers who desire to obtain and read these fascinating yarns would be deprived of much of the pleasure by previous knowledge of the plots.....

Why should this man, who had been so highly educated, have turned from the path upon which he had been set - he, who should have lead his country to greater things?

This is a problem to which we shall never know the answer.

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THE WORK OF GILBERT CHESTER IN THE UNION JACK & SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY

by Charles and Olive Wright

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UNION JACK

<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Character</u>
975	The Case of the Mystery Plantation	Professor Kew
979	The Case of the Bond Street Dentist	Professor Kew
987	The Case of the Great St. Ledger Fraud	Kew and Count Ivor Carlac
1012	The Case of the Petrol Turbine	Gilbert & Eileen Hale
1045	The Case of the Kidnapped Pianist	
1062	The Case of the Haunted Works	G. & E. Hale
1074	Graft!	
1075	The Strangle Hold	
1078	The Great Wembley Mystery	G. & E. Hale
1102	The Fog Fiends	
1111	The House of the Horoscope	
1134	The Affair of the Gold Filled Tooth	
1136	The Affair of the Sheffield Sampler	
1138	The Lift Shaft Mystery	
1140	The Adventure of the Engineer's Blue Print	G. & E. Hale
1142	The Negative Alibi	
1144	Blackmail!	
1152	The Strange Affair of the Willow Pattern Plate	G. & E. Hale
1181	The Return of Professor Kew	Carlac & Kew
1186	The Case of the Phantom Ferry	Carlac & Kew
1188	The Adventure of the Railway Raiders	Kew & E. Hale
1195	200 Fathoms Down	Carlac & Kew
1252	The Mystery of the Master Crook's Messenger	Denise Drew
1275	The Mississippi Mystery	

<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Character</u>
1292	The Man With the Burnt Arm	
1296	The Carrier Pigeon Conspiracy	E. Hale
1319	The Case of the Ghost Ship	G. & E. Hale
1328	The Foot of Fortune	
1334	The Mosaic Mystery	
1340	The Riddle of Ruralong Bay	
1362	The Gnomid	
1374	False Lights	
1376	Certified Insane	G. & E. Hale
1381	Buried Deep	
1387	The Staring Stone	
1400	Fear	
1404	The Coffin Ship	
1413	Gang Justice	
1415	Manhunt	
1423	Flat Fourteen	
1426	Red Tongues	
1428	Carmone Comes Across	
1430	Crooks' Haven	
1434	Phantom Island	
1436	Under Cover	
1444	Sexton Blake Saves Blackpool	
1446	The 'Q' Ship Mystery	
1451	Menace Over Margate	
1477	Aerial Gold!	
1485	The Proud Tram Mystery	G. & E. Hale
1509	The Death Insurance Policy	
1524	Men of the Mask	
1527	Stolen Identity	

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SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY

1st series.

289	The Great Revue Mystery	
304	Solved in 36 Hours	
315	The Secret of the Carpathians	
329	The Third Key	
332	The Secret Millionaire	G. & E. Hale
343	The King's Secret	
351	The Affair of the Country Club	
355	The Secret People	
367	The Case of the Red Cremonas	G. & E. Hale
375	The Riddle of the Registry Office	G. & E. Hale
379	Limited Liability	

2nd series.

4	The Yellow Cat	
14	The Case of the Bogus Bride	G. & E. Hale
17	On the Night Express	G. & E. Hale

<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Character</u>
	<u>SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY</u> 2nd series. (cont'd)	
22	The Affair of the Diamond Star	G. & E. Hale
29	The Affair of the Cross-Roads	G. & E. Hale
37	The Case of the Old Oak Chest	G. & E. Hale
50	The South Coast Tragedy	G. & E. Hale
59	The Case of the Silent Safe Cutter	G. & E. Hale
65	The Excavator's Secret (Reprinted 2nd series No. 620)	G. & E. Hale
81	The Affair of the Kidnapped Crook	G. & E. Hale
94	The Mystery of the Mansion Fire	G. & E. Hale
107	The Mystery of the Four Rooms	G. & E. Hale
120	The Great Salvage Swindle	G. & E. Hale
124	The Secret of the Snows (Reprinted 2nd series No. 651)	G. & E. Hale
131	The Riddle of the West End Hairdresser (Reprinted 2nd series No. 672)	G. & E. Hale
140	The Riddle of the Runaway Car	G. & E. Hale
151	The Fur Raiders (Reprinted 2nd series No. 700)	G. & E. Hale
172	The Riddle of the Garage	G. & E. Hale
174	Down and Out	G. & E. Hale
179	The Black Maria Mystery	G. & E. Hale
190	The Ballot Box Mystery	G. & E. Hale
209	The Motor Show Mystery	G. & E. Hale
220	The Flaming Belt	G. & E. Hale
254	The Green Room Crime	G. & E. Hale
270	The Mystery Gangster	G. & E. Hale
280	Murder on the Marshes	G. & E. Hale
294	Dr. Duvene's Crime	G. & E. Hale
326	The Palais De Danse Mystery	G. & E. Hale
338	The Secret of the Farm	G. & E. Hale
351	The Studio Crime	G. & E. Hale
361	The Murder on the Broads	G. & E. Hale
386	Murder to Music	G. & E. Hale
394	The Crime on the Clyde	G. & E. Hale
407	The Case of the Bogus Prince	G. & E. Hale
419	The Case of the Deportee	G. & E. Hale
435	The Caravan Crime	G. & E. Hale
452	The Salvage Pirates	G. & E. Hale
465	The Tithe War Mystery	G. & E. Hale
490	The Beauty Parlour Murder	G. & E. Hale
494	Murder on the Pier	G. & E. Hale
506	The Abyssinian Mystery	G. & E. Hale
514	The Mystery of the Greek Exile	G. & E. Hale
522	The Secret of the Steppes	G. & E. Hale
531	The Case of the Brass Bound Trunk	G. & E. Hale
539	The Stage Door Crime	G. & E. Hale
546	The Mystery of the Old Curiosity Shop	G. & E. Hale
554	The Talisman's Quest	G. & E. Hale
564	The Man from Moscow	G. & E. Hale

<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Character</u>
<u>SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY</u> <u>2nd series. (cont'd)</u>		
573	The Coronation Mystery	
586	The Charity Fund Mystery	
602	The House on the Cliffs	
611	The Secret of the Sunken Ships	
620	The Excavator's Secret (Reprinted from 2nd series No. 65)	G. & E. Hale
633	The Hire Purchase Crime	
651	The Secret of the Snows (Reprinted from 2nd series No. 124)	
654	The Mystery of the Condemned Cottage	
668	The Monastery Mystery	
672	The Riddle of the West End Hairdresser (Reprinted from 2nd series No. 131)	G. & E. Hale
686	The Depository Mystery	
700	The Fur Raiders (Reprinted from 2nd series No. 151)	
706	The Riddle of the Gas Meter	
716	The Riddle of the Murdered Fisherman	
721	The Black-Out Crime	
743	The Case of the Man on Leave	
- - - - -		
<u>3rd series.</u>		
3	The Mystery of the Hush-Hush Factory	
7	The Crime of Corporal Sherwood	
11	The Riddle of the Missing Fire Watcher	
14	The Man from Norway	
20	The Man who Bailed Out	
23	The Silk Stocking Murder	
30	The Paper Salvage Crime	
34	The Mystery of the Underground Factory	
37	The Victim of the Combine	
42	The Mystery of the Kidnapped Munition Worker	
48	The Soldier who Came Back	
50	Doctor Sinister	
56	The Mystery of Stillwater Mere	
60	The Case of the Repatriated Prisoner	
64	The Riddle of the Kidnapped Prisoner	
66	Previously Reported Missing. Now....	
70	The Mystery of the Demobilised Soldier	
74	The Man who Wouldn't Quit	
78	The Man they Couldn't Buy	
84	The Strange Case of the Footman's Crime	
88	The Sword of Vengeance	
92	Under Police Observation	
99	The House in the Wood	
110	The Mystery of the Confiscated Ship	
123	The Red Van Mystery	
128	The Mystery of the Double Burglary	

<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Character</u>
	<u>SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY</u>	<u>3rd series. (cont'd)</u>
135	A Date with Danger	
156	The Great Currency Racket	
185	The Riddle of the Night Garage	

In accordance with the policy of the Sexton Blake Circle, no details are given regarding the stories in DETECTIVE WEEKLY. As a 'space filler', however, the following titles are the work of Gilbert Chester in the first hundred issues.

10. Pauper's Island	47. The Mystery of the Molten Bell
18. The Netted Man Mystery	55. The Clue of the Extra Ace
24. Decoy!	72. Crook's Convoy
29. The Affair of the Fake Astrologer	85. The Man who Knew Too Much
39. Conspiracy in Cuba	97. The Secret of the S.S. Malvado

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#### SEXTON BLAKE AND - THE PROBLEM OF THE MISSING AUTHORS

by Walter Webb

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Amongst that past generation of Sexton Blake readers whose only desire was to enjoy a good, well-written story, the editorial policy of not giving the authors' names was, perhaps, a matter of indifference. On the other hand, to the more exacting and conscientious reader who liked to bestow praise upon or pass criticism of the originators' work that same policy must have caused much frustration in his, or her, mind, and not a little irritation thereby. Yet, looking back on those days, the surviving Blake enthusiast is inclined to regard that anonymous era with tolerance, and, in some cases, even delight, for it has enabled him to don the mantle of his favourite character and stirred within him a desire to track down those unknown authors of long ago. Many of them have been discovered, but a few still remain hidden where the mists of time are denser and more unpenetrable.

Not that it was decided to publish the Sexton Blake stories anonymously at the very beginning - that idea was to originate in some editor's brain some thirteen years later - for those early tales of the character published in the MARVEL in 1893-4 were credited to the man who wrote them, either under his own name of Harry Blyth, or under the pseudonym of Hal Meredith. Some, but not all, of those stories have been mentioned before in these pages, or in those of the monthly COLLECTOR'S DIGEST, so it might not be a bad idea to give them in full here. As far as I have been able to ascertain these were all the stories of Blake to appear in the half-penny editions of the MARVEL.

No. 6	"The Missing Millionaire"	20 Dec. 1893
7	"A Christmas Crime"	27 Dec. 1893
9	"A Golden Ghost"	10 Jan. 1894
32	"Sexton Blake's Peril"	20 June 1894

Prior to the anonymous era the following authors were named as having

submitted Blake stories to the half-penny issues of the UNION JACK: Harry Blyth (his creator), W. Shaw Rae, Arnold Grahame, Melton Whyte, Herbert Maxwell, Campbell Brown, Paul Herring, Mark Darran, Percival Cooke and Alec G. Pearson.

Intermingled with tales from those old-timers were several published anonymously, indicating a most unsettled policy in the editorial department where Sexton Blake was concerned. The unsigned stories were contained in the following issues: Nos. 43, 62, 69, 88, 191 (the Double Christmas Number for the year 1897), 194, 283, 344 (the Double Christmas Number for the year 1900), 400 and 420. Why the names of the authors of those ten stories were withheld from the knowledge of the reader whilst giving those of the abovementioned was very bewildering and did not make sense at all. Neither did the fact that a story advertised as being written by Alec G. Pearson appeared on publication day with the fictitious name of "Arnold Davis" attached to it. Why try to conceal an author's identity after having already made it known? This happened a few years later in the early pink-cover days, when the price of the UNION JACK had risen to a penny, the story in question being "Sexton Blake's Triumph" (issue No. 51).

All very muddled and confusing, yet, withal, signs that in the immediate future editor William Back and his assistants were concentrating on bringing into their programme of coming Sexton Blake stories a little more stability and decisiveness. Issue No. 59 saw us back to the anonymous stories again with "The Mark of the Thumb", the announcement on the cover giving us the information that it was by the author of "The Silver Arrow". This was the title of the very first UNION JACK published, and was a yarn of the Wild West in the days when the red man roamed the plains to the peril of the whites, and was written by Paul Herring. Lest any Blake enthusiast has been kidded into the belief that this author was also responsible for No. 59, let me disabuse his mind right away - the style of writing in no way resembles Herring's at all. The tracking down of the real writer has not been without its difficulties, for he presents us with our first major problem, being, if one of the lesser known chroniclers, an extremely good one for all that. After comparing "The Mark of the Thumb" with stories entitled "The Phantom of Tregenna" and "The Thames Hawks" (issues Nos. 10 and 70, respectively) both written by T.G. Dowling Maitland, I am convinced that this author wrote the Sexton Blake story already referred to.

Now, since Dowling Maitland is known to have submitted several of the early Blake's a little misunderstanding appertaining to an alleged nom-de-plume of his should be rectified in order that the confusion which rages in and around the Blake saga be quelled a little. It has been stated that Dowling Maitland was a pen-name which concealed the identity of a woman writer, who also wrote as Max Hamilton. This is not correct, for a few years ago the late Mr. H.J. Garrish assured me that Dowling Maitland was the real name of the writer; moreover, that he acted as agent for other writers and was very prolific, writing under a variety of pen-names. After reading "The Silent Witness", by Max Hamilton (U.J. No. 66), I am absolutely convinced that this author and Dowling Maitland were two quite separate individuals. Possibly the latter did submit some of Hamilton's work to various editors and it was inadvertently published under his name, but this, of course, is only a theory. Some years ago Michael Poole, who has written a few Blake stories, mentioned the fact that he recalled an occasion when William Back told him that Cicely Hamilton had written some Sexton Blake stories, and it is practically certain that it was she who concealed her identity so successfully behind that of the masculine Max. Photographs of Cicely are rare, but Hamilton

Edwards published a very good one in the PENNY PICTORIAL (No. 529) dated 17 July 1909, together with a signed article in which she made a plea for an actors' trade union. Described as an actress, Miss Hamilton's photograph showed how she appeared in her middle thirties - a pleasant, rather good-looking woman, with unruly hair, which, according to the lighting on the print, may have been blonde.

The work of W. Murray Graydon does not afford any mystery to the Blake follower as his style is well-known, so he has no place in this narrative; but because a story by him was published under the name of "Arnold Davis", it might be as well to record the fact that "The Mystery of Hilton Royal" (U.J. No. 62) was indeed Graydon's work. This was the Double Christmas Number for the year 1904.

No. 69 was an historical story, for it described Blake's first investigation under the title of "Sexton Blake's First Case". The tracking down of the author of this one proved a very simple matter, for, in an unusual burst of generosity, Willie Back gave out the titles of three past stories by the author for other publications, and from this it was disclosed that the name of the author was Stanhope Sprigg. As the narrative dealt with incidents which took place so early in the career of the investigator, it is worthy of a few comments. Set in London and Plymouth, the story described how Blake, an eighteen year old clerk set out to achieve his life's ambition to become a world famous private detective. Aided by his chum, Will Bastable, he was instrumental in saving his employer, Etheridge Dowson, a lawyer, from death at the hands of an eccentric French criminal, the Baron Adolf de Leonant. In the confines of the lawyer's stuffy office, the youthful detective's thoughts had often strayed to the daughter of his employer - the pretty and winsome Lais Dowson, to whom he had become very devoted and wished to marry: so, doubtless, it was with much gratification that he found himself accepted as a future son-in-law by old Dowson, whose heart was bursting with gratitude through the great service his young employee had tendered him. No mention of the wedding having taken place was made at the conclusion of the story, but readers of Blake's memoirs will recall that Percival Cooke, writing in the Double Christmas Number issue of the "U.J." for the year 1901, referred to Blake as being a married man but did not bring his wife into the story. Did the famous man marry the girl of his dreams after all and was the petite Lais the girl author Cooke referred to in his story "Sexton Blake's Lost Clue"?

Now to the trail of the missing authors again, and we call a halt at "U.J." No. 71 to decide who wrote "The Clue of Three". This was the first Blake story by a narrator new to the detective's records, but he was destined to write quite regularly for a while. I have no hesitation in naming Beverley Kent as being responsible for this work, for once having sampled his distinctive style one cannot fail to recognise it again. I rate him as one of the best and liveliest of all the early Blake chroniclers. He also wrote as H. Winter Gale and Herbert Chandos, but of which three was his correct name, or whether all were pseudonyms, is not known. Authors and editors contacted have never heard of Beverley Kent, but since his first story ever to appear in the pink covered "U.J." was as H. Winter-Gale that probably was his correct name.

No. 77 "On the Track", was a tale of the annual Boat Race, with the author indulging in the hazardous enterprise of forecasting the result. The author - T.G. Dowling Maitland; his winning crew - Cambridge.

No. 79 introduced Jimmy Sykes, a sixteen year old street arab, whom Blake took under his wing and employed as an assistant in the absence of Tinker, who for some reason was not available. The explanation, however, is simple, for when the author was writing the story Tinker had not been created. This was quite a good narrative, and made specially interesting due to the introduction of an adventuress named Lucretia de Valois, who used both her brains and beauty - in both departments of which she was admirably equipped - in order to engulf the assistance of Blake into her cunning schemes for easy riches. Needless to say, she vamped in vain. A matter of interest is occasioned when this story is compared with that which appeared in No. 51. In the latter issue a character named Lucille de Valois was mentioned without actually entering into the story at all, but, whereas she was a girl with good ideals, Lucretia de Valois, of No. 79, was her exact opposite. However, it was not a case of two authors hitting upon an almost similar and unusual name, for Alec G. Pearson wrote both stories.

No. 81, "The Ocean Detective" is a story to which I have to plead to complete failure where the name of the author is concerned. Like G.H. Teed of a later era, he used to take Blake far away from London and its environs, and in this narrative his target was the Cocos Islands. To simplify matters and save unnecessary research should the author's real identity be discovered in the future, I have given him a pen-name of my own - "Peter Drake" - under which nom-de-plume he will be subsequently referred to.

Mark Darran was a well-known writer of the early "U.J." issues, who created the famous Mr. Spearing of Scotland Yard, so a story featuring this character automatically identified the author. But No. 83, entitled "The Tsar's Double" was written before Spearing was created, so it may not be generally known that Darran wrote this one. The author wrote a lot of his work at express speed, so it was natural that the results aimed for were not always satisfactory. This particular effort was a sample of his better work; No. 89, "Two on a Trail" was of the other kind, and a poor yarn. After a run of anonymous stories this had Darran's name on the opening page.

The trail of "The Jungle Boy" and that of "Foes in the Dark", Nos. 85 and 87 respectively, led unerringly to W. Murray Graydon, who was charged and found guilty of being responsible for two inferior stories.

The style of writing in "The Warder Detective" was immediately familiar, and an important clue was discovered when a reference was made at the bottom of page 19 to incidents which had occurred to Blake in the case of "The Ocean Detective". The name - or, rather, that which has been conferred upon him - of Peter Drake was at once apprehended and entered into the records in accordance with the regulations. This was a really well-written narrative of smuggling, set somewhere on the coast, graphically describing how Blake, in the role of a warder at Portland Prison, discovered in the son of a runner of contraband the long-lost heir to an ancient baronetcy.

Our trail now leads us to a barracks in Hounslow where, in issue No. 93, "The Army Detective", Blake joined the ranks as an ordinary soldier under the name of Samuel Blake in order to solve a mysterious crime. Blake found his man, and we find ours - our old friend, Alec G. Pearson, who appeared to know as much of the life of a soldier as he did that of a sailor.

"Detective and Fakir" (No. 95), we observe to be the work of the non-

existent "Arnold Davis", which again differs considerably in style from the two previous stories under the same name. Writing to Mr. Garrish some years ago on this discrepancy, I was told that it was no uncommon practise in the very early days for several authors to write under one pen-name. This was actually conferred upon them whether they liked it or not. For example, if a story written by - say - Alec G. Pearson published under the name of "Arnold Davis" was favourably received then a story due for publication a week or two later by - say - Murray Graydon, appeared with the author's name omitted and that of "Arnold Davis" substituted. It amounted to this: If readers wanted more of Davis, this was the way they got him!

Somewhat bewilderedly, we hit the trail again, now liberally bespattered with shoals of red herrings but somewhat comforted in the fact that since a more settled policy seemed to have been decided upon and that, save for one or two exceptions, the Blake stories were coming along with no name appended at all, there was little fear of transparent fellows like Davis leading us up a blind alley. In this case, the authorship presents us with no problem at all, and, if we cannot use the word transparent in relation to Mark Darran, we can very appropriately in referring to his story, which I found very poor, indeed.

Looking up No. 96 which related the case of the "Champion of the Channel", whom do we see named as the author? Why, none other than that fellow Davis again! Was he Pearson, Graydon or Darran? None of these, and, once again, we are faced with a style unfamiliar to Blake stories of that period. Who was this new author introduced for the first time to the growing band of contributors? We follow Blake through his investigations from London to Dover, and from the style of writing we have strong suspicions of the culprit but no definite evidence by which to convict. By the time we have crossed the channel to Calais we are still casting around somewhat desperately for a lead, and then recall that at one stage of his career Blake was sometimes helped by his friendly rival, Nelson Lee, of Gray's Inn Road. Maybe assistance will be forthcoming from the same source, and so from French soil back to familiar London. What transpires now is that we have at last grasped a lead, and we only allow our fingers to relax that grip in order to send them spinning through a pile of early "Nelson Lees", a pocket-sized detective story paper, with attractive coloured covers. We pause at No. 56, and our quest is ended, for contained herein is the clue which must ultimately lead to the apprehension of the suspected man. We turn to page one, and here beneath the title of "The Case of the Fatal Fight", is the following information: "By the author of "The Missing Gainsborough", "Champion of the Channel", "Vipart Reeves, Detective", etc.". Vipart Reeves! We have surely heard of him, for stories of his exploits appeared in a few of the halfpenny issues of the "U.J." Much more important still, we know that the name of the author was given, and now headlong on the road to success and on a trail suddenly become red-hot, we wade through piles of halfpenny "U.J.'s" until we arrive at No. 267. Title - "To Crush Britain!" featuring Vipart Reeves, detective, written by Arthur S. Hardy. We have got our man, and, if our feelings of elation are particularly pronounced, it is because this case of the missing writer had all the appearance of proving a tricky business, so that our satisfaction in the solving of the mystery was unusually gratifying.

What mystery there was in "The House of Mystery" (No. 97) found no echo in our minds, for not long after following Blake's progress from Hawarden to Chester and into the Pied Bull in Northgate Street we could tell by the style of

authorship who wrote it. Amongst numerous clues that of the introduction of Inspector Harkness of the C.I.D. was a piece of damning evidence, for W. Murray Graydon used him occasionally instead of Widgeon. For the record it may be mentioned that it was during our investigations here that we met motherly old Mrs. Bardell for the first time.

Coming across a story with a title like "The Railway Detective" (No. 98) reminds us instantly of an author named Reginald Wray, who specialised in yarns of the iron way. Some, after only a cursory examination of the story, might conceivably be tempted to attribute this narrative to him, which would be tantamount to convicting on circumstantial evidence alone. They would be wrong, for to our list of Blake authors we must add, not Wray, but Maxwell Scott.

Confidence gives way to doubt when we come to review "Tracked Across Europe" (No. 99), and we are none too sanguine of success. No clues are to be observed in the opening chapters by which the author can be identified, and there is nothing for it but to accompany Blake on his investigations on the Continent, and we are with him all the way from Faversham, in Kent, to Milan. We thrill to his adventures in a balloon drifting over the shimmering waters of the lake of Como, and by this time our suspicions have been aroused almost to a point of certainty on the question of the writer's identity. One by one during the voyage we have, by the simple process of elimination discarded our list of suspected writers - Graydon, Darran, Hardy, Sprigg, Maxwell, Kent, etc., and brought them down to three - Dowling Maitland, Pearson and "Peter Drake". During the journey from Lugano to Paris what time we have followed with absorption the investigator's pursuance of the criminals he is bent on bringing to justice, we find ourselves expecting that glamorous feminine character of a previous adventure, Lucretia de Valois to come on the scene at any moment. Expectations are not realised, but our instincts are stirred to the belief that this was the work of Alec G. Pearson. We have only the style of writing to go on here and that it is the type of story with which the author is generally identified. A wanderer in his early manhood, who travelled far and wide in the days of his naval service, Alec saw much of the world, and it is a matter of genuine regret that he came to write Sexton Blake stories only in the twilight of his days. He was very prolific, and also wrote as Edgar Pickering.

The "U.J." celebrated its one hundredth number by introducing Pedro for the first time, under the title of "The Dog Detective". This case was too easy, even for us amateur sleuths, and after seeing Widgeon's name at the bottom of the first page we were now sufficiently advanced in experience to feel somewhat impatient that our services should be called upon to investigate what appeared - and was - an open and shut case. Really, Trackett Grim could have solved it!

Did Mark Darran ever go to China? One is prompted to give a negative answer to this question because under the title of "Sexton Blake in China" (No. 101), which he wrote, he gave us little insight of the celestial character and the reader felt instinctively that what the author was writing about was scraps he had picked up from information contained in other books and magazines. Atmosphere was completely lacking in a story denuded of those essential factors - authenticity and originality, which combine to give conviction and so go to make up a good story.

Issue No. 102 was not a case of Sexton Blake, detective, but Sexton Blake, naval seaman, with Tinker in the role of ship's boy. If any reader was asked to

guess the name of the author responsible for the title of this number, "The Navy Detective", he would probably guess correctly. Alec G. Pearson was, of course, the name of the writer, and for this sort of yarn no man could be better fitted to write it than he. On the other hand, W. Murray Graydon may not have been a member of the London Fire Brigade, but he was instrumental in Blake joining that fine body, which resulted in No. 103 being published under the title of "The Fireman Detective".

It is now time for us to hit the trail again, and to all appearances it is going to prove a very long one - no less than a couple of journeys round the face of the earth - as observe the title, "Twice Round the World" (No. 104). But, no! We have just commenced the second chapter and what do we see? A reference by Tinker to their previous adventure on the Cocos Islands. Then another reference - the author's allusion to Tinker as "a young imp!" - an expression used several times both in the title at present under survey and in that of the Cocos Islands story. Much as we would like to accompany Blake on what was likely to prove a fascinating trip round the globe, we refrain, for our journey is no longer necessary; so contenting ourselves with seeing him off to New York on the first leg of his long journey we enter the name of "Peter Drake" in our record books as the author responsible for the detective's departure.

Following his experiences first as prison warder, a soldier, a sailor, and a fireman in the L.F.B., Blake joined the police force. In "Sexton Blake, P.C." (No. 105), Mr. Spearing of Scotland Yard was introduced for the first time, so perhaps it is superfluous to name the author.

No. 106 has no place in our records, for it was a school story; yet, since the incomparable Charles Hamilton wrote it for inclusion in our pages, it well merits our appreciation, and we do not begrudge the break in the run of the Blake stories for its insertion.

We were not unduly extended in our solving of the mystery of "The Cab-Driver Detective" (No. 107), for, being fairly familiar with the good work of Maxwell Scott, it was soon evident that he was responsible for the title. No. 108 "Sexton Blake's Coup", was also one for us, for, thanks to Mr. Spearing's inclusion in the affair, we were able to detect the writer in double-quick time.

Who wrote "The Mechanic Detective" (No. 109)? Here we had another style of writing which seemed vaguely familiar, but which we had not as yet experienced in the Blake stories. We follow our famous investigator as, in order to solve the mysterious disappearance of a certain Mr. Jasper Deane, he obtains a post of employment at the Vulcan Electrical Engineering Works, which large concern the missing man owns. Although we remain interested spectators as Blake brings the case to a successful conclusion in the face of great odds, and the style of writing gains in familiarity as the finale is approached, we are disunited in our opinions of the real culprit. The finger of suspicion points strongly to John Stanton, as he was known when writing complete stories for the pink covered "U.J." or as the famous Henry St. John when contributing to certain other boys' papers. It is certain that this author with the stupendous output did contribute several Blake stories at this period, but if, indeed, this was one of them, it must be confessed that it fell far below his usual high standard. Whilst the shadows of doubt flicker uncertainly in our minds, we refrain from pressing the charge, and with a verdict of case not proven against the author, we confess to partial failure here, and turn our attention to our next case.

This is No. 110, entitled "The Jockey Detective", and here the method of writing was immediately obvious from the first chapter. Long before we joined the gay throng streaming along the road to Epsom, amid the jingling of harness and the clatter of horse-hoofs, to watch Tinker ride the wonder horse, Mayfly, to victory in the Derby, we had found our man, for that forceful, exuberant style, which was so characteristic of all his work, could mean none other than that Beverley Kent wrote it.

Reading in the July - September 1941 issue of "The Story Paper Collector" recently I came across a condensed version of an article "by a former Amalgamated Press Editor", entitled "Some Former Boys' Writers", in which the writer, indulging in a few reminiscences, mentioned certain authors whose names he recalled vividly to mind. Among them was - to use his own words - "Beverley Kent - this was not his real name - who claimed to have introduced Pedro into the Sexton Blake stories, though that claim was contested". This, of course, justified our suspicions that Beverley Kent was a pseudonym and not the correct name of the writer, but it only serves to increase our curiosity as to his real identity. He took Blake and Tinker all over the world during his short career as a chronicler of their exploits, and some of the foreign parts he seemed to know very well were India, Australia, South America, Baku, Corsica and Newfoundland, besides many of the lesser known countries of the world. He seemed to have made a special study of crime, for one gets the fixed impression that he was at one time an interested spectator at the criminal courts, for very often he wrote a story introducing Blake in a dramatic court-room scene. The following titles bear out what I mean: "Sexton Blake, K.C." (No. 135), "Struck Off the Rolls" (No. 178), "The Case of the Coroner's Court" (No. 200), "Sexton Blake at Court" (No. 234), "Sexton Blake, Jurymen" (No. 332), and "Witness for the Defence" (No. 416). So acquainted did he seem to be with so many places dotted about the face of the globe that I wonder - was he Ernest Brindle, famous author and journalist, who was appointed special and war correspondent on the Daily Mail in the autumn of 1903? I recall at least one serial he wrote for one of the Harmsworth papers, and that was reprinted in the Boys' Friend Library in May 1913, under the title of "Shan Chung's Conspiracy" (No. 190), under the nom de guerre of 'Peter Bayne'. He was a very prolific contributor of short stories and articles to the various magazines and periodicals. During the Russo-Japanese war he was attached to the Second Japanese Army at the front under General Otu in the last six months of the campaign, and visited all parts of the world. Admittedly, a shot in the dark, but even random shots have been known to find their billet. Was Beverley Kent really Ernest Brindle? What a pity that A.P. editor was not a little more informative! I have a shrewd suspicion that he was a one-time editor of the 'Gem', for I seem to recollect that paper publishing serials under both the names of Brindle (as Peter Bayne) and Beverley Kent, so he would be bound to have known them, for in the S.P.C. article he admitted remembering Brindle quite clearly, as well as Kent. It might be argued that if the editor knew Beverley Kent to be Brindle why didn't he say so then? The answer could be that the author may have been alive in 1931, when the article was originally written, and may not have wished to be associated with the stories he wrote in his apprenticeship. Faced with this possibility, the editor would not have felt justified in disclosing the information.

There is a particular fascination about stories of the stage, embracing as they do the lives of that grand troupe of entertainers to whose great profession many have aspired only to experience the bitter heartache of disillusionment. "The Actor Detective" (No. 111) was not a good story of its class, though we are

less concerned with this fact than that of the name of the man who wrote it. We follow the whole case through from its beginning, when, after witnessing the rehearsal of the new play 'The Love Light', at the Monument Theatre, we see Aston Revelle, the author, collapse into Sexton Blake's arms, dead, after smoking a poisoned cigarette, to the climax, when the celebrated detective, as the 'promising new actor, Sheldon Blake', denounces Max Merrivale, the principal comedian, as the murderer. But we do not share Blake's triumph, for this story reminds us naught of the style of any author we have read in the pages of the "U.J." before. Seeking inspiration, we indulge in the process of elimination, recalling to and dismissing from our minds the names of authors who were at one time connected with the stage and have been mentioned in relation to the publishing of old boys' books - A.S. Hardy, Henry Farmer, Geo R. Sims, Atherley Daunt (who, despite strong suspicions to the contrary, was definitely not Hardy), William J. Elliott, Lewis Carlton, Thomas Burke, and one or two more, but we are satisfied that the man we seek was none of these. With complete failure staring us in the face, we turn our attention to the pages of the 'Marvel', and in the tales of Frank Dudley, detective, we find the similarity of style for which we have been seeking. Was Alfred Barnard, the author, an actor, or in any way connected with the stage? Mr. Garrish was able to tell me some years ago that Barnard, who is now dead, was a politician and publicist; and in the now defunct film weekly, 'Pictures and the Picturegoer' (No. 157, vol XI), published w.e. 17 Feb. 1917, his photograph appeared on page 437. As we look upon his likeness, thrown back at us from the page and note the high forehead, the firm mouth, the calm, steady gaze of the deep-set eyes, we know we are looking at the face of a once more than ordinarily intelligent man. But it is the information beneath the photograph which presents us with an important clue - 'Editor of the Era'. The article into which the photograph of Alfred Barnard was inserted was written on the occasion of a luncheon given at the invitation of 'Era' to mark the occasion of the recent appointment of Mr. T.P. O'Connor, M.P., as the new British film censor. Alfred Barnard was chairman at that luncheon, which comprised of 160 guests representing leading members of the film trade, dramatic critics, and others. So Barnard was connected with theatrical life, after all! And was there any significance in the fact that, in the story, Blake sent Tinker to the offices of the theatrical paper, the 'Era', in order to hunt up every file which might furnish important information as to where a certain crooked actor once appeared on the stage? Also, was there anything to read between the lines in the preceding issue to "The Actor Detective", when the editor wrote a few words praising a story by Barnard which was appearing that same week in 'Pluck', and then went on to say that Alfred Barnard's work was familiar to most "U.J." readers? Editors very seldom praise the work of authors other than those whose stories have appeared in their own publications, and the fact that those words were printed on a level with a reduced facsimile of the cover of the story which we believe Barnard to have written seems significant, to say the least.

Born in Plaistowe in 1878, the author left the A. Press in 1911 to become editor of "The Era". In 1918 - 20 he was an editor on the staff of the Daily Mirror, and when his appointment terminated there, he took over the proprietorship of "The Encore", which periodical he edited between 1928 - 30. Well, much as we would like to insert the name of Alfred Barnard against the title of the story we resist the temptation in the interests of accuracy, for little elements of doubt have not been entirely disposed of.

We did not need to accompany "Sexton Blake in Africa" (No. 112), for when

we heard about Matthew Quin, the wild beast hunter, being involved in the many adventures and escapades of Blake and his assistants we knew Murray Graydon had been at work again. Incidentally, the author must have nurtured a soft spot in his heart for this character, for he was to use him right up to the time of his retirement, many years hence.

Our attention being distracted to the fact that a story of Blake, entitled "The School-Master Detective" was running in serial form in the penny 'Boys' Friend', we note that Herbert Maxwell is given as the author, and, there being no mystery here to warrant our intervention we return to the "U.J." again. No copy of No. 113, "The Post Office Detective", being available, the following issue, which was the Double Christmas Number for 1905, entitled "Sexton Blake's Christmas", claims our attention, but briefly, because when we read of Mr. Spearing being involved we know who wrote it - Mark Darran, of course. No. 115 - "In Double Disguise" - no copy again, so to the last story of 1905, "The River Police Detective" (No. 116), featuring Mr. Spearing and a most appropriate time to lay down the pen for a while and take a well earned vacation following our investigations of the missing authors.

Looking back, we have every reason to feel pleased with what we have achieved. True, there have been failures, but our successes have far outnumbered them, and these setbacks may be only of a temporary nature, after all. Referring to our notes, we observe that the following questions have still to be answered satisfactorily: (1) Who was 'Peter Drake'? (2) Did Henry St. John really write "The Mechanic Detective"? (3) Were Beverley Kent and Ernest Brindle one and the same person? (4) If not, was H. Winter Gale the real name of the former? (5) In the event of an affirmative reply, and in view of the several stories in which many chapters were utilised for the purpose of relating certain proceedings in the law courts, was Winter Gale a barrister in addition to being an author? (6) Was Alfred Barnard, politician and writer on international law, the author of "The Actor Detective"? Much food for thought here, and, truly, no deeper mysteries were conceived in the stories of Sexton Blake than those which are there for the solving around them!

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### POPULAR CHARACTERS IN THE SEXTON BLAKE SAGA

by LEONARD PACKMAN

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In compiling the following, I have only included the 'fixed' characters who were in the limelight at one time or another. In other words, characters whose creators used them on more than one occasion. It will also be observed that several well-known names have been omitted from this list, the reason being that the creator cannot be definitely established.

<u>Character</u>	<u>Creator</u>
Ah Wo	Reid Whitley
Barry	Allan Blair
Beaudelaire	Lewis Jackson
Beaumaron (Count)	George H. Teed
Begge (Humble)	Andrew Murray

Character	Creator
Belford (Sergeant)	Anthony Parsons
Bennett ('Punch')	Maurice B. Dix
Bierce (Father)	Lewis Jackson
Bierce (Fifette)	Lewis Jackson
Black Eagle (The)	George H. Teed
Black Rat (The)	George H. Teed
Black Trinity (The)	Anthony Skene
Bonalli (Count. 'The Owl')	Andrew Murray
Brand (K.C., M.P.)	Mark Osborne
Brim (Peter. 'The Spider')	Ladbroke Black
Carlac (Count Ivor)	Andrew Murray
Cartier (Middle. Yvonne)	George H. Teed
Cavendish (Eustace)	Edwy S. Brooks
Champion (Sir Philip)	Robert Murray
Chanways (Lord Montague)	John G. Brandon
Charon (Bertrand)	Pierre Quiroule
Christmas (Captain)	Stacey Blake
Council of Eleven (The)	George H. Teed
Council of Nine (The)	Mark Osborne
Cranston (Bliss)	Andrew Murray
Creed (Laban)	William M. Graydon
Crime Minister (The)	Robert Murray
Criminals Confederation (The)	Robert Murray
Cynos (Paul)	Robert Murray
Dack (Captain)	John Hunter
Dass (Gunga)	H. Gregory Hill
Death (Miss)	Gwyn Evans
De Ferre (Ysabel)	Robert Murray
Delisle (Claire)	F. Addington Symonds
Dene (Gloria)	Anthony Skene
Despard (Camille 'The Girl')	George H. Teed
Dexter (Aubrey)	Mark Osborne
Dolland (Dirk. 'The Bat')	Robert Murray
Double-Four (The)	Gwyn Evans
Doyle (Cavendish)	William M. Graydon
Drell (Elspeth)	Earle Danesford
Fane (Hamilton)	Mark Osborne
Fawn (Fenlock)	William M. Graydon
Ferraro (Doctor)	Coutts Brisbane
Fetherston (Reggie)	George H. Teed
Flanagan (Ted)	Warwick Jardine
Fortune (Julia)	Anthony Skene
Furg (Jim. 'The Fur Man')	Stanley Gordon
Galante (Marie)	George H. Teed
Gale ('Glory')	Mark Osborne
Gargoyle (The)	Anthony Skene
Grant ('Granite')	Pierre Quiroule
Graves ('Uncle')	George H. Teed
Griff	Christopher Stevens
Hale (Eileen)	Gilbert Chester

<u>Character</u>	<u>Creator</u>
Hale (Gilbert)	Gilbert Chester
Hanson (Ruff)	Gwyn Evans
Harfield (Roxane)	George H. Teed
Harker (Inspector)	Lewis Jackson
Harmon (Joe)	Stanton Hope
Hoang Ho	Robert Murray
Hong Loo Soo	George H. Teed
Jannsen (The 'Moonslaver')	Stanley Gordon
Jones (Julius)	Gwyn Evans
Julie (Mademoiselle)	Pierre Quiroule
Karl (King)	Gwyn Evans
Kelk (Krock)	Arthur Patterson
Kestrel (Leon)	Lewis Jackson
Kew (Professor)	Andrew Murray
Krantz (Frau)	Anthony Skene
Kurtin (Dr. Eldred)	Michael Poole
Lawless (Hon. John)	Andrew Murray
Lee (Nelson)	Maxwell Scott
Lennard (Inspector)	Edwy S. Brooks
Lepperman (Doctor)	Michael Poole
Lobangu	Cecil Hayter
Lord (Ferrers)	Sidney Drew
Losely (Sir Richard)	Cecil Hayter
Madrano (Fifito)	Lewis Jackson
Maitland (Kate. 'Broadway Kate')	Mark Osborne
Maitland (Ezra Q.)	Mark Osborne
Marinotte	Lewis Jackson
Marl (Muriel)	George H. Teed
Marsh (John)	Mark Osborne
Martin (Inspector)	Mark Osborne
Men Who Were Dead (The)	Gwyn Evans
Menes (Prince)	George H. Teed
Mist (Mr)	Gwyn Evans
Nantucket ('Trouble')	Andrew Murray
Nasmyth (Olga)	Lewis Jackson
Nihil	Anthony Skene
Nipper	Maxwell Scott
Nirvana	George H. Teed
O'Flynn (Mike)	Stanton Hope
Onion Men (League of)	Gwyn Evans
Oyani	Anthony Skene
Page (Derek 'Splash')	Gwyn Evans
Palmer (Hammerton)	George H. Teed
Pedro	William M. Graydon
Perrison (Archie)	George H. Teed
Plummer (George Marsden)	Michael Storm
Potter (Jim)	George H. Teed
Purvale (Hon. R.S.V.)	John G. Brandon
Raven (The)	F. Addington Symonds
Reece (Mr)	Robert Murray

<u>Character</u>	<u>Creator</u>
Reece (Professor Jason)	Robert Murray
Rhodes (Dusty)	Stanton Hope
Ribart (Dr. Gorlax)	Lewis Jackson
Rymer (Dr. Huxton)	George H. Teed
Sadler (Sir Gordon)	George H. Teed
San	George H. Teed
Satira (Doctor)	Robert Murray
Scorpion (The)	Maxwell Scott
Semiramis	Lewis Jackson
Severance (June)	George H. Teed
Shadow Club (The)	Gwyn Evans
Shadow (The)	Robert Murray
Shanghai Jim	Lewis Jackson
Smith (Mr.)	Robert Murray
Somerton (Algy)	George H. Teed
Spearing (Will)	Mark Darran
Steele (Adrian)	Andrew Murray
Tallon (Dearth)	Warwick Jardine
Tench (Sam)	John Hunter
Thomas (Inspector)	George H. Teed
Tinker	Herbert Maxwell
Trent (Mary)	George H. Teed
Twyford (Cora)	Cedric Wolfe
Vali Mata-Vali	George H. Teed
Vedette (Jules)	Andrew Murray
Venner (Superintendent)	Anthony Parsons
Von Kravitch (Baron)	George H. Teed
Waldo (Rupert)	Edwy S. Brooks
We-Wee	W. Shaw Rae
Wibley (George 'Flash')	John G. Brandon
Wicketshaw (Basil)	William M. Graydon
Widgeon (Inspector)	William M. Graydon
Withers ('Bigg Bill')	John G. Brandon
Wu Ling (Prince)	George H. Teed
Zenith (Monsieur)	Anthony Skene

The following authors names in inverted commas are pen-names. The real name is shown in parenthesis.

"Pierre Quiroule"	(W.W. Sayer)
"Earle Danesford"	(F. Addington Symonds)
"Stanley Gordon"	(Stanley Gordon Shaw)
"Michael Storm"	(Charles Ignatius Semphill)
"W. Shaw Rae"	(Ernest Treeton)
"Herbert Maxwell"	(Herbert Lomax)
"Maxwell Scott"	(Dr. John Staniforth)
"Lewis Jackson"	(Jack Lewis)
"Sidney Drew"	(Edgar Joyce Murray)
"Robert Murray"	(Robert Murray Graydon)
"Mark Darran"	(Norman Goddard)
"Mark Osborne"	(John W. Bobin)
"Allan Blair"	(William J. Bayfield)

"Coutts Brisbane" (R. Coutts Armour)  
 "Reid Whitley" (R. Coutts Armour)  
 "Stanton Hope" (W.E. Stanton-Hope)

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GILBERT CHESTER

The following "Union Jack" stories are also the work of Gilbert Chester. This information has been made available through the courtesy of Mr. H.W. Twyman, late editor of the "Union Jack" and "Detective Weekly".

No. 1027	The Case of Tinker's Tourist Trophy		
1155	Homeward Bound	(Criminals Confederation)	
1158	Landed At Last	{ " " }	
1163	Gone to Earth	{ " " }	
1164	Reece's Hold-Up	{ " " }	
1165	North of 70°	{ " " }	
1175	Reece's Revenge	{ " " }	
1185	The Marriage of Jason Reece	(Criminals Confederation)	
1191	Dirk Dolland's Crime	{ " " }	
1196	The Great Round-Up	{ " " }	

The stories featuring the Criminals Confederation are due to the fact that Robert Murray was indisposed at that time.

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I have just obtained a second-hand copy of a book entitled "The Riddle of the Red Dragon", by Gwyn Evans. The original of this story is Union Jack No. 1365 ("The Mistletoe Milk Mystery", but in the book the characters' names have been altered.

Another book in my possession contains two stories, the first by Gwyn Evans and the second by G.H. Teed. The first story is "The Clue of the Missing Link", a reprint of U.J. No. 1167 "The Case of the Missing Link"; the second is "The Mystery of the Painted Slippers", reprinted from U.J. No. 1161 with the same title.

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THE BEST IS YET TO COME

A Review of the Fourth Series

by

ERIC COPEMAN

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WITH the welcome advent of the Fourth Series following the surprise announcement that there would be three issues per month instead of two, readers of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY waited expectantly.

Nor have they been disappointed. For six months the standard has been kept consistently high and we are continually promised that "the heat is yet to come". How much better can the Blake yarns get?

The series began in January and sight of the first three case-books proved there were really great things in store. New Series, No. 1 brought with it a breath of nostalgia, being written by the author of the original No. 1, G.H. Teed, but though we scanned the pages somewhat apprehensively, it was no reprint but a brand-new yarn, entitled HUXTON RYMER'S BRAZILIAN COUP. An editorial announcement gave us the amazing news that several unpublished stories by earlier Blake writers were being prepared for release.

No. 2, though appearing under the by-line of "Berkeley Gray", was easily recognisable as the work of our old friend, Edwy Searles Brooks, yielding at last to readers' persistent demands and supplying us with the long-awaited story, SEXTON BLAKE VERSUS NORMAN CONQUEST.

No. 3 was by Anthony Parsons, being one of the best Indian yarns he has turned out to date, THE CASE OF THE HIMALAYAN ADVENTURER, and re-introducing that old-time favourite Gunga Dass.

To our way of thinking, the new series could not have been launched more effectively and our only worry was whether the new Editor could keep it up!

February's releases showed that he could. No. 4 was written by Gwyn Evans. Its title, SPLASH PAGE -- CONVICT, hinted at the human interest in this story. Blake throughout was at his brilliant best, while Inspector Coutts has never been more sympathetically revealed than in this battle between duty and friendship.

No. 5 was a brand-new tale by John Creasey, whose last Blake story was written round about the time the first Toff novels came on to the market. In VOLCANO OF TERROR, Creasey teams Blake with the popular Doctor Palfrey, head of Department Z, taking them to New Zealand (a country he visited in 1951) during the eruption of Mount Ngauruhoe.

No. 6, by John Hunter, featured Captain Dack of the "Mary Ann Trinder", and was called SUNK WITHOUT TRACE. This story provided Blake with one of the finest sea mysteries he has yet been called upon to solve.

Noticeable in all these yarns was that both Blake and Tinker appeared early in the plot, this apparently being also part of the new editorial policy. Also in the two "home" stories (those by Berkeley Gray and Gwyn Evans) both Mrs. Bardell and Pedro were well-featured.

March issues were rushed by readers old and new and it was difficult to get copies unless they were on order. The covers, all now the work of Eric R. Parker, have proved to be some of his very finest work, either Blake or Tinker having personally appeared on four out of the first six of the new series. Surely a good omen?

No. 7 was written by Gilbert Chester, coming by special request from retirement to pen one of his best stories, GILBERT HALE'S GREAT SWINDLE.

No. 8, written by Richard Goyne and entitled THE PADRE'S DILEMMA, teamed Blake unexpectedly with Goyne's well-known thriller character, the Reverend Peter Eversleigh ("The Padre"). The story was written with terrific zest and provided a really smashing climax.

No. 9 by newcomer W. Howard Baker, was called THE GIRL FROM EAST BERLIN, and was a masterpiece of breathless non-stop action and suspense. Baker's Blake

is now the "old Blake" we know so well, while his knowledge of post-war Germany has never been more clearly revealed.

Three months and still the standard as high as ever!

April issues appeared on time, giving readers more treats. No. 10 was by Ladbrooke Black and called MR. FREED FINDS TROUBLE. Mr. Freed wasn't the only one. Sexton Blake had his share, too. In this story Tinker and Pedro really came into their own when the going was tough. It was a touch of the old days to hear Tinker's occasional lapse (always a peculiarity of this author) when he addressed his beloved gov'nor as "Mister Blake"! But there was no lapse about the story; it was one of the author's best and should have been printed years ago.

No. 11 by Martin Frazer was called THE CASE OF THE MURDERED GOALKEEPER, and was a football yarn with a difference.

No. 12 by Walter Tyrer, THE FILM STAR'S VENGEANCE, brought with it a genuine breath of the British Film Industry as well as real detective work that reminded us of this writer's earlier successes, and particularly "The Curse of the Carringtons".

May releases were as follows:

No. 13, written by Lewis Jackson, re-introduced in a brilliantly-conceived story the Master Mummer, Leon Kestrel. It was called KESTREL'S BOLDEST BLUFF.

No. 14 was written by Simon Harvester, writer of several novels of mystery and espionage, and was his first Blake story. With a European setting, its title was DEATH OF A TRAITOR.

No. 15 by Rex Hardinge brought about the welcome return of Sir Richard Losely and Lobangu and was entitled LOBANGU AND THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN. One of Hardinge's best African stories to date.

June couldn't come soon enough.

No. 16 (not a reprint but a new story) was GRANITE GRANT'S PERIL and featured Granite Grant and Mademoiselle Julie against a setting of Tito's Yugo-Slavia.

No. 17 (much to our delight) was written by none other than Dennis Wheatley, who first declared his admiration for Sexton Blake in print in Detective Weekly No. 313. His story was entitled GREGORY SALLUST'S MISSION, but it was a mission that Blake completed (most effectively too) when Gregory was put out of action with a dislocated spine. The thrills are maintained until the final words, "Mission accomplished."

No. 18 was by John Drummond, with the simple title of THE ESTATE AGENT'S SECRET camouflaging one of the best stories of deduction we have yet read.

Eighteen issues. Six months of the Fourth Series of the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY and every yarn a winner! And such perfect balance! Each month, editorial policy now seems to be to feature one story by an established "old-timer", one by a former writer now engaged mainly turning out best-selling novels, and one by a modern Blake author. That way, to my mind, everyone is satisfied -- and the blending couldn't be beaten.

We notice in the announcements for July a story by Richard Standish who

who gave us that CASE OF SERGEANT BILL MORDEN some years ago. Also one by George E. Rochester whose RIDDLE OF THE MISSING WARDRESS made such excellent reading. And one by old-timer Anthony Skene re-introducing to readers the notorious "ZENITH THE ALBINO".

If this is what the new editorial policy can bring to us we want to be the first to express our appreciation.

If.

Yes -- such a little word. If.....

If dreams came true.

Well, maybe some day they will. Maybe some day the books I've reviewed will be written. Or even some of them.

If only we could get the authors to co-operate and the Editor to launch the "New Era of Blake" with real enthusiasm.....

If.....

Well, it doesn't hurt to dream about it, does it?

\* \* \* \* \*

THEY ALSO WROTE OF BLAKE

by BILL LOFTS

\* \* \*

Following my recent article in the Collectors' Digest on Mr. H.W. Twyman, I have received a number of letters from readers requesting the names of authors whose work in the Union Jack - for the period covered by Mr. Twyman's records - has hitherto been untraced. These letters have been answered and the information supplied; but this has led to further correspondence, all written in the same strain, to the effect that certain names have never been heard of before and do I know anything about them?

Well, this little article is intended primarily for the benefit of those correspondents, but I am quite sure that all Blake enthusiasts will find it both interesting and informative. I should add that one or two names are already well known but not in connection with Blake.

The first unfamiliar name is associated with U.J. No. 988 "Sexton Blake in South America". This is a story featuring Sir Richard Losely and Lobangu and, until now, credited to Cecil Hayter. The author of this story was, in fact, a man named SAPT. Unfortunately, despite hard thinking, Mr. Twyman could not recall to mind this writer nor even his Christian name, and although Walter Webb tells me there was a Union Jack writer in 1903 (U.J. No. 9) named W. SAPTE it is very doubtful as to there being any connection. I might add that U.J. No. 9 "Through Peril to Fortune" is not a Blake story.

The next name is Dr. W.H. JAGO, the author of U.J. No. 1055 "The Scarab of Ament-Aba" (introducing the character Dr. Gorlex Ribart). Dr. Jago was a qualified M.D. on a merchant ship and had travelled all round the world. He was a man who had experienced many strange and unusual incidents, and therefore just

the type to spin a yarn of interest to Union Jack readers. Again I am indebted to Walter Webb for informing me that Dr. Jago wrote quite a few pieces for the U.J. Supplement. Mr. Twyman tells me that Dr. Jago only wrote the one Union Jack story and then went back to his ship - to sail away and never be seen again.

U.J. No. 1095 "The Adventure of the Black Spider" was written by a man named TYLER. No details as to this author are known, for Mr. Twyman cannot recollect him at all. It certainly wasn't Walter TYRER, for this writer is well-known to Mr. Twyman.

The next two names are known but not in the Blake field, although the second has written other Blake yarns on occasion. The first is 'Anthony Baron' who wrote "The Secret of the Dutch Garden" (U.J. No. 1107). 'Anthony Baron' was the pen-name of Augustus Baker, who was then the sub-editor of Newnes "Tubby Haig Library". The second is John Nix Pentelow, the author of U.J. No. 1108 "The Ghost Raisers". At one time editor of the "Magnet", Pentelow wrote for various papers under the pen-names of 'Jack North', 'John West', 'Richard Randolph', 'Randolph Ryle' and 'Harry Huntingdon' ("Chums"). Pentelow is perhaps best known (as 'Jack North') for his stories of Wycliffe and Haygarth schools.

Another unfamiliar name for the writer of U.J. No. 1124 "The Disguise of Doom" is Noel WOOD-SMITH, although he was very well known at the A. Press. Wood-Smith was second in command to Maurice Down, editor of the "Magnet", and wrote quite a few Greyfriars stories for that paper. He also wrote for other papers under the name of 'Norman Taylor'. Other U.J. stories written by him were "The Norman Duke Mystery" (No. 1253) and "The Needle Man" (No. 1439), both of which had the author's name given as 'Norman Taylor'. Noel Wood-Smith was also a clever inventor. I regret to say that I am informed he died 18 months ago.

Union Jack Nos. 1146 "The Scarecrow Clue" and 1330 "The Green Flash" were written by a certain YOUNG. Here again I am afraid that Mr. Twyman could not recollect him, and so, it seems, this author must remain in obscurity.

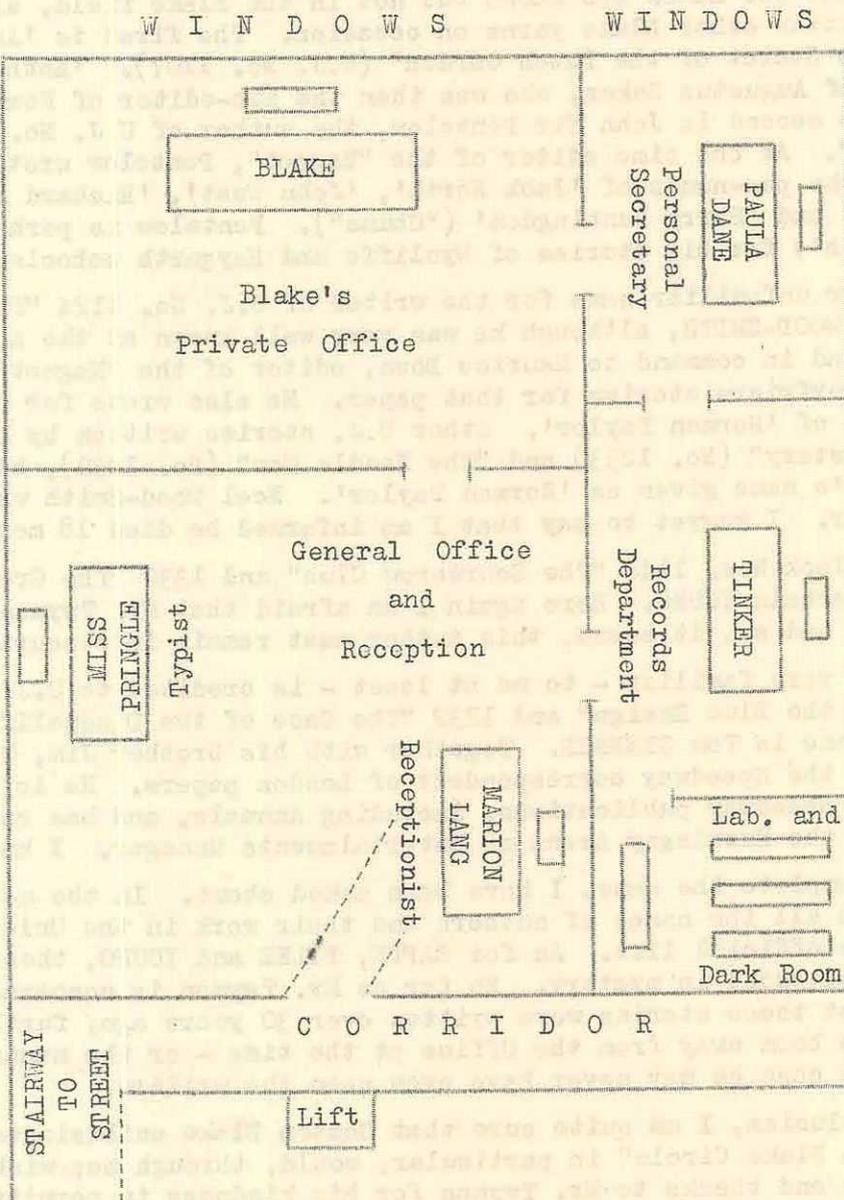
A name very familiar - to me at least - is credited to U.J. Nos. 1223 "The Puzzle of the Blue Ensign" and 1232 "The Case of the Disqualified Derby". The author's name is Tom STENNER. Together with his brother Jim, Tom Stenner has for years been the Speedway correspondent of London papers. He is also the publisher of many Speedway publications, including Annuals, and has recently been connected with the Harringay Arena as Entertainments Manager. I know him well.

This completes the names I have been asked about. In the near future I hope to publish all the names of authors and their work in the Union Jack covered by Mr. Twyman's official list. As for SAPTE, TYLER and YOUNG, these I am afraid will remain enshrouded in mystery. So far as Mr. Twyman is concerned it must be pointed out that these stories were written over 30 years ago; furthermore, Mr. Twyman may have been away from the Office at the time - or the manuscript sent by post - in which case he may never have even seen the writers.

In conclusion, I am quite sure that Sexton Blake enthusiasts in general, and the "Sexton Blake Circle" in particular, would, through me; wish to express their gratitude and thanks to Mr. Twyman for his kindness in permitting his Union Jack records to be made known to us, and also for the valuable information he has supplied for publication in the Collectors' Digest and Collectors' Digest Annual.

Postscript: This interesting plan of Sexton Blake's offices in Berkeley Square was given to me when I visited him at Fleetway House last September. (H.L.)

B E R K E L E Y   S Q U A R E



THE outbreak of enthusiasm for sports that, taking St. Frank's by storm, terminated in five cricket Test matches and a Sports Day at Stamford Bridge was a great moment in the history of that famous school. There is an element of doubt as to who originated the idea of a Sports Meeting. Undoubtedly Edgar Fenton had much to do with it; and it was due, in no small measure, to the leadership of the St. Frank's captain that the meeting was such an unqualified success. The notion to hold a series of cricket Test matches between Young Australia and Young England emanated from Dick Hamilton, better known to the Junior School as Nipper. Fenton gave it his whole-hearted support, as did William Napoleon Browne of the Fifth; and it was the latter who was greatly responsible for the final Test taking place on Lord's famous ground. It is not possible in the limited space at our disposal to recount the events leading up to the Lord's match, nor the various adventures that befell the boys of the school. The whole is detailed admirably by Edwy Searles Brooks in the Nelson Lee Library, First New Series Nos. 1-11.

There can be no doubt that the "Sports Mad" series ranks as one of Mr. Brook's better efforts, dealing as it does with events near and dear to a school-boy's heart. In addition, not only were many of the lesser-lights among the boys allowed to star, but ESB wove several fine plots into the whole and gave us a grand helping of cricket which, if a trifle over-seasoned with rules unknown to

# SPORTS MAD AT ST. FRANK'S

BILL HUBBARD and BERNARD THORNE

the governing body of the game, lacked nothing in colour and action.

We are quite certain all readers will realise, that in preparing the scores of the Tests and giving the results of the various sports events in which the St. Frank's boys participated, a certain amount of imagination has been necessary. Should, therefore, we make your particular hero fail just a little too often, we can only plead that well-worn excuse - 'Author's Licence'!

The Sports Meeting was chiefly notable for the success of Johnny Onions, Clive Russell, Bob Christine, Talmadge, Owen and Doyle. One expected the Onions brothers to excel at events such as the Long Jump, but it was refreshing to see one's personal favourites eclipse the more popular characters. More than once Nipper, Handforth and Fullwood had to bow the knee to Tom Burton, Jerry Dodd, Duncan and Vandyke. The victory of the Ancient House over its three rivals was, of course, a foregone conclusion; but this was due largely to the efforts of Walter Church and Clive Russell who provided two of the upsets of the day by beating Bob Christine in the 100 and 200 yards sprint. The other outstanding surprise was the running of Archie Glenthorpe in the 880 yards. Trained, more or less in secret, by that incomparable Gentleman's Gentleman Phipps, Archie left both Clapson and Crooke standing and won in almost record time. He repeated this success in the Marathon Run which started at the school, continued through Bannington to Edgemore and on across the moor back to the school - a distance of fifteen miles. There was an enormous number of entries for this event, but the field began to thin once Bannington was left behind and before Edgemore was reached it became obvious that the race would be fought out between Glenthorpe, Hamilton, Christine,

Pitt, Clapson, Church and McClure. But Archie had that little something the others hadn't got, and although challenged closely by Nipper, the Pride of the Glenthorne's streaked home to victory.

The main swimming event caused no little surprise. Many of the junior boys considered Tom Burton to be an easy winner. But Burton was essentially a long distance swimmer (he was to swim the Channel a year or so later) and as such he had no chance where speed was of major importance. He did remarkably well to win the preliminary heat over Nipper and Church, becoming representative of the Ancient House. But in the semi-final he was well beaten by Reggie Pitt who went on to take the final from Bob Christine.

Pitt was also successful in the Marathon Bicycle Race which took place over a circular course embracing Bannington, Caistowe and a number of neighbouring villages. Again there was a large number of starters, but it became certain, some way from the school, that the winner would be either Buster Boots of the Modern House or Pitt. And Reggie, with Boots in hot pursuit, rode home the winner.

The 440 yards Relay, a very popular event with the onlookers, was won in championship style by the Ancient House team of Church, Russell, Fullwood and Tregellis-West. Without question Church and Russell were the stars here. They made such headway that Fullwood and Montie had little difficulty in carrying the baton to an impressive victory.

Some mention should be made of Willy Handforth and his friends of the Third. They were always in evidence, particularly in the Novelty Relay Obstacle Race for the Empire Cup. Against two teams captained by Clive Russell and Nipper, Willy and his Third Formers proved far superior, negotiating the obstacles with all the skill and speed of eels.

Of the remaining events there is little of interest to record. Jerry Dodd outdistanced Nipper in throwing the cricket ball. But the Remove captain reversed the order when he won the javelin throwing event. Len Clapson won the mile and Owen Minor won two of the Under 14 events. Tom Burton beat Nipper and Armstrong in putting the weight. Certain other contests such as boxing and sculling were not, strictly speaking, part of the Sports Meeting, and therefore are not detailed. We do feel, however, that it was unfortunate that Mr. Brooks did not chronicle the Fifth and Sixth Form contests. We feel that much was lost by the omission of events in which such giants as Fenton, Wilson, Morrow, Frinton, Browne and Stevens battled.

#### ST. FRANK'S JUNIOR SPORTS

##### 100 Yards (Under 16)

	<u>House</u>	<u>Points</u>
1. C. Russell.....	Ancient.....	4
2. Sir M. Tregellis-West.....	Ancient.....	3
3. A. Hart.....	West.....	2
4. R. Christine.....	Modern.....	1

##### 220 Yard (Under 16)

1. W. Church.....	Ancient.....	3
2. R. Christine.....	Modern.....	2
3. E. Dallas.....	East.....	1

	House	Points
<u>100 Yard (Under 14)</u>		
1. J. Owen (Minor)	Ancient	4
2. J. Blythe	Ancient	3
3. J. Heath	Ancient	2
4. R. Jones	West	1
<u>220 Yard (Under 14)</u>		
1. V. Hopkins	West	3
2. W. Handforth	Ancient	2
3. S. Kerrigan	West	1
<u>440 Yards (Under 16)</u>		
1. R. Pitt	West	3
2. H. Vandyke	Modern	2
3. A. Duncan	Ancient	1
<u>880 Yards (Under 16)</u>		
1. A. Glenthorne	Ancient	3
2. L. Clapson	Modern	2
3. A. Croke	Modern	1
<u>Obstacle Race (Under 16)</u>		
1. E.A. Handforth	Ancient	3
2. J.B. Boots	Modern	2
3. J. Grey	West	1
<u>High Jump (Under 16)</u>		
1. T. O'Grady	Modern	3
2. E. Munro	East	2
3. W. Church	Ancient	1
<u>Novelty Relay Obstacle Race (For Empire Cup)</u>		
1. W. Handforth's Team:	J. Owen, J. Heath, C. Lemon, W. Handforth.	
2. C. Russell's Team:	J. Dodd, A. Duncan, H. Vandyke, C. Russell.	
3. R. Hamilton's Team:	T. Watson, A. Brent, Sir M. T-West, R. Hamilton.	
<u>Long Jump (Under 16)</u>		
1. J. Onions	West	3
2. B. Onions	West	2
3. C. de Valerie	Ancient	1
<u>High Jump (Under 14)</u>		
1. S. Kerrigan	West	3
2. V. Hopkins	West	2
3. J. Hook	East	1
<u>Long Jump (Under 14)</u>		
1. W. Handforth	Ancient	3
2. S. Kerrigan	West	2
3. C. Lemon	Ancient	1
<u>220 Yards Hurdles (Under 16)</u>		
1. J. Onions	West	3
2. C. Talmadge	Modern	2
3. H. Doyle	West	1

220 Yards Hurdles (Under 14)

	House	Points
1. J. Owen (Minor)	Ancient	3
2. C. Lemon	Ancient	2
3. J. Heath	Ancient	1

Throwing the Cricket Ball

1. J. Dodd	Ancient	3
2. R. Hamilton	Ancient	2
3. R.L. Fullwood	Ancient	1

Putting the Weight

1. T. Burton	West	3
2. R. Hamilton	Ancient	2
3. T. Armstrong	East	1

Mile (Under 16)

1. L. Clapson	Modern	3
2. A. Croke	Modern	2
3. J.B. Boots	Modern	1

Throwing the Javelin

1. R. Hamilton	Ancient	3
2. J. Dodd	Ancient	2
3. H.R. Lal Kahn	West	1

880 Yards Relay (Under 16)

1. Modern House:	C. Talmadge, R. Christine, H. Oldfield, R. Yorke.	16
2. West House:	H. Doyle, R. Pitt, Hon. D. Singleton, J. Grey.	12
3. Ancient House:	A. Duncan, Duke of Somerton, C. de Valerie, A. Brent.	8
4. East House:	E. Dallas, W. Freeman, L. Griffith, C. Conroy.	4

440 Yards Relay (Under 16)

1. Ancient House:	Sir M. T-West, R. Fullwood, W. Church, C. Russell.	16
2. West House:	H. Doyle, A. Hart, N. Trotwood, J. Onions.	12
3. Modern House:	C. Talmadge, R. Yorke, T. O'Grady, W. Denny.	8
4. East House:	E. Dallas, W. Freeman, J. Page, C. Turner.	4

Marathon Race

1. A. Glenthorne	Ancient
2. R. Hamilton	Ancient
3. (R. Pitt	West
(L. Clapson	Modern

Marathon Bicycle Race

1. R. Pitt	West
2. J.B. Boots	Modern
3. C. Conroy	East

Junior Swimming Events

		First Round (Heats)		
Ancient House:	1. T. Burton	2. R. Hamilton	3. W. Church	
West House:	1. R. Pitt	2. H. Doyle	3. S. Levi	
Modern House:	1. R. Christine	2. L. Clapson	3. T. O'Grady	
East House:	1. D. Harron	2. W. Freeman	3. C. Conroy	
Semi-final:	Pitt beat Burton,		Christine beat Harron	
Final:	R. Pitt (West House) beat R. Christine (Modern House)			

House Results:

1.	Ancient House.....	77 Points
2.	West House.....	55 Points
3.	Modern House.....	45 Points
4.	East House.....	13 Points

Points Winners:

		<u>House</u>	<u>Points</u>
1.	J. Onions.....	West.....	9
2.	C. Russell.....	Ancient.....	8
	W. Church.....	Ancient.....	8
	C. Talmadge.....	Modern.....	8
3.	Sir M. Tregellis-West.....	Ancient.....	7
	B. Christine.....	Modern.....	7
	J. Owen.....	Ancient.....	7
	H. Doyle.....	West.....	7
	R. Hamilton.....	Ancient.....	7
4.	S. Kerrigan.....	West.....	6
	R. Pitt.....	West.....	6
	R. Yorke.....	Modern.....	6

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FIRST TEST MATCH

Young England v Young Australia

Played at St. Frank's

Australia's captain, R.L. Beaton won the toss and elected to bat first. Browne and Nipper opened the bowling against Beaton and C.H. Williams, and after thirty minutes play Beaton's wicket fell to Browne with 31 runs on the score board. Bayliss only stayed for three overs before being bowled by Browne, and Smith fell to a fast ball that kept low. Fifteen minutes later Fullwood held a fast return and four Aussie wickets were down for 54 runs.

It was an excellent beginning for England and the St. Frank's boys were on their toes. But it was the last success they were to enjoy until lunchtime when a sound partnership between Jerry Dodd and Jack Bayliss was broken and play halted with Australia 133-5.

After lunch the score mounted slowly, but Nipper, Kahn and Fenton were keeping a good length and wickets fell steadily. Browne, after his early success, had been rested; and Nipper with accurate bowling took the wickets of Robinson and Cockburn for 12 runs. Aided by Fenton, the England attack finally rounded off the innings for 203, of which Dodd made 66 and Jack Bayliss 44.

Fenton and Morrow opened for England against the bowling of Rex Bayliss and Marshall. They were soon in trouble against the Australian boys' slows that broke awkwardly on the dusty pitch. Morrow went at nine, and Stevens at 13. Then William Napoleon Browne joined his captain and proceeded to take command. With the score mounting into the seventies, Beaton made several bowling changes, but even the tricky deliveries of Jerry Dodd made no impression on Browne who drove him to the boundary twice in his first over. Fenton was the first to go

after scoring a patient and invaluable 45. Browne joined him a minute later when the indefatigable Dodd removed his off stump. Fullwood and Handforth were soon out, but with Reggie Pitt batting brilliantly on the leg side, the England tail waggged gaily. Finally Pitt was out to a catch by Marshall at square leg and the innings closed for 215.

A steady drizzle set in that evening and lasted far into the night, but dawn brought a cloudless blue sky. When Australia opened their second innings the hot sun, after shining for three hours on a damp wicket, had made perfect conditions for Browne's deliveries. Two batsmen were dismissed in his first over and it was only the beginning! Within ninety minutes the side were back in the pavilion for 98. Browne had taken 4 for 23 and Lal Kahn 3 for 24.

Thus England required only 90 to win. Only Browne seemed uncertain of the result.

"While sharing your optimistic view to a certain extent," he said. "Let me warn you that it is never wise to take anything for granted. England is determined to win - and with myself included in the team, I fail to see how she can lose. But, alas, I cannot be at both wickets at the same time. I am dependant upon others, or I would safely assure you of our ultimate success!"

After lunch the English opening pair went in to bat and Browne's warning was verified. Dodd and Marshall opened the attack and on a bowler's wicket they were unplayable. In five overs six men were out for 23 runs, and only the imper-turbable Browne showed any sign of staying. Then with the score at 47 for 9, the burly Edward Oswald Handforth strode to the wicket. He attacked each ball with a complete indifference to its length and smote boundary hit after boundary hit while Browne held the fort at the other end. Finally, after the greatest display of fireworks seen at St. Frank's for many a day, Handy drove Marshall to the pavilion for six, and England had won by one wicket!

#### YOUNG AUSTRALIA

<u>1st Innings</u>				<u>2nd Innings</u>			
R.L. Beaton	b. Browne	12		b. Browne		0	
C.H. Williams	c. Fullwood b. Browne	24		run out		6	
Rex Bayliss	b. Browne	7		b. Browne		0	
C.K. Smith	b. Browne	0		c. Morrow b. Hamilton		17	
J. Dodd	c. Hamilton b. Kahn	66		b. Browne		21	
J. Bayliss	b. Hamilton	44		l.b.w. b. Browne		18	
W. Robinson	c. Browne b. Hamilton	12		c. Browne b. Fenton		7	
L.B. Cockburn	b. Hamilton	4		b. Kahn		5	
A. Rogers	c. Handforth b. Fenton	15		b. Kahn		3	
B.J. Marshall	b. Fenton	4		c. Phillips b. Kahn		11	
E. Field	not out	3		not out		0	
		ex	<u>12</u>			ex	<u>10</u>
			<u>203</u>				<u>98</u>

	O.	M.	R.	W.	O.	M.	R.	W.
Browne	19	4	57	4	15	7	23	4
Hamilton	17	2	62	3	6	0	20	1
De Valerie	5	0	27	0	-	-	-	-
Kahn	10	1	29	1	8.5	1	24	3
Fenton	7.1	2	16	2	11	4	21	1

YOUNG ENGLAND

<u>1st Innings</u>				<u>2nd Innings</u>				
E. Fenton	c. Dodd	b. Marshall	45	b. Dodd			1	
A. Morrow	l.b.w. b. Marshall		4	b. Dodd			1	
H. Stevens	b. Rex Bayliss		1	c. J. Bayliss	b. Marshall		11	
W.N. Browne	b. Dodd		50	not out			35	
R. Hamilton	c. Beaton	b. Rogers	22	l.b.w. b. Marshall			2	
R.L. Fullwood	st. Field	b. Rogers	2	b. Dodd			0	
E.O. Handforth	b. Dodd		4	not out			33	
R. Pitt	c. Marshall	b. R. Bayliss						
			34	c. Beaton	b. Dodd		0	
C. De Valerie	b. Rex Bayliss		17	l.b.w. b. Rogers			2	
H.R. Lal Kahn	b. Dodd		11	b. Dodd			1	
A. Phillips	not out		5	c. Dodd	b. Marshall		2	
		ex	20			ex	2	
			<u>215</u>	for 9 wickets			<u>90</u>	
	O.	M.	R.	W.	O.	M.	R.	W.
Rex Bayliss	16	2	56	3	3	0	7	0
Marshall	22	8	49	2	12.2	2	45	3
Dodd	14.2	2	37	3	15	6	22	5
Robinson	6	1	19	0	-	-	-	-
Rogers	7	2	19	2	6	1	14	1
Williams	5	1	15	0	-	-	-	-

RESULT: Young England won by 1 wicket.

SECOND TEST MATCH

Young England v Young Australia

Played at St. Frank's

Won by Australia by the narrow margin of one wicket, even the bowling of Edgar Fenton and W.N. Browne could not save England.

England won the toss and Fenton decided to bat first in the morning of a particularly hot and cloudless day. The England eleven was, with one exception, unchanged: Fullwood being dropped for Wilson.

On a wicket that appeared to give no assistance to Dodd and Rex Bayliss England fared badly, losing their first five wickets for 27. Again Browne batted well, being the only batsman to show any defiance against bowling that was literally unplayable. Nipper stayed long enough to see the score pass the fifty mark, but he was never comfortable and gave three chances in his innings of 15. Dodd and Bayliss bowled unchanged through the innings which finally closed for 63. Dodd taking 7 for 37 and Bayliss 3 for 29.

After lunch the Australian pair settled down to an opening partnership which, if uninteresting to watch was invaluable to Australia. Fifty was on the board before Browne sent Williams back, but further successes came tardily and at tea-time the hundred was up with only three wickets lost. Browne had been taken off some while before, and Nipper and de Valerie had been bowling for over an

hour. After tea Reggie Pitt took over from the pavilion end and the change was immediately successful. Pitt dismissed Smith and John Bayliss, and with Nipper whittling away at the other end, the Australians were dismissed for 213 shortly before the close.

During the night a thunderstorm broke over the ground, and there was much gloom throughout the school when the England pair walked to a wicket that gave every sign of 'stickiness'. But Fenton and Morrow took no chances, watching the ball right onto the bat and only scoring off the occasional loose delivery. Their concentration earned a just reward: gradually the devil went out of the pitch and the batsmen got on top. Beaton made several changes in his attack, but 98 runs were scored before Fenton was bowled by Rex Bayliss for a faultless 65 - only 16 of which came from boundary hits. Wilson was soon out, smartly stumped from a stroke that he should never have made. Browne stayed to score 35 before being finally caught by Dodd off Rogers. Nipper and Handforth came together then and proceeded to take a heavy toll of the attack which by now could get no assistance from the pitch. Just before the tea interval Nipper left for a sparkling 52; but Handforth, striding down the wicket, drove Marshall and Dodd consistently to the boundary and twice put Robinson over the sight screen for six. When the innings closed for 300, he was still undefeated with 47 runs. Rex Bayliss, bowling almost unrelieved throughout the long afternoon, had the fine analysis of 6 for 69.

Australia went in requiring 151 to win, and although wickets fell quickly, the runs were obtained with ten minutes to spare. A different result might have been recorded had the England fielding been up to standard. No less than four catches were dropped - two in the first hour, and many hits which were worth only two or three runs were allowed to trickle to the rails. Rex Bayliss was the outstanding player of the match having an aggregate of 9 wickets for 98 runs.

YOUNG ENGLAND 63 (W.N. Browne 17, R. Hamilton 15, J. Dodd 7 for 37, Rex Bayliss 3 for 29 (Bowled unchanged through the innings) and 300 (E. Fenton 65, R. Hamilton 52, A. Morrow 50, E.O. Handforth 47 not out, W.N. Browne 35, Rex Bayliss 6 for 69).

YOUNG AUSTRALIA 213 (Rex Bayliss 37, C.K. Smith 35, R. Hamilton 4 for 49, C. De Valerie 3 for 57, R. Pitt 2 for 15) and 151 for 9 wickets (R.L. Beaton 52, J. Bayliss 26 not out, W.N. Browne 4 for 37, E. Fenton 3 for 42).

RESULT: YOUNG AUSTRALIA won by 1 Wicket.

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THIRD TEST MATCH

Young England v Young Australia

Played at St. Frank's

The team of St. Frank's boys for the third Test differed in one respect from the previous eleven. Due to an injury sustained during practise on the previous day, Arthur Morrow was unfit to play; and something of a sensation was caused when it was learned that Willy Handforth of the Third was to take his place. Willy was a skilful bat and his fielding was superb; but it was unusual, to say the least, to play a Third-Former on such an important occasion. Fenton, faced with the alternative of playing either Walter Church or Willy, decided, correctly as it transpired, on the latter.

Beaton won the toss and decided to open the batting with Williams on a pitch resembling polished marble. That his decision was a wise one was proved by the fact that 78 runs were scored before Willy held a hard drive from the Australian captain when he had scored 40. It was the first of two catches held by the fag and his fielding alone justified his place in the team. The Australian innings lasted throughout the day, closing shortly after the tea interval for 223. C.K. Smith made another fine score, as did Williams. Lal Kahn's bowling figures of 5 wickets for 64 runs was particularly meritorious considering the lifelessness of the wicket.

England's inning opened badly. With the third ball of the fourth over Wilson was out for a duck. Two overs later Stevens was caught behind the wicket with the score at five. Fenton and Phillips played themselves in carefully, but Jerry Dodd and Rex Bayliss were extracting the last ounce from a friendly pitch. Phillips left at 37; Fenton, his concentration upset by the arrival of a telegram, was bowled for 17; Nipper stayed only for an over, and half the side were out for 41. At this stage Rex Bayliss had taken 2 for 16. Browne batted well but could find no one to stay with him. He and Willy Handforth added 27 for the eighth wicket but it was the last kick of a dying team and the innings closed for 96. Bayliss received a round of applause for his fine performance of 6 for 39. In five English innings he had taken eighteen wickets for a shade over eleven runs each.

England followed on the following morning with Fenton, Browne and Handforth absent. They had been called away and had not yet returned. Reggie Pitt took over the captaincy and opened with Nipper. At midday England were 30 for 1, Reggie having edged a ball into Dodd's hands at second slip. Willy Handforth joined Nipper and it was soon seen that, despite his youth, he had the big match temperament. Coolly and calmly he set about mastering the bowling. Losing no opportunity to score he soon overhauled the patient Nipper who was content to back him up. Fenton and Handforth returned to the ground as Willy was caught behind the wicket by Field for a creditable 41 runs, made out of a total of 70. Fenton sent Handforth in, and the burly Removite set about the bowling in his customary manner, scoring 14 off the last five balls of the over. Nipper's long and dour stay had, meanwhile, ended and Fenton took his place. Handy was the next to go having scored eight boundaries in his 46 runs. Fenton batted magnificently and, aided by the tail-enders overtook the Australian total and brought England back into the game. He reached his century at 265, and was still the master of a very tired bowling when the last wicket fell. Browne, unfortunately, did not return in time to bat, and so the innings closed for 319.

Australia opened requiring 190 runs to win, and immediately met with disaster - losing her opening pair with only 10 runs on the board.

By tea-time the score was 97 for 5. Dodd alone showed any confidence against the accurate bowling of Fenton and Lal Kahn, and an hour later when the ninth wicket fell at 157, St. Frank's was jubilant. But they had not taken Field, the Aussie last man and wicket-keeper into account. Surrounded by a ring of fieldsmen he defended stolidly while Dodd by crisp forcing strokes found the boundary again and again. Gradually the score mounted until, with a drive past mid off for four, Jerry put 192 on the board and Australia had won by one wicket to finish ahead on the series.

# The full story of how Fenton, Browne and Handforth came to absent themselves on the morning of the second day of play can be found in Nelson Lee Library, First New Series No. 7.

THIRD TEST  
YOUNG AUSTRALIA

<u>1st Innings</u>				<u>2nd Innings</u>			
R.L. Beaton	c. W.Handforth	b.Kahn	40	b. Browne			0
C.H. Williams	c. Fenton	b. Browne	52	c. Browne	b. Fenton		7
R. Bayliss	l.b.w. b. Browne		11	c. Wilson	b. Fenton		25
J. Dodd	c. Wilson	b. Browne	17	not out			85
C.K. Smith	c. W.Handforth	b.Kahn	41	l.b.w. b. Fenton			16
J. Bayliss	c. Wilson	b. Kahn	22	c. E.O.Handforth	b. Kahn		2
L.B. Cockburn	c. Wilson	b.De Valerie	5	b. Kahn			0
A. Rogers	b. Kahn		7	c. W.Handforth	b. Fenton		1
R.K. Clarke	c. E.Handforth	b.Browne	10	c. Wilson	b. Hamilton		15
B.J. Marshall	not out		7	b. Fenton			10
E. Field	b. Kahn		5	not out			17
		ex	6			ex	14
			<u>223</u>		for 9 wickets		<u>192</u>

	O.	M.	R.	W.		O.	M.	R.	W.	
Browne	18	2	56	4	16	7	1	19	1	17
Hamilton	12	3	27	0	8	10	2	24	1	9
Fenton	15	7	26	0	6	25	10	48	5	11
Kahn	21.5	2	64	5	9	19.3	4	57	2	11
De Valerie	7	1	34	1	4	6	1	18	0	4
Pitt	4	1	10	0	2	1	0	2	0	2

YOUNG ENGLAND

<u>1st Innings</u>				<u>2nd Innings</u>			
E. Fenton	b. R. Bayliss		17	not out			119
G. Wilson	c. Dodd	b. R. Bayliss	0	l.b.w. b. Marshall			18
H. Stevens	c. Field	b. R. Bayliss	2	b. Marshall			8
A. Phillips	b. Dodd		19	b. R. Bayliss			21
R. Hamilton	c. Marshall	b. Dodd	1	b. R. Bayliss			23
W.N. Browne	c. Beaton	b.Marshall	37	absent			0 X
E.O. Handforth	b. R. Bayliss		0	c. Smith	b. Marshall		46
R. Pitt	l.b.w. b. Marshall		2	c. Dodd	b. R. Bayliss		12
W. Handforth	c. Field, b. R. Bayliss		10	c. Field	b. Rogers		41
C. De Valerie	b. R. Bayliss		1	c. Rogers	b. Marshall		16
H.R.Lal Kahn	not out		0	c. R. Bayliss	b. Rogers		15
		ex	4			ex	-
			<u>93</u>				<u>319</u>

	O.	M.	R.	W.		O.	M.	R.	W.
R. Bayliss	14	5	39	6		24	5	82	3
Dodd	10	2	25	2		13	2	37	0
Marshall	7.4	1	17	2		27	11	72	4
Rogers	3	0	8	0		12.3	2	48	2
Williams	-	-	-	-		2	0	17	0
Beaton	-	-	-	-		9	1	35	0
Clarke	-	-	-	-		7	1	28	0

RESULT: Young Australia won by 1 Wicket.

X N.B. In the actual narrative as written by E.S. Brooks, R.L. Fullwood takes Browne's place in the second innings of Young England but is clean bowled first ball.

We need hardly remind readers that such a substitution is contrary to the Laws of Cricket and would never have been allowed.

The score is therefore shown as it would have been in an actual match.

The Authors.

#### FOURTH TEST MATCH

Young England v Young Australia

Played at St. Frank's

The fourth Test was outstanding for the high scoring in all four innings: 1143 runs being hit for a total of 39 wickets. William Napoleon Browne was the outstanding player in the game, scoring a century in each innings and taking 10 wickets for 133 runs. No less than nine scores of fifty runs were made on a pitch that remained a batsman's paradise throughout the two days of play. C.H. Williams made 95 in the second Australian innings - he and Beaton putting on 177 for the first wicket; but the remainder of the team batted poorly and the side were out for 324, leaving England 339 to make in a little more than five hours.

Fenton left early, but Morrow and Stevens retrieved the bad start, and Browne and Handforth put Young England in sight of victory. With Browne back in the pavilion for a faultless century, it was a race against time. Handforth, with a recklessness excusable under the circumstances, swung at everything - in one over late cutting and driving Rogers for three consecutive fours followed by a drive that sailed over the shrubbery for six. Fullwood joined the leader of Study D with 56 runs still wanted. He saw little of the bowling but when facing Marshall he showed confidence and 'put up the shutters' against Jerry Dodd. Handy continued to collar the bowling and seven minutes before close he square cut Marshall to the boundary, and the game was over. St. Frank's and England had saved the 'Ashes'.

YOUNG AUSTRALIA 246 (C.H. Williams 60, Rex Bayliss 51, R.K. Clarke 38, L.B. Cockburn 37, W.N. Browne 4 for 61, E. Fenton 4 for 59, R. Hamilton 2 for 38) and 324 (C.H. Williams 95, R.L. Beaton 86, J. Bayliss 28, W.N. Browne 6 for 72, H.R. Lal Kahn 2 for 75).

YOUNG ENGLAND 232 (W.N. Browne 103, E. Fenton 52, A. Morrow 27, Rex Bayliss 3 for 63, J. Dodd 2 for 46, R.L. Beaton 2 for 39) and 341 for 9 wickets (W.N. Browne 100, E.O. Handforth 51 not out, A. Morrow 51, H. Stevens 40, J. Dodd 4 for 66, B.J. Marshall 3 for 85).

RESULT: YOUNG ENGLAND won by 1 Wicket

FIFTH TEST MATCH

Young England v Young Australia

Played at Lord's Cricket Ground

Played at Lord's famous ground at St. John's Wood Road on Wednesday and Thursday, July 17th and 18th, 1926, Edwy Searles Brooks describes the scene as follows:

"London was flocking to see this match between Young England and Young Australia. The people had heard a great deal of the previous Test matches at St. Frank's and the idea had caught the public fancy. There were hosts of distinguished people among the onlookers, too. Relatives and friends of the players were there in force, and the occasion was every bit as distinguished as the more famous Eton v. Harrow match. The pavilion enclosure was like a fashion parade, gay with colour, and bubbling with mild excitement."

The Australian team was unchanged from that taking part in the previous matches. Young England was as follows: Edgar Fenton (Captain), Arthur Morrow, W.N. Browne, H. Stevens, Ralph Fullwood, R. Hamilton (Nipper) W. Church, E.O. Handforth, R. Pitt, H.R. Lal Kahn, G. Wilson, Twelfth Man Frinton.

It was a fine cloudless day when the captains went out to inspect the wicket. The ground was firm and seemed to have a lot of runs in it. Fenton won the toss and without hesitation elected to bat first.

Dodd and Rex Bayliss opened the bowling and, despite the slowness of the pitch, proceeded to tie down Fenton and Morrow to the occasional single or two. At lunch the score was 76 for 2 - Morrow having stepped forward to a Dodd googly and had his middle stump uprooted, while Fenton was lbw to the same bowler for 30. After lunch Stevens and Fullwood went quickly, but Hamilton joined Browne and the score rose steadily to 133 for 4. Browne was well set and his leg sweeps and drives past extra cover were a joy to watch. When finally he succumbed to a ball from Bayliss that broke sharply, the Australian troubles were not over. Walter Church came in and, when Nipper fell to Jerry Dodd, was joined by Handforth. Handy was his usual hard-hitting self and Church, catching some of his chum's dashing spirit, began to excel with some fine strokes that found gaps in the field. The pair put on 53 in 32 minutes before Church mistimed a good length ball from Rex Bayliss. Shortly afterwards the innings closed for 266, Handforth carrying his bat for a sparkling 57. Dodd, bowling without relief took 6 wickets for 92, an excellent performance when it is remembered that he was punished severely by Handforth and Browne.

Australia's first innings was not without its anxious moments. Beaton was in fine form and cut and hooked skilfully but lost Williams and Bayliss in the first hour. Then Dodd joined him and the pair flogged the England attack to the tune of 110 runs in 90 minutes. England got the upper hand for a time when Beaton and Dodd left almost together and Clarke was completely beaten by the first ball from Browne. But Jack Bayliss and Cockburn kept the score moving freely. Bayliss in particular excelling with attractive strokes that kept mid-off and extra cover busy. At close of play the England total had been passed for the loss of nine wickets.

Ten minutes of the second day sufficed to end the Australian innings for 284. That it had been a victory for the bat was shewn by the bowling analysis:

Fenton had used all six of his bowlers and only Browne had achieved any success. Then came the unexpected dismissal of England who were all out for 192 in under four hours. There was little reason for their poor display; the weather had remained fine overnight and the wicket was in excellent condition. Eight batsmen made double figures but only Stevens and Reggie Pitt batted with any confidence. In fact, had it not been for Fenton sending Wilson in as last man the position might have been critical. The last pair defended gamely against a field comprising three slips and a gully with only one man on the leg side. Marshall's medium-paced deliveries, successful as they had been against the earlier batsmen, had little chance against Pitt's leg strokes. Wilson was backing up well, and fine team work accounted for many singles snatched with the ball placed no further than silly mid-on. Marshall returned the excellent figures of 6 for 49 in 17 overs of which five were maidens.

The Australians opened their second inning with great confidence. Neither Fenton nor Browne could dislodge the opening pair and they had 96 in the score book before Kahn, who had relieved Fenton, bowled Beaton for 47. Browne, then, began to find his deadliest form. He dismissed Bayliss at 109, Williams at 113; and with the score unchanged, Smith was brilliantly caught by Church and Jack Bayliss caught at the wicket - Browne had performed the 'Hat-trick'! But Rogers survived the over and, with R.K. Clarke, 'put up the shutters'. Gradually the score mounted. Hamilton and Pitt were tried without success. Then Kahn had Clarke caught off a full toss at 162 for 7; Browne took two more wickets and Marshall joined Field with five runs required for victory. Field cut Browne away towards the boundary but the ball was stopped a yard from the rails by Handforth - 172 for 9! Fenton sent down the first ball of the next over. It was short of a length and Field went out to drive it. It was a bad stroke and the batsman paid the penalty: there was a click and Wilson had swept off the bails with Field hopelessly out of his crease. Young England had won the fifth Test and the series!

Undoubtedly the honours again went to Browne. His score of 62 in the first innings and a bowling analysis for the match of 11 for 111 stamped him as an all-rounder unequalled in the history of St. Frank's.

For the whole series the batting honours went to Browne who, in addition to scoring two centuries, had a batting average of nearly 55. Beaton, Jerry Dodd and Handforth all averaged over 30 runs an innings. Fenton scored the third century of the series. The bowling was also headed by Browne with 38 wickets for just over 12 runs each. Dodd took 31 for an average of 13; Rex Bayliss 29 for an average of 17; and Edgar Fenton 17 for an average of 18. Figures proved that there was very little difference between the two sides. In each match the margin of victory had been narrow. St. Frank's had had the advantage of a greater number of players from whom to select the England team. The small number of Australian-born boys had limited the choice of their opponents. Australia owed much to the batting of Beaton and the all-round skill of Rex Bayliss. For Young England the very fine leadership of Edgar Fenton was invaluable. Some mention must also be made of Walter Church's field, H.R. Lal Kahn's bowling, and Wilson's smart work behind the stumps. It was cricket of a nature long to be remembered by all the schools participating and by those, who have had the pleasure of reading this fine St. Frank's series.

FIFTH TESTYOUNG ENGLAND

<u>1st Innings</u>				<u>2nd Innings</u>			
E. Fenton	1.b.w. b. Dodd	30		b. Marshall			9
A. Morrow	b. Dodd	23		b. Marshall			12
W.N. Browne	b. R. Bayliss	62		c. Smith b. Marshall			7
H. Stevens	c. Williams b. Dodd	2		c. Williams b. Marshall			29
R.L. Fullwood	c. Beaton b. Dodd	4		1.b.w. b. Dodd			15
R. Hamilton	b. Dodd	42		b. R. Bayliss			10
W. Church	b. R. Bayliss	32		c. Rogers b. R. Bayliss			18
E.O. Handforth	not out	57		b. Marshall			22
R. Pitt	c. Dodd b. Marshall	5		c. Williams b. Rogers			24
H.R. Lal Kahn	b. Dodd	0		b. Marshall			4
G. Wilson	c. Marshall			not out			19
	b. R. Bayliss	1				ex	23
	ex	8					
		<u>266</u>					<u>192</u>

	O.	M.	R.	W.		O.	M.	R.	W.
Dodd	27	3	92	6		13	2	40	1
Rex Bayliss	19.2	2	68	3		12	2	29	2
Marshall	22	9	49	1		17.4	5	49	6
Rogers	13	3	40	0		9	2	24	1
Beaton	2	0	9	0		3	0	16	0
Williams	-	-	-	-		4	1	11	0
Clarke	-	-	-	-		1	1	0	0

YOUNG AUSTRALIA

<u>1st Innings</u>				<u>2nd Innings</u>			
R.L. Beaton	1.b.w. b. Hamilton	74		b. Kahn			47
C.H. Williams	b. Browne	15		b. Browne			50
Rex Bayliss	c. Stevens b. Browne	2		b. Browne			12
J. Dodd	c. Wilson b. Pitt	68		b. Browne			18
C.K. Smith	1.b.w. b. Fenton	24		c. Church b. Browne			0
R.K. Clarke	b. Browne	0		c. Fenton b. Kahn			27
J. Bayliss	b. Kahn	50		c. Wilson b. Browne			0
L.B. Cockburn	c. Wilson b. Hamilton	25		c. Hamilton b. Browne			3
A. Rogers	b. Browne	5		b. Browne			7
E. Field	c. Morrow b. Hamilton	3		st. Wilson b. Fenton			4
B.J. Marshall	not out	4		not out			0
	ex	14				ex	6
		<u>284</u>					<u>173</u>

	O.	M.	R.	W.		O.	M.	R.	W.
Browne	25	7	64	4		17	6	47	7
Fenton	15	2	47	1		12.1	1	29	1
Hamilton	24.2	5	69	3		11	2	25	0
Kahn	13	3	57	1		12	2	59	2
Pitt	6	1	19	1		4	0	8	0
Morrow	5	0	14	0		-	-	-	-

RESULT: Young England won by 1 run.

(Note: It was requested that the following article should be published in the December 'Collectors' Digest' but it was received just too late. So it was decided to give it the first available space, here in the 'Annual'. It will be agreed that Mr. McLean speaks his mind in no uncertain voice.

Well now, those who have read the contributions to the S.B. Circle feature in earlier pages cannot fail to be impressed by the vast amount of research they entail and the same devotion has been going on for years as earlier Annuals show. They are proof positive of the amazing hold the famous detective of fiction has on those who have known him back through the years to his early days. It is only natural, therefore, that the old guard were content with the Blake they knew in the pages of the U.J. and the four a month S.B.L's.

But as Mr. McLean points out many of the members of the older generation have passed on and a new one is springing up with different ideas. Thus things had reached a crisis. Well, he is at the inside of things, so he should know. Hence his no beating about the bush comments.

At the moment of writing these lines all the newspapers are giving considerable space to divided views on a very serious international topic. Likewise as editor of a magazine designed for pleasure in our leisure it is up to me to let you hear all sides. So over to Mr. McLean. - H.L.)

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## IN REPLY TO CRIES OF ANGER

by ARTHUR McLEAN

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In recent issues of the Collectors' Digest, the Blake Controversy has consumed a great deal of paper. Opinions pro and contra have been expressed, and editors and writers past have girded up their loins to do battle.

It now needs an editor or a writer present to make a reply. I am that writer, and this is it.

The first thing which should be realised is that the changes made in the Sexton Blake series were last ditch efforts to save it from extinction. Contrary to the apparent opinions of some correspondents the Amalgamated Press is not a Benevolent Society devoted to the out-moded interests of an aggressively articulate few. Every periodical, no matter what its nature, demands a healthy circulation, and the truth is that the circulation of the old series was not merely downright unhealthy, it was dangerously ill. The Proprietors were faced with a readership which could best be counted not on a show of hands or subscriptions but on a display of tombstones. Old readers were dying off, and new ones were not forthcoming in sufficient numbers to keep the series alive. These are facts which must be faced.

It was necessary, then, to operate speedily and drastically to save the patient's life. That the surgery, though painful to some of the more reactionary elements of the readership, was successful may be judged from the fact that the

series is still to be seen upon the bookstalls. In point of fact, the patient is now passing through a period of convalescence at the end of which, there is already evidence to show, he will be more robust than ever.

What was involved in the operation? It is always interesting to know. The 'innards' of the great are now as familiar to us as the street map of our own town. What happened to the series?

First the covers were modernised, and this, to the observant, should have portended greater changes to come. Covers, as a rule, do not take nearly as long to prepare as written work, and a change here is generally the first hint given to the public of a major movement in policy. On this score, I think, there can be few to disagree with the decision taken. The new covers, from any standpoint save that of the curious antiquarian, are immeasurably better than the old.

What next? The stories were commissioned. Note that word. They were commissioned. They didn't just happen! The tired old improbabilities of the past were relegated to limbo. A new pattern for story-telling was dictated, and a strong accent was laid upon realism. After that Miss Paula Dane walked down the steps into the Malibu Club, and the rest is history.

But why? That's what you're saying, isn't it? Why the change in style? And why Miss Paula Dane, of all people? Let me deal with the questions in that order.

The new style was long overdue. It represents the fast-moving type of reading a modern public wants. It is said that the style is pseudo-American (this, I suspect, because in some places 1956 slang expressions are used instead of those dating back to the Boer War); and 'strong undertones of Chandler' have been detected. Even if it were true, which, of course, anyone who has ever read his way through Chandler will realise it isn't, what would be wrong with that?

Creative art knows no national boundaries, but, if it did, what a great debt we owe to American writers!

In 1841, fifty-two years before Sexton Blake started rooting around for a 'Missing Millionaire' an eccentric American genius called Edgar Allan Poe created the detective story.\* In the late twenties, Dashiell Hammett injected reality into it; and, in the thirties, Raymond Chandler -- spurred on by the discovery that detective stories of the time 'fail to come off intellectually as problems, and...do not come off artistically as fiction' -- worked hard at transforming the detective story into a folk-art form. These three names : Poe, Hammett, and Chandler, are the great ones in the history of the detective story, and the trail these three men have blazed cannot lightly be ignored.

The American school of writing is the strongest and most virile form of writing known. Through Hemingway and Fitzgerald, through Jon Dos Passos, Steinbeck, Sinclair Lewis, and James M. Cain, it has influenced all types of writers throughout the world. American writers lead. It is to some, maybe, an unpleasant fact, but it is true. In the field of the detective story, the only alternative to the realism of the American school is that offered by the 'School-Which-Never-Was' -- the English -- best represented by Miss Agatha Christie.

Now, Christies may come and Christies may go with their intricate plots and their all-pervading air of a vicarage tea-party attended by automatons, but

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\*The Murders in the Rue Morgue, first published in Grahams, April 1841

to compare their work with that of any of the master craftsmen of the American school is like holding up a crossword puzzle before a painting by Goya. One represents life. The other is only emblematic of man's futile and tortured ingenuity.

Look at 'The Scented Bath Crime' as described by Robert Graves in The Long Weekend to see a typical example of the English school.

"The geography and chronology of... 'The Scented Bath Crime' was such that it could have been committed only by someone with a knowledge of Chinese, in desperate need of money, who could persuade a left-handed negro dwarf to train a monkey to climb up a ventilator pipe and squirt a rare South American poison into the victim's hot bath -- with a syringe through the keyhole -- at the one short moment when the French maid's back was turned.

Therefore it could not have been A, who did not need money; or B, who had an aversion to negroes and dwarfs; or C, who did not know Chinese; but the only remaining character unaccounted for -- D, who, surprisingly enough, was the maid herself, whose innocence had seemed established by a perfect alibi. Q.E.D."

Q.E.D. indeed.

The new Blake stories are firmly based upon the bedrock of the credible and the true. They acknowledge a debt to the American school of writing.

But pseudo-American? No!

And now what of Miss Paula Dane? Why, as one of Mr. Howard Baker's correspondents put it 'has that hussy been allowed to break up Blake and Tinker's lovely friendship?'

The truth is, of course, that she hasn't. All that happened here, as elsewhere, is that reality has been allowed to intrude a little way upon the lives of our characters. Reality, and something else. A breath of fresh air.

To read some of the letters, anonymous and otherwise, which arrive on Mr. Howard Baker's desk in Fleetway House is to complete one's education. As a writer I have found them staggering. Many only serve to emphasise just how warped the minds of their author's must be, and to demonstrate that quite an unhealthy and evil interpretation has been laid upon the Blake-Tinker relationship in some quarters in the past. To have swept this away and to have substituted for it something natural and normal seems to me to be one of the best things that the new policy prevailing within the series has done. As a character, Tinker is not being dispensed with; in fact, in stories to come, it may well be found that he plays a larger part than ever.

But it is a different kind of part. Edward Carter is a man now -- not a stooge for Blake, nor an unhealthy companion. To say that Paula Dane has usurped his position in Blake's affections -- as some correspondents have done -- is to indicate a state of mind which could best be remedied by recourse to a doctor or a priest.

This leads us further into the subject of the morals of the stories generally. Let me just say this. In the past, crime paid. The Plummers, Zeniths, Rymers, and the rest, all too often escaped deserved punishment; whilst the blatant and crude sex-content of stories which then were directed at a readership of '9 to 90' has, in many cases, to be seen to be believed.

All this is ended.

In the new Blake series, with its accent on realism and its adult approach, sex plays a part it is true, but it is a proper part. As for crime and its punishment it will be seen that every effort is being made to drive home the great moral truth -- Crime Does Not Pay.

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COLLECTORS' WHO'S WHO  
(cont'd from page 143)

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

- ADLEY, DEREK L.,  
100 Coles Crescent, South Harrow, Middlesex.
- BENTLEY, J. BREEZE,  
"Wyvern," Hawkesworth Lane, Guiseley, Nr. Leeds.
- BROYD, D.,  
10 Bean Road, Bexley Heath, Kent.
- FLINDERS (Miss) E.B.,  
18 Conquest Close, Stevenage Road, Hitchin, Herts.
- HARRISON, WILLIAM,  
4 Clarendon Place, Leeds, 2.
- HARRISON, DAVID,  
Flat 6, 6 Pembroke Gardens, Kensington, London, W. 8.
- JACK, JOHN,  
"Greyfriars," 5A Union Avenue, Ayr, Scotland.
- JENKINS, ROGER M.,  
Flat 6, 6 Pembroke Gardens, Kensington, London, W. 8.
- MATTHEWS, H. G.,  
64 Thorofare, Woodbridge, Suffolk.
- SIMPSON, CLIVE,  
Flat 16, Festival Flats, Fishergate, York.
- STOREY, ROWLAND,  
8 Eskdale Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2.
- WHITIER, BEN. G.,  
36 Newcourt House, Horwood Estate, Bethnal Green, London, E. 2.
- WALKER, T. W., 331 Ditchfield Road, Hough Green, Widnes, Lancs.

# In Placid Victorian Days

By RONALD E. J. ROUSE

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For the collector keenly interested in various types of books and penny weeklies appertaining to true crimes and of blood chilling accounts of horrors there was nothing to compare with the Victorian Era. In the later part of it there were the pink paged "Illustrated Police Budget" and "Famous Crimes" published by Charles Shurey's. Those newsagents who displayed them could be sure of a never ending stream of window gazers and the gazers could be sure of seeing blood splashed on every page. They had a long run especially the Police Budget, but they ceased about 50 years ago.

However, there was a vogue for this line of literature way back in the early years of the 19th century. After some atrocious crime, and there were many, had been committed, there would promptly be published a weighty volume of several hundred pages describing the trial and execution of the malefactor. In many cases they were accompanied by many plates and wood-cuts of the criminal and victim and important scenes dealing with the case. Nothing was too lurid, and after death they even had casts made of the criminal's head and neck, showing the marks made by the rope. Quite often, too, these books on real crimes published the full confessions (when there were any) and sordid particulars of the street ballads being sung in the streets with much gusto concerning the murderer and his crimes.

These executions were evidently treated just like a bank holiday by the masses. They would gather round the reprobate in their thousands and boo or cheer him into the next world. Sometimes they would pass the time away by stoning the hangman, especially if they had any sympathy for the criminal. Whilst this was going on the hot pie and chestnut vendors were doing a roaring trade!

A great number of the crimes of the period were published in the "Newgate Calendar", a publication issued from time to time over the years from the late 18th century under such intriguing titles as "Tyburn Calendar" or "Malefactors' Bloody Register" published at the appropriate address of Hanging Bridge, Manchester; also "Chronicles of Tyburn" or "Villainy Displayed in all its Branches" and "The Annals of Newgate", etc.

During the period 1804-9 "The Criminal Recorder" was published in four volumes. This was a fine little work embellished with plates. It is quite a rarity to obtain a complete set. I have never seen one listed in the book auctions, though on one occasion I saw three.

Another fine item published in 1825 was "The Terrific Register" by Sherwood, Townsend & Co: very interesting on the true crime aspect. In 1824 "The Criminal Portraits" were published in two volumes, and in 1831 "The Romance of Crime" ran for twelve weeks or so.

The year 1840 saw the publication of "The Chronicles of Crime" which was republished in 1887 and 1891. Another was "The Annals of Crime" and yet another "The Calendar of Crime", a kind of Newgate Calendar in penny numbers. Later, in

1871 came "Remarkable Trials and Notorious Criminals" with engravings by Phiz.

A few outstanding trial and execution reports, detailed in single books or parts, after crimes of much public interest were: "Trial of Thistlewood" or "The Cato Street Conspiracy" published by Kelly, in 1820; "Trial of Thurtell" by the same firm in 1824. This particular trial was also published by various firms. Hodgson's version was issued in the same year, also Pierce Egan's "Lament and Recollections of Thurtell" published in two parts.

The "Trial of Corder for the Murder of Maria Marten" was published in 1828 by Kelly in book and serial form and numerous versions of this crime by many other firms. Yet again in 1829 many were issued on the Burke and Hare Horrors. Much later, in 1848 came the publications on the "Rush Murders" and "Life of Palmer the Poisoner, and Trial" in 1856 and the "Roads Murders".

Even towards the end of the 19th century we had one or two instances, one being "The Deeming Crimes" in 1892 and "Dougal" in 1901.

Of course, many other interesting publications appeared during this period of which the following are examples. "Hue and Cry", issued weekly from about 1810-27, later carried on as "Police Gazette"; Cleaves' "Penny Police Gazette" and "People's Police Gazette", about 1836; "Police Reporter", 1838; "Police Recorder and Criminal Record", 1854. All these items are now extreme rarities.

Not so far back were issued the 1/2d "Police Budget", 1871 (only one published; "Police Clipper", 1894; "Police Bits", 1896; "Modern Detective, 1898; and "Police and Crime", around 1905.

The proprietors of the "Illustrated Penny Police Budget", 1893-1910, also issued "Famous Crimes" (Police Budget edition) 1903-1905, reprinted 1907-1909. They also published "Famous Fights", 1901-1904, fifty three of which were re-published in 1907-1908 as "Famous Fights" (Shurey's edition).

Two very good Sunday newspapers with much data on true crime accompanied with lurid wood-cuts were "Bell's Penny Dispatch, Sporting and Police Gazette and Newspaper of Romance" and "Penny Sunday Chronicle" issued in the 1840's. Also issued at the same period was "The Penny Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette" published by E. Lloyd. Both these items are extremely rare.

Round about 1836 the working class had an immeasurably lower standard of living than today. It was about this time that Edward Lloyd started to cater for the poorer classes who were just emerging from illiteracy. Many of the crimes of this period and onwards (many of them long forgotten) formed the basis of the old 'penny bloods' or 'blood and thunders', and though elaborated they conformed generally to the original facts.

Edward Lloyd had competitors in this particular field. A sordid, unsolved murder of 1838 gave basis for a 'blood' published by B.D. Cousin about 1840. It was entitled "Eliza Grimwood" or "A Domestic Legend of the Waterloo Road" in 40 penny numbers.

Cousins' also published one of the earliest versions of that familiar tragedy "Maria Marten" or "The Murder in the Red Barn" under the title "The Gipsy's Warning" or "Love and Ruin", in 20 penny numbers about 1842.

Another item, this time by Lloyd, was "Mary Bateman" or, "The Yorkshire

Witch", and another old crime is recalled by "Melina the Murderess" written by Septimus Hunt and published by W. Caffyn about 1848. The story was woven round a young woman who shot a soldier in St. James Park, by whom she had been seduced and betrayed. W. Caffyn also published about 1842 "Catherine Hayes" or "Crime and Punishment" recalling a very sordid true crime of the early 18th century.

Edward Lloyd about 1847 published "Newgate" in 97 penny numbers. Although the details of the crimes in this item may have been fictitious they were woven round old Newgate Prison, a grim place which certainly did exist for many years. During the same year Lloyd also published "The Lady in Black", or "The Widow and the Wife". This was a very successful romance; a real old blood, founded on the pathetic story of a young woman who lost her reason following the execution for forgery of her brother, a clerk in the Bank of England. For years afterwards she was to be seen, dressed all in black, waiting near the entrance to the Bank for the brother she would never see again.

Around this period, 1848, Edward Lloyd issued "Sweeney Todd". Although it was a fictitious story and the crimes certainly never occurred in England, it is possible that the myth of Sweeney Todd originated from a series of similar crimes that did occur in France.

During 1846 "Jonathan Bradford", or "The Murder at the Roadside Inn", an extremely rare item was published in weekly numbers, again by Lloyd. Bradford, who was hanged for the murder of a wealthy guest at his inn, was later found to be innocent. However, he had intended to commit the crime, but before he entered the fatal chamber the deed had been accomplished by the servant of the guest. This servant later confessed on his death bed. In the story Bradford is portrayed as a wrongly accused man, who, with innocence eventually proved, was restored to his family a free man.

About 1870 Farrar published "Mary Patterson" or, "The Fatal Error", in penny numbers, dealing with the Burke and Hare crimes: a most rare publication. Also by the same firm was issued "Calcraft's Confessions" in about ten numbers. This deals with the life of Calcraft the Hangman.

From this period onwards the flood of these stories waned. The lurid fiction of the Newsagents' Publishing Co. had only lasted for around nine years and it was not until the 'eighties that the real crime story was revived for a short period. "Ned Kelly the Ironclad Australian Bushranger" was published in 1881 in 38 penny numbers by the General Publishing Co. Then George Purkiss, proprietor of the "Illustrated Police News" came up smiling with "Charles Peace the Burglar", "Marwood the Hangman", "Calcraft the Hangman" and others.

Of this type of periodical we have none whatever today. Sometimes we may come across a Canadian or American true crime magazine, perhaps a re-hash by some enterprising publisher of some of the more notorious crimes in book form. But there's never published a real old pennyworth like those in the days of yore with a juicy blood stirring title similar to, shall we say, "The Black Mantle"; or "The Murder at the Old Ferry"; "The Death Ship" or "The Pirate's Bride and the Maniac of the Deep"; "Mysteries of Bedlam"; or "Annals of a Madhouse", "The Skeleton Horseman" or "The Shadow of Death" and "Ada the Betrayed" or "The Murder at the Old Smithy".

So for myself I staunchly contend that the real penny dreadfuls thrived in the good old early Victorian days.

# THE COLLECTORS'

## WHO'S

## WHO

(Note: As explained in the Foreword, owing to such an abundance of material it has been found impossible to find room for the full "Who's Who" this year. So much time and care has been taken over the articles which do appear that I had not heart to cut them any more, and there are some I have had been compelled to hold over altogether.

So for this year only the names of some new members appear and the new addresses of those old members who have moved during the year.

I am sure all will appreciate the dilemma I was in. - H.L.)

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Groups: 1. Victorian Papers; 2. Early 20th Century; 3. Aldines; 4. Captain, Boys' Own Paper, Chums and similar papers; 5. "Hamilton" Papers, (a) Magnet, (b) Gem, (c) Penny Popular, (d) Schoolboys Own Lib, (e) Holiday Annuals; 6. Sexton Blake, (a) Union Jack, (b) Sexton Blake Library, (c) Detective Weekly; 7. Nelson Lee, (a) Nelson Lee Library, (b) Monster Library; 8. Between Two Wars, (Champion, Thriller, Ranger, etc.); 9. Comics; 10. Schoolgirls' Own Lib., School Friend, Schoolgirls Weekly, etc.

Collectors' favourites appear in order of preference

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BARLOW, HARRY, 8 Quebec St., Elland, Nr. Halifax, Yorks. (Age 45). Printer.  
Group 5(a).

GREENWOOD, ROLAND RICHARD, 63 Griffiths Drive, Ashmore Estate, Wednesford, Staffs. (Age 29). Fitter and Machinist. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d); 6 (c); 8; 9. Became interested in pre-war books during war years. Is extremely interested in all Hamilton papers and would like to obtain copies of the first and last Magnets and Gems. Has only a few score assorted items at present. Always pleased to hear from other collectors.

GRAY, BOB, "Pennsylvania," Church Stretton, Salop. (Age 52). Nurseryman.  
Groups 5 (a),(c),(b),(e),(d); 6 (b),(a); 7 (a). Only started collecting recently. Would very much like to obtain copy of 'Merry & Bright' of sometime in the summer of 1918, which contained a letter of his. He then lived at Carlisle.

GRIFFIN, FRED, 2558 Grand Concourse, Bronx 58, New York, U.S.A. (Age 52).  
Assistant Grocery Store Manager. Groups 7 (a); 5 (b),(c); 6 (b); 5 (d).  
His first London visit in 1948 failed to locate any Gems, Magnets or Nelson Lees. A 1953 trip produced 20 post-war Billy Bunters and Tom Merry Books also recent Sexton Blakes. Recently heard of the Collectors' Digest and as a result is building up a collection, which includes two bound volumes of Nelson Lees, old series. Would like to obtain Christmas number Boys Friend 1917.

JACOMBS, ROGER, 38 Selsdon Park Road, Addington, Surrey. (Age 16). Schoolboy.

Groups 5 (a),(d),(b); 6 (b),(a),(c); 7 (a). Only started collecting in 1953 and now has 300 Magnets, 100 Gems, 12 Penny Populars, 50 Sexton Blakes, 3 Holiday Annuals, all the Bunter Books, 5 Tom Merry's and Billy Bunter's Annuals, some Union Jacks and 50 Aldines.

KINGSTON, JACK, 3 Gawen Terr., Torpoint, Cornwall. (Age 37). Electrical Fitter.

Groups 5 (a); 9; 10; 2; 8. Is anxious to obtain the first Holiday Annual and two copies of Bubbles and Tiger Tim comics. Only started collecting about a year ago. Regrets he lives so far from any of the O.B.B.C's., but he is looking forward to a holiday in Liverpool in 1957 when he hopes to visit the Merseyside Branch.

LACK, HAROLD HERBERT, 4 Rushmere Road, Northampton. 'phone Northampton 4792.

(Age 44). Municipal Clerk. Groups 10; 5 (a),(b),(e),(c),(d). Present collection consists of about 200 Schoolgirls Own (1921-1924) and most of the issues of School Friend from 1919-1928 and some later ones. Would like to express his appreciation of the great help given by Len Packman in getting many of the earlier ones. Still requires some of the 1919-20 ones. Is also greatly interested in the early days of the cinema and collects books on the subject. Has about 300 early Picture Shows but is still on the look-out for a number of 1919-20 period.

LE BLANC, EDWARD T., 36 Taylor St., Fall River, Mass., U.S.A. (Age 36). Position Classifier for the U.S. Naval Section, Newport, R.I. Groups 1; 2; 3.

O'HERLIHY, D.P. (DAN). 17220 Gresham St., Northridge, Calif., U.S.A.

Group 5 (a),(b),(d),(e),(c). Desires to build up complete sets of both Magnets and Gems and has made good progress since entering our circle. Will gladly give details of numbers still required. Has a quantity of duplicates available for exchange. Is a well-known figure in the film world. Played prominent parts in 'Adventures of Robinson Crusoe'; 'The Virgin Queen'; 'That Woman Opposite'; 'Purple Mask'; etc. Received Academy Award Nomination (1955) for his performance in 'Adventures of Robinson Crusoe'. Coming films 'Assassin' and 'Honey and Bitter'. Born at Wexford, Ireland. Has appeared at Abbey and Gate Theatres, Dublin.

PATE, (Miss) ELIZABETH (BETTE) JEAN, 8 Day St., Drummoyne, N.S.W., Australia.

Life Assurance Clerk. Group 6 (b),(a),(c). Collection comprises S.B.L's. (1st series), 40 odd numbers; 2nd. series, 535-744 except 539, 571, 572, 628, 735, 736; 3rd series, complete. Also first two S.B. Annuals; Union Jacks 150; Detective Weeklies 80; 5 Boys Friend Libs. with Blake stories. Has been reading Blake stories for 20 years; G.H. Teed her favourite author. Is anxious to obtain U.Js. and S.B.Ls. prior to 535 by this author. Also requires S.B.Ls. (2nd series) 489, John Hunter's "The Affair of the Fatal Film".

SMITH, T.G., 10 Darleydale Avenue, Great Barr, Birmingham, 22A. (Age 36).

Salesman. Group 5 (a),(d). Collection at present consists only of Magnets collected by himself between 1933 and 1940 before joining the R.A.F. Only heard recently of our activities and thinks there couldn't be a better hobby. Would be glad of any Magnets up to 1932.

STANDEN, A.G., 33 Grasmere Avenue, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire. Urgently requires 'Jesters' dated 1917-1918 containing serials "Secrets of a Great City" and "The Dauntless Three" complete.