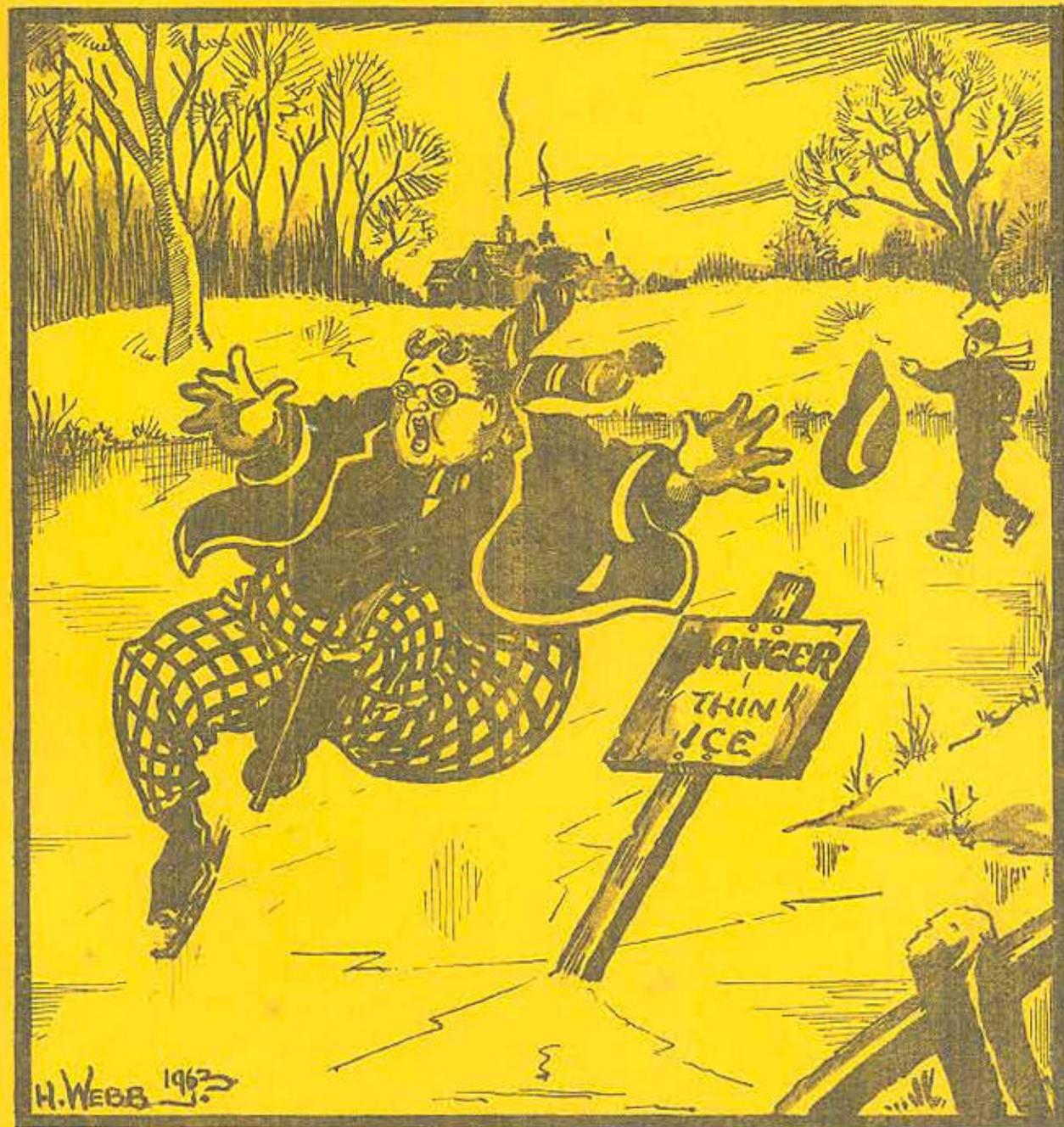


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CHRISTMAS 1963

SEVENTEENTH YEAR

Editor:

ERIC FAYNE

EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON, SURREY, ENGLAND

My dear Chums,

Though this brief letter to you appears at the commencement of the Annual, it is actually the last item to be written. One pens it with a sense of anti-climax. All the contents are safely garnered. After many months of planning and preparing which started early in the summer (and no reader can probably quite realise just how much planning and preparing has to go into a volume of this size) the work is completed. The Annual files are closed - until they are re-opened in a few months' time in readiness for the next.

The Seventeenth Edition of Collectors' Digest Annual is now in your hands. I have tried - and that is the main aim always - to make each succeeding edition better than the previous one. I believe that there must be something in this volume to please everyone, whatever his or her taste may be.

We were all much younger when the late Herbert Leckenby offered the first edition of Collectors' Digest Annual to his band of supporters. The years have swept by - we have hardly noticed their passing - and those who possess every one of the seventeen editions have a veritable encyclopaedia which must surely cover every possible facet of Old Boys' Book lore.

Our thanks go out to our gallant band of contributors who give, willingly and unselfishly, year after year, of their time and talent so that we may enjoy ourselves. They are, indeed, an inspired group.

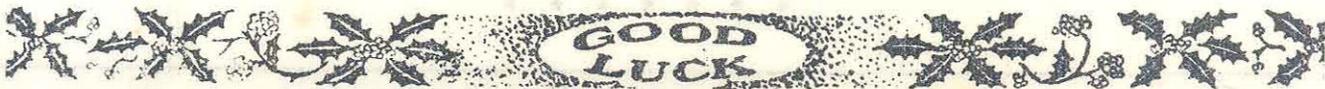
Once more we are indebted to York Duplicating Services, our inimitable northern firm, for their wonderful work which never lets us down. It is quite impossible to praise them sufficiently.

And you, dear readers, whose loyalty, affection, and never-ending encouragement makes everything possible and so worth-while. My thanks come to you in a flood. I hope that this Seventeenth Edition of Collectors' Digest Annual will give you all the pleasure you so richly deserve.

A joyful Christmas to all my chums the world over, and may the New Year be the best you have ever known.

Your sincere friend,

Eric Fayne



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The St. Frank's Series in The Gem

by GEOFFREY WILDE

It was a sad day for Edwy Searles Brooks's admirers when in the summer of 1933 the Nelson Lee came to the end of its eighteen years' run. There had been no disguising for some time that the Lee was in difficulties; but no paper can run for nearly two decades without much solid achievement behind it, and readers of the day must surely have hoped that one which had permanently enriched our mythology would survive to regain its former dignity. But if the sentence of closure finally left no hope of a reprieve, there was at least a remission: the famous stories of St. Frank's were to continue in the Gem, where they would provide the serial at the back of the paper. The merger was accompanied by the usual optimistic pronouncements and rather more than usually extravagant assurances to the minority readership. "From now on," said the Editor, "the Nelson Lee and the Gem are one paper." The Gem's title-page began to carry the words 'Incorporating the Nelson Lee Library' and big things were supposed to be in the offing.

One wonders if the Lee readers were much deceived by these fair overtures. Logically, no doubt, it was a matter for thankfulness that the St. Frank's stories were promised some form of continuance; but in these matters there is a good deal more than logic involved. One's favourite paper is not just the vehicle of its subject-matter: it is a set of habits endeared by long custom. The boyish reader, ignorant of those "reasons of policy" for which mergers are made, knows well enough that amalgamation means forsaking old friendships and adapting himself to new, up-start ways. Things are never the same. There is the indignity of patronage, too: resentment and disdain must always stand high among the emotions with which the parent publication is regarded. I know how I felt when the Gem itself was eventually swallowed up in some wretched rag ironically named the Triumph. Now the Lee, admittedly, was being amalgamated with a first-rate paper with which it already had some affinity; but the average St. Frank's enthusiast, I am sure, viewed the promised deal with cautious mistrust, only too grimly aware that the proof of the pudding would lie in the eating, and not in the head-waiter's description of the menu.

And in the event, some will argue, the diet didn't amount to much. The cynic will point out that if the Lee and the Gem were indeed one paper the marriage lasted only two years. The words 'Nelson Lee', in fact, were banished from the cover within a matter of a few weeks; a rival appeared on the scene with the advent of the Pack-saddle stories in 1935; and of a total of ten St. Frank's serials, nearly half were reprints. This rather bleak summary, I suspect, represents the view of a good many Lee fans even today. If I am right in taking indifference as a form of critical disfavour, Brooks's work for the Gem stands pretty low in their esteem, for I find it hardly ever mentioned either in conversation or in print. I know, of course, that no man makes his reputation with serials, which are perhaps condemned by their form to be undervalued, but it is hard to resist the impression that the attitudes of 1933 still persist, distinctly sceptical when they are not openly hostile. If so, the time for re-appraisal is surely much overdue.

I personally find myself in almost total disagreement with the viewpoint outlined above. Seen without prejudice, I believe the Gem serials will be found to constitute a vital and characteristic corpus that embodies some of Brooks's best

writing and supplies the saga of St. Frank's with a splendid epilogue. Of the reprints, on closer examination, one proves to be no more than a wind-up of the story the Lee was carrying at its dissolution, and two others to be quite short; so there was therefore only one major item that was not newly-written for the Gem, and that was a particularly famous series, well worth reprinting. As for the Packsaddle stories, the really remarkable thing is that they didn't in fact encroach on the St. Frank's part of the paper, the extra space being gained entirely at the expense of the St. Jim's story - a pretty striking proof of the Editor's keeping faith with the Nelson Lee readers. Most important of all, though, the six new yarns were well-varied, strong, imaginative and interesting. The level they maintained was not only high, but was much nearer, I would submit, to Brooks's very best than was any of the work he had contributed to the Nelson Lee during its declining phase, which in turn suggests that he found in this new undertaking a stimulus that had liberated in him a fresh burst of creative energy.

Another point, I think, is worthy of mention. The St. Frank's stories in the Gem were illustrated by Savile Lumley, a really first-rate artist in whom E. S. Brooks found his ideal illustrator. Lumley's work not only possessed beauty and rightness in itself, it was right for Brooks, matching in graphic form the author's colourful sense of incident and bringing his leading characters recognisably to life. His association with St. Frank's, as many readers will recall with pleasure, was maintained in the Schoolboy's Own Library, where it continued over the next seven years.

With this harmonious partnership the happy accommodation of St. Frank's within the pages of the Gem was finally assured. The serials acquired that indefinable air of belonging to the paper. Indeed, commanding as it did the impressive team of Martin Clifford and Macdonald, E. S. Brooks and Savile Lumley, the Gem had now become a beautifully balanced publication, and a delight both to read and to handle. In the quality of its stories, of its appearance, and its presentation, it was probably never better. During this period the Gem reprinted nearly all the really great St. Jim's yarns, stories whose quality must here be taken as speaking for itself; but let us acknowledge that the St. Frank's section contributed in its own right to the paper's excellence.

In considering the effects of the merger between St. Jim's and St. Frank's we have so far spoken almost entirely of the Nelson Lee reader. But let us remember another class of reader it affected, and an incidental benefit that as a consequence must have come of it. There must have been a considerable number whose first introduction to St. Frank's came through the Gem - established readers of Martin Clifford who now became part of a new audience for the writings of E. S. Brooks.

I, in a sense, was one of them.

Though St. Frank's was already a part of it, it was certainly for St. Jim's that I first read the paper as a small boy. It was a while before I ventured into the serials, which seemed to me strange and rather frightening beside the cheery and reassuring world of Martin Clifford. But I soon came to surrender to the sense of atmosphere and adventurous thrill that these stories commanded. They became a very real part of the great pleasure I got from the Gem at this time, and there is no doubt that St. Frank's always seemed to me an essential part of the paper.

There has been talk at times of idolatry on the part of Charles Hamilton's admirers, so let me say at once - as an ardent Hamiltonian - that there were many occasions when it was the St. Frank's item that stood out to me as the Gem's highlight. In so far as this represents a criticism of Martin Clifford, we must

remember that among his best efforts the Gem also reprinted a number of surprisingly ordinary tales, while the chronology of the reprints was at times almost baffling. The preference stands, though, as a genuine tribute to the merits of Brooks, and to the particular kind of pleasure I got from his stories that I couldn't get elsewhere.

I think it may be true that many Hamiltonians have under-rated Brooks because failing to find in him the same kind of literary virtues as they find in Hamilton they are apt to conclude that he has none. This is not only an erroneous conclusion, but a singularly unrewarding one. It is our own loss if we are blinded by Hamilton's genius to the very different ways in which other authors can excel - or, indeed, to their occasional points of superiority in directly comparable fields of writing.

I have in mind, for instance, my early impression that the world of St. Frank's was somehow more adult than that of the Hamilton schools. I would qualify such a statement nowadays, but its measure of truth springs, I feel, from the wide range of characters forming the normal ambient of the St. Frank's stories. In his ability to suggest the continuity of school life at all its levels Brooks is decidedly superior to Hamilton, who tends to retain only his middle-school heroes as part of the prevailing background, fags, seniors and others appearing for special purposes only, and being otherwise held in suspension, assumed present though not actually alive. The Moor View girls, too, bring a graceful and refreshing touch to many St. Frank's tales, not only in themselves, but in the healthy normality with which they are portrayed; without offending at all against the accepted canons they do at least suggest creatures of another sex. A further gain for St. Frank's is in the variety of its adult characters, and it is interesting to note in passing that those adult creations of Hamilton who stand outside the familiar range of schoolmasters and bookies - Soames or Hiram K. Fish, for example - are some of his best.

It is hardly surprising, though, that broadly speaking a direct comparison between the two authors is nowhere more clearly to Hamilton's advantage than in the orthodox school story. His undisputed pre-eminence in this field was doubtless indirectly responsible for the kind of hybrid that St. Frank's became. Brooks, who wrote some passable sub stories for both Gem and Magnet, must have reached a point where he found it easier to write Hamilton's school yarns than his own, and at which, like any good writer, he began to cast in some direction that would better express his own individuality. In doing so, he created a new kind of school story, with that particular blend of mystery, adventure and fantasy we now recognise as peculiarly his own. And this it is pointless to condemn simply because it is different: we must judge it for what it is.

A detailed comparison between the work of E. S. Brooks and Charles Hamilton would make a fascinating study which is obviously beyond my present terms of reference; but no comparative view can ignore the essentially contrasted nature of their aims and methods, and the large extent to which their talents were complementary. In Hamilton we have the polished stylist, whose little felicities of dialogue and descriptive comment are a pleasure and an end in themselves, something to savour almost apart from the story. Though his construction is masterly, plot as such may be tenuous almost to vanishing-point: the action is on an inner and psychological plane. With Brooks, there are no such finesses. His tersely functional narrative style is almost totally free from embellishment. Our involvement is with the plot, where he permits himself elaboration: and here the movement, with its constant twists and plunges, is entirely on the physical surface. The one transforms the commonplace into the wonderful; the other brings the fantastic into the sphere of normality.

What is it, then, that Edwy Searles Brooks has uniquely to offer? Above all, I

think, a release from the dull imprisoning world of everyday. His is a literature of sheer escapism, a flight into a realm of pure, uninhibited adventure, such as every boy inhabits in his daydreams. Like Lord Dorrimore - an archetypal figure in the Brooks legend - the reader breathes an intoxicating air of gorgeous and illimitable freedom: the world lies at his feet; the lands of eternal romance beckon to him. He explores lost cities, ransacks the treasure-houses of Africa, and emerging safely from each breathless adventure longs only to be off on the next. Even at school his life is scarcely less exhilarating. His Housemaster, for a start, is the famous detective Nelson Lee - surely near to every boy's vision of the ideal schoolmaster; the vicinity, which includes the sea, a ruined abbey and a haunted wood, abounds in opportunities for the venturesome; and the authorities adopt a remarkably enlightened attitude toward boys who break bounds at night in order to risk their lives in the pursuit of dangerous criminals. Life is a continuous, gloriously exciting spree.

The limitations of this vision are obvious, but they are part of the price we pay for its undeniable appeal. It has been said that Brooks's stories are incredible, and that his characterisation is weak. There is truth in both charges. No story whose pivot is its ingenuity of plot can study character in depth, and too nice a regard for probabilities is hardly to be expected in a land of perpetual adventure. The truth is no more than partial, however, and I think the gravity of both defects can be exaggerated.

Those who delight, as I do, in Hamilton's urbane and leisured idiom may care to observe with what aptness Brooks's clear and unaffected style is also adapted to its purpose. No matter how desperate the thrills into which we are plunged, the writing never becomes turgid or excitable. It leans always on the side of understatement, preserving our contact with reality at moments of extreme horror or surprise. Brooks's invention may be uninhibited, but the restraint of his narrative carries a conviction that is never quite lost, even in his most audacious sequences.

So, too, with his character-drawing. There is none of Hamilton's perceptive analysis, his sense of motivation, of the small events that set bigger ones in motion. But what Brooks's characters lack in subtlety, they more than make up for in vitality. The Handforth brothers, W. N. Browne, Dorrie, Nelson Lee and a few of the others are among the most memorable characters in the old boys' papers. Slightly crude and overdrawn, perhaps, they nevertheless possess that magical property of coming alive for the reader. They have the *élan vital*; they are real; we know them as we know our friends.

The author may be compared to a painter working in some vivid impressionistic technique. All else is subordinated to the total effect. Precision of detail, accurate perspective and subtle shading may be lacking; but the strong primary colours are boldly and imaginatively applied, the outlines are firm and clear, and the conception is vigorous and confident. His work has immediacy, it has impact; it "comes off".

Vitality, imagination, and inventiveness - these, held in control by a mastery of plot, are the outstanding qualities of E. S. Brooks. They may not be the qualities that ensure literary immortality, but they are formidable qualifications in a writer of boys' serials. Let us now consider exactly what use he made of them in two years of writing for the Gem.

The story with which St. Frank's began its career in the Gem is unsatisfactory in being both a reprint and a fragment. During its last phase the Nelson Lee took to reprinting a number of its past successes, and the China series of 1926 was midway

through its second run when the paper folded up, leaving the reader stranded with the St. Frank's party in the clutches of the mandarin Foo Chow. The Gem accepted the responsibility for seeing them safely home again, providing the conclusion of the series in thirteen instalments in nos. 1331-1343. Though its duration was rather longer than that of most of the serials which followed it, this was so patently a bit of the Nelson Lee's unfinished business that one rather wonders if it ought to count at all in a survey of the Gem's St. Frank's stories. It had obviously been a good story in its original form, and there was still excellent reading in it in 1933; but there had clearly been insufficient time to consider its adaptation for serial publication, and I for one am finally left with an impression of truncated awkwardness.

Towards the end of the China series fulsome publicity began to herald its successor, the Gem's first St. Frank's serial proper. Edwy Searles Brooks himself, in a half-page letter, told readers something of what was in store for them, and announced: "In this story I have written my masterpiece." Whether this stated an honest belief or was simply a claim designed to excite the hopes, and command the continuing loyalty, of his supporters, there can be little doubt that in *The White Giants of El Dorado* (Gems 1344-1354) Brooks had set out to make a major new contribution to the St. Frank's saga. In this we may fairly acknowledge that he was successful, though few will agree that it surpassed the best of his earlier achievements, or, indeed, that it was the equal of some of the serials that were yet to come.

The White Giants is certainly a feast of thrills, but before it is over perhaps a rather indigestible one. The evident desire to secure a strong St. Frank's readership for the paper seems to have resulted in a policy of throwing just about every popular ingredient into the stockpot. The discovery of El Dorado in 1920 was an established part of the legendary past of St. Frank's; so too was Nelson Lee's arch-enemy, Cyrus Zingrave. Now we were to have them both back - and in the same story.

To find El Dorado at all is quite an achievement; to do so twice might on the face of it seem a trifle excessive, especially when on both occasions some master-criminal proves to have the run of the place. But in a series that strains the credulity throughout details of this kind hardly qualify as improbabilities at all. The story, in fact, gets off to a flying start in more ways than one. Lord Dorrimore's ultra-modern airship, the *Sky Wanderer*, has been fitted out as a flying school which is to take a large contingent of St. Frank's seniors and juniors on an educational tour of the world under the headmastership of Nelson Lee. (Dorrie's airship, incidentally, was to become a familiar character in its own right in stories of this period). Crossing the South American continent, the St. Frank's party cannot resist flying over the scene of their former adventure, curious to know if anything of El Dorado has survived the great earthquake. From this point events move with breathless speed, reaching a climax with the appearance of Zingrave and the imprisonment of Lee's party in a fiery subterranean cavern where they are surrounded by a lake of molten gold.

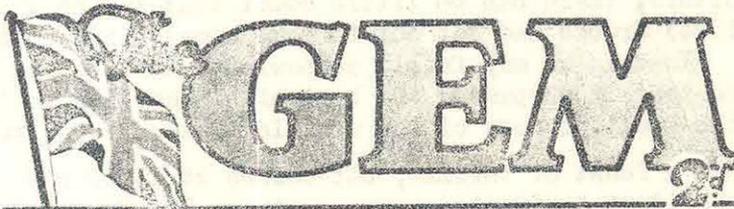
Their brilliantly ingenious escape from this situation is told in Brooks's best manner, and shows his powers of invention at their liveliest. His supreme excellence lay in passages of just this kind, and the secret was that even his most extravagant sequences were governed by an element of uncanny logic. One's sense of imaginative fantasy was seized, and yet one's belief compelled at the same time. So precarious a combination was not always perfectly judged, of course - some instances later in this serial I find contrived - but the remarkable thing is that it comes off at all; and among the many successful examples that remain to enthral us the rope of gold stands out as a tour de force.

From this highpoint I feel the story declines markedly. It is not that it fails to hold the reader's attention; nor is it really, I think, that he loses tolerance with the rather incredible incidents, though these admittedly pile up in some profusion. The real trouble is that a story which has been moving swiftly and purposefully now seems to lose direction. Zingrave, unexpectedly failing to re-appear, isn't heard of again till the final instalment, and with him we lose the cut and thrust we had expected from Nelson Lee and so formidable an antagonist. Instead of developing, the story becomes transparently sectional, each episode presenting a more or less self-contained adventure - a brontosaurus one week, pterodactyls the next, a giant fungus in another, and so on. In each some peril is thrillingly averted only for a new one to confront the travellers in the last few lines, with the reader left gasping for a week: quite an orthodox serial procedure, of course, but one that is here in danger of degenerating into a formula.

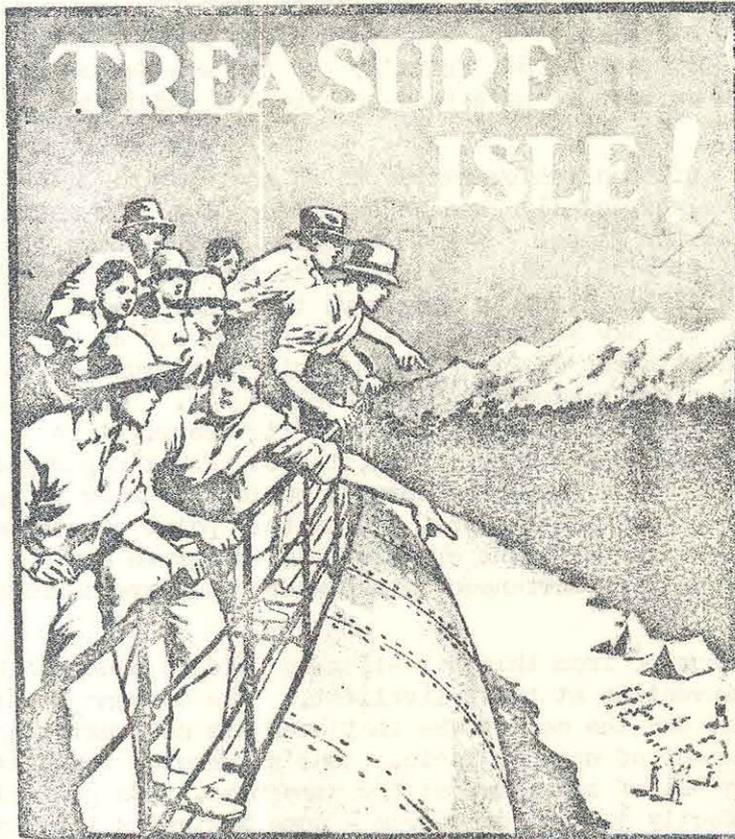
Perhaps in retrospect the author himself felt that exuberance of detail had here got the better of his sense of plot, to the detriment of his story as a whole. At all events, it is a weakness that does not recur in the Gem serials. The stories that were now to follow certainly did not lack novelty of incident, but it was always controlled and organic, contributing to the forward march of the narrative.

Of Treasure Isle (Gems 1355-1365), a thrilling adventure among Pacific island cannibals, I cannot speak unemotionally, for it was running in the first numbers of the Gem that I ever read. The effect of these issues on a small boy's imagination (I was barely eight) was quite electrifying, and the world of this serial, perilous yet appealing, with its vivid colours and malign shadows, a world not just of boys but of adventurous, masterful adults, was even more so, perhaps, than the more predictable world of St. Jim's. It was probably my first experience of an adventure thriller. My early Gems passed quickly

GREAT NEW ST. FRANK'S STORY STARTS TO-DAY!



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into limbo - it was some time later that I began to preserve my copies - but the atmosphere of this serial and of Savile Lumley's superb illustrations continued to haunt my memory for years afterwards. The details in time were inevitably dimmed, and at last I could no longer be sure if the stray fragments that struggled for recollection belonged to some real story or to some muddled fantasy of my own making. Yet a few years back, when I acquired a complete set of Gems for this period, I turned to these numbers with an astonished recognition. There it all was: the descent of the whirlpool, the poisoned spear in Dorrie's arm, young Willy's ordeal among the savages, as it had hovered on the fringes of my memory for 25 years. Re-reading it for the first time since childhood I still found it colourful, swift-moving and compelling - a thoroughly satisfying adventure tale.

Equally satisfying is the Western adventure Ghost River Ranch, which followed in nos. 1366-1376. The flying school had now returned to base, and the story opens at St. Frank's, but almost immediately Justin B. Farman is gathering together a party to visit his father's ranch property in Arizona. They quickly find mischief afoot in the Ghost River valley, and themselves in the thick of exciting experiences. It was always one of the merits of the St. Frank's characters that they could be introduced into a special setting without losing their own individuality. Here once again a specialised locale forms the vividly-presented backcloth against which the reader can the more readily accept a headlong sequence of events. Like its predecessor, this is an excellent tale, virile, imaginative and strong in atmosphere, with all its elements nicely in proportion. Plot and construction are of a particularly high order, with several ingenious twists, including a splendid surprise intervention by Nelson Lee and a fine double-take finish.

Following these hectic months a school story came as a refreshing change. Not, as one might expect, that The School from Down Under, in nos. 1377-1387, was in any routine sense a normal school story; but the action was confined to St. Frank's and its district and almost exclusively concerned the boys themselves, with a topical cricket interest in the background. When a party of Australian boys take over the River House for the summer we seem to be in for a quasi-Hamiltonian tale of ragging encounters and inter-school rivalry, but in fact the story is typical Brooks, with its surprise turns of fortune and an element of mystery that brings in Nelson Lee at the climax.

After a year of St. Frank's serials, the Gem reader could now look back on several striking successes that had clearly established Edwy Searles Brooks's mastery in this medium. Indeed, it might be argued that it showed him to particular advantage. Where the extensive canvas of a full weekly issue requires a more detailed exploration of school life, the organisation of sub-plots and the extension of dialogue - departments in which he did not especially excel - the serial largely eliminates these factors and places a premium on those talents he most conspicuously possessed - an exuberant invention, a bold, clear sense of outline, and a simple but compelling narrative style. With a serial, impetus is nearly everything; and Brooks had above all the capacity to make the time-honoured instruction 'Now read on' quite superfluous.

His next contribution nevertheless marked a departure from the pattern so successfully established, for The Ten Talons of Taaz, in Gems 1388-1398, was not strictly a serial at all: in effect it was simply ten short stories and a prologue. When ten leading St. Frank's juniors go to the rescue of a doomed vessel they unwittingly incur the vengeance of a Tibetan cult. Though their lives are temporarily spared, each must undergo an ordeal to appease the wrath of the vulture-god Taaz. Each of the ten episodes is devoted in turn to one character and the 'test' to which

he is subjected; they are thus, while loosely linked, not really continuous, and only the last need preserve its allotted place in the sequence. The whole scheme sacrifices the possibility of real development and forward drive - normally among Brooks's chief assets - and leans heavily upon the merits of its general idea and the novel nature of the ten ordeals. These, and the supernatural light that plays upon the series, do give it a certain fascination, but considered as a whole the experiment probably left neither the author nor his readers entirely happy.

For some reason we now had as long as nine months of Gem serials devoted to St. Frank's reprints. Not, one imagines, that more than a handful of readers were aware of this, or that the rest particularly cared so long as they were getting good stories; and on that score they were probably well content, for the bulk of this period was occupied by the Lee's famous Northestria series (1st N.S. 36 - 43), reprinted in Gems 1405-1431 as The Secret World. I know I wouldn't willingly have missed it. One wonders nevertheless what was behind the reprint policy, especially in view of the excellent new work Brooks had put into the serials.

As a prelude to the Northestria series the Gem also took over from the Lee the Christmas series that ran into it. It appeared as Handforth the Ghost-Hunter, and occupied nos. 1399-1404. The early chapters were weird and gripping enough (I spent a really creepy Christmas in 1934, for the St. Jim's story was Martin Clifford's ghostly masterpiece about Mr. Selby's insane guest), but thereafter I felt that, for Brooks, it tailed off rather tamely. Hauntings apart, though, a pleasantly warm and convivial glow pervaded this seasonal story, which assembled a large cast of St. Frank's favourites as well as the Moor View girls. We awaited only the arrival of Dorrie, Umlosi and Nelson Lee to complete the party for another adventurous trip in the former's airship. Surprisingly, the vessel was here named the Titan; the Sky Wanderer, of course, had not been thought of in 1927, but the Editor should have known better in 1935.

And a memorable trip it proved to be. Travelling in the Arctic Circle, the party are driven before a violent storm and finally brought down in a strange land surrounded by volcanic mountains, where the inhabitants pursue a completely mediaeval way of life. After some difficulty, they establish friendly relations with the inhabitants, to discover that not only is there no way of escape to the outer world but that Northestria itself is threatened by war.

The Secret World, of course, is open to all the usual objections levelled against stories about the discovery of lost lands. I can only say that they have never troubled me very greatly, and that if the yarn be handled with imagination and some sensible restraint I am entirely ready to suspend my disbelief. I have had enormous pleasure from stories in this genre, which, along with the desert-island theme, seems to me one that never loses its fascination. Their appeal, I imagine, is to emotions in the deep subconscious of modern man. At a time when life has become safe but unadventurous it is pleasant to be able, without parting from the comforting assurances of security all about us, to return in imagination to a time when men lived closer to realities. Even more potent, perhaps, are those stories like the Northestria series which depict a realm cut off from the advance of modern knowledge. They appeal to the wish dormant in us all to have our chance in life over again. Aware that past ages did possess some secrets of living that have now eluded us, we are able to say: "Ah, if only we could return to those times knowing what we know now!"

These, doubtless, are considerations well distant from the mind of the school-boy reader, but what they amount to saying is that the lost-land theme is truly and

essentially romantic, and seldom fails to inspire a colourful and exciting tale; and these are matters that the schoolboy reader - very rightly - takes quite seriously.

The Northestria series lent itself with remarkable smoothness to serial adaptation, all things considered, though a duration of 27 weeks was a little excessive by normal standards. But the interest never really flags, and, aided by the unfailing standard of Lumley's illustrations, the story moves towards its appointed end with a sense of gathering momentum and cumulative excitement that would have been impossible had it been pruned to a smaller scale. It must certainly be acknowledged one of the highlights of this period of the Gem.

Whatever was to follow *The Secret World*, it would do so with some sense of inevitable anti-climax. The Editor wisely avoided the temptation of offering another big success, and looked instead for a pleasantly relaxed short serial. The choice fell on another reprint, which appeared as *Mystery Mill* and ran for four weeks in nos. 1432-1435. In every respect a modest little mystery tale, it claimed to be nothing that it wasn't, was refreshingly free from stereotyped situations, and was never in danger of outstaying its welcome. It thus fulfilled its allotted role admirably.

And so we came to another fateful August. There can have been little in the announcement of a new mystery serial by E. S. Brooks to suggest to the reader of 1935 that the wheel had come full circle since that summer of two years before, and that this was indeed to prove the last chapter in the story of St. Frank's. All the signs were on the contrary pointed fair towards a further golden period of Gem serials, for it was quickly evident that Brooks was back with a completely new tale and at the top of his form. Hailed in such terms as "Edwy Searles Brooks's greatest school thriller", *The Black Hand at St. Frank's* (Gems 1436-1448) lived up to nearly all that was claimed for it. The story of how fate involves eight St. Frank's boys in the machinations of an exiled Mafia-like organisation which has established a secret headquarters near the school, it reveals in full measure those qualities by which Brooks could delight and enthral his readers. Criticism would be mere pedantry. As thrill follows thrill, the reader is swept along with each twist and turn of the plot as though upon some irresistible current. Despite its breathless pace, the story never falters in its course, and the sinister and malevolent atmosphere that envelops Zingari's forces in the earlier episodes is gradually dispelled as Nelson Lee takes control and, in a splendid climax, the fighting eight strike back at the killers. I have vivid recollections of reading *The Black Hand* in bed long after the hour of curfew had tolled, and with many nervous glances into the more shadowy recesses of the room. I was carefully collecting my papers by this time, and this is a serial I have many times re-read since those halcyon days, always with captivated attention. A thriller in a thousand, the Editor had called it, and so it is: an absolute cracker.

Thus, with a resounding bang, ended the St. Frank's serials in the Gem. No. 1448 announced that a Rookwood serial would start the following week, and that we were saying farewell to St. Frank's "for the present". That was all: no fuss, no publicity, no explanations. But it was not for the present; apart from a small piece in the 1936 Holiday Annual, the Black Hand was the last St. Frank's story Brooks ever wrote. Suddenly, surprisingly, it was the end.

I enjoyed Rookwood, and I was glad when the Gem later serialised the first Magnet stories. But neither made quite the successful marriage for me that St. Jim's and St. Frank's had made. Inevitably one wonders (continued on page 28...)

Through the years with **THE CAPTAIN**

by BRIAN DOYLE

When Sir George Newnes brought out the 1st number of "The Strand" in January, 1891, he invented the popular sixpenny illustrated monthly magazine. When he introduced "The Captain" in April, 1899, he performed the same service for the schoolboy market.

Although other juvenile publications, such as the "Boys' Own Paper", were being produced in monthly editions, they simply consisted of the weekly numbers bound up together in a single cover. "The Captain" was designed as a monthly from the start. And its career was long and distinguished.

Newnes once said that his main idea in the basic layout of both "The Strand" and "The Captain" was that people would like a story magazine if they found an illustration at every opening. He therefore gave instructions that the best, and only the best, illustrators, as well as authors, were to be engaged. First-class stories and articles married to excellent and graphic pictures was the formula. And the formula paid off handsomely.

"The Captain" was once described as "a kind of junior brother to 'The Strand'". The description was an apt one as both magazines were much-alike in appearance. They were the same size (7" x 9") and both had glossy paper, double-column pages, wide margins, striking illustrations and bold, easy-to-read type.

Whilst "The Strand" had Sherlock Holmes, "The Captain" rejoiced in 'The Old Fag'. 'The Old Fag' was the pseudonym of the editor, R. S. Warren Bell, famous under his own name for excellent school stories. Under John Hassall's famous drawing, The Old Fag - pictured as a sort of tall, thin and sprightly Pickwickian figure, complete with skull-cap and pince-nez - gave his monthly Editor's Chat, which was among the magazine's most popular features. In one section of it he acted as a kind of 'Dutch Uncle' to readers, offering sympathetic and usually sound advice to his more worried correspondents.

"The Captain" was aimed primarily at public and grammar schoolboys. It offered well-illustrated features on famous public schools, origins of public school traditions, photographs of schools and their captains, sports results of leading schools and so on. Every conceivable aspect of public school life, past and present, in fact. And in fiction too. But more of that presently.

Warren Bell dreamed up a novel idea to publicise "The Captain" on its first appearance. The university Boat Race fell on the day following publication of Number 1, so he arranged for a launch, displaying banners and streamers announcing the new magazine, to parade up and down the Thames, before and after the event.

The 1st issue, for April 1899 (which, in fact, appeared on 22nd March) was priced at 6d and must have been eagerly snapped up by discerning schoolboys - boys who decided not to purchase half-a-dozen 1d papers instead - for nothing quite like "The Captain" had been seen on the bookstalls before.

The contents included a feature on G. A. Henty (then one of the country's top

boys' writers), a Greyhouse school story by Bell, the first instalment of a rousing adventure serial by D. H. Parry, the redoubtable C. B. Fry (the magazine's Athletics Editor) on training for sports, an article on fags and fagging, the first instalments of a couple of school stories, a piece on physical culture by Sandow (the Charles Atlas of his time), features on Eton College's museum, haunted schools and school magazines, many other short stories, hobby articles and features and, lastly, right at the back of the magazine, The Old Fag's Chat. All this plus more than 140 illustrations!

The Old Fag began his first Chat disarmingly enough by remarking: "So far from apologising, after the manner of new papers and magazines, for adding our weight to the bookstalls, we hasten to beg pardon for not having done so sooner. True, there are several boys' papers, but there does not exist a sixpenny magazine for boys - that is to say, a sixpenny magazine which comes out once a month and only once a month." The cover showed a school sports captain (which actual sport was left in some doubt) being cheered to the echo by a group of boys in the background. This was the design used on the cover of the maroon-clad bound volumes issued twice a year too.

The new magazine caught on, especially with two entirely different groups of readers: those who were at public schools, and those who wished they were. To the former the magazine had obvious appeal, dealing with the world they knew and lived in; to the latter the school stories were a kind of wish fulfilment in print, etching in the details of a private world they longed to join, but knew they never could. The same sort of reason, probably, why so many readers bought and enjoyed "The Magnet", etc. each week.

"The Captain", of course, specialised in public school stories. And how superb they all were.

The Old Fag once replied to a correspondent: "'Anxious Enquirer', not being a boy, has doubts about 'The Captain' school stories. 'Are they true to life,' she asks, 'or are they only piffle?' and she waits in trepidation for my reply. How glad I am to be able to assure her that they are the real thing and are written by men who know."

He was right. The 'men who knew' included such writers as Gunby Hadath, Richard Bird and 'The Old Fag' himself, Warren Bell, who were all schoolmasters (or had been), and Hylton Cleaver, P. G. Wodehouse and Desmond Coke, who based some of their stories partially upon their own schooldays at St. Pauls, Dulwich and Shrewsbury respectively. Most readers of the "CDA" are familiar with the writings of these authors, so I will not go into much detail about them here. Fuller notes will be found at the end of the lists and I will just relay the relevant tit-bit that a portrait of Desmond Coke (author of "The Bending of a Twig", etc.) appeared in the first volume of "The Captain" - appropriately enough as Coke was Captain of Shrewsbury at the time!

Some of Wodehouse's earliest work appeared in "The Captain" between 1902 and 1913, comprising (apart from a few sports articles) of several excellent school stories, in one of which ("The Lost Lambs") the immortal Psmith made his bow.

Many people are under the impression that Wodehouse wrote his very first stories for "The Captain". This is not so. In fact, his work appeared in "Tit-Bits", "Fun", "Sandow's Magazine", "The Weekly Telegraph", "The Universal and Ludgate Magazine", "Answers", "The Globe", "Today" and "The Public School Magazine" (which serialised "The Pothunters", his first full-length school story) before

Wodehouse so much as sold a short story to "The Captain".

Distinguished writer John Buchan (later Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor-General of Canada) wrote a brilliant adventure story set in South Africa for "The Captain". In its serial form it was called "The Black General" and had superb illustrations by George Soper. Republished in book-form it was called "Prester John" and is today a classic. In his autobiography, "Memory Hold the Door", Buchan recalls: "...apart from a few short stories I let fiction alone until 1910 when, being appalled by the dullness of most boys' books, I thought I would attempt one of my own, based on my African experiences. The result was 'Prester John', which has since become a school-reader in many languages."

Other notables who featured in the pages of "The Captain" included Alec Waugh (author of "Loom of Youth") who wrote short stories; Clifford Mills (author of the famous Christmas play and book "Where the Rainbow Ends"), who contributed a serial; Leslie Hore-Belisha (later famous as a politician and the man who gave his name to the 'belisha-beacon'), who wrote a humorous poem called "The Susceptible Monitor", written in a parody of W. S. Gilbert's style, for Volume 28; and J. N. Pentelow, who contributed short stories to Volumes 30 and 35.

Sport occupied its fair share of pages in "The Captain" and, as usual, nothing but the best in the way of experts was the magazine's policy. As mentioned earlier, the great C. B. Fry (who captained the successful England cricket team in Australia in 1904) was the first Athletics Editor; he was such a hit with readers that he was later able to leave "The Captain" and run his own magazine for Newnes and called "C. B. Fry's Magazine". Fry was succeeded by Pelham Warner and other cricket contributors included Hobbs, Grace, Fender and Jessop. Other sports were equally well covered.

Hobbies were not forgotten and other "Captain" experts included E. J. Nankivell on stamps and Edward Step on natural history. 'The Captain Club' was later introduced and had a membership of thousands, who loyally wore badges and entered special competitions.

The offices of "The Captain" were situated in Burleigh Street, near Covent Garden and opposite the stage door of the Lyceum Theatre, from which editor Warren Bell often saw Sir Henry Irving and Ellen Terry emerge. Unlike most editors, Bell encouraged callers and was also quite proud of the fact that Sir George Newnes had been the previous occupant of his office when editor of "Tit-Bits".

In 1910, Newnes started 'The Captain Library', a series of B.F.L.-type monthly publications each containing one long complete story. Some were classics, such as "The Three Musketeers" and "The Last of the Mohicans". The venture failed to catch on, however, and ceased after 12 titles had been issued.

In 1910, The Old Fag held a contest among readers, inviting them to choose what they considered were the best dozen books for boys ever written. The result may be of some interest. In order of popularity they were: "Tom Brown's Schooldays", "Treasure Island", "Robinson Crusoe", "Westward Ho!", "Adventures of Sherlock Holmes", "Ivanhoe", "King Solomon's Mines", "Coral Island", "Fifth Form at St. Dominic's", "Last of the Mohicans", "Mr. Midshipman Easy" and "J. O. Jones". As the Old Fag was himself the author of this last choice he must have felt highly gratified at the result...

Warren Bell, always doing his best to help his readers from every angle, must have puzzled quite a few of them, to say nothing of any parents who happened to see

it, by running a piece in 1909 in fervent support of communism. It was written by a freelance contributor who said that Psmith's humorous quips on 'the New Socialism' in the current serial by Wodehouse, "The New Fold", were slighting a great political faith, etc. etc. The rest of the article read like a leader from the "Daily Worker" and must have raised many an eyebrow in public school studies throughout the country.

"The Captain" carried on, however, and even the Great War didn't seem to make a lot of difference to its format or contents. There were only two war serials; but a lot of space was given up to reports and pictures of the various schools' O.C.T.U's in training. Regular reports were given by the Old Fag on how various contributors were faring on the battlefield and Hylton Cleaver, it was proudly announced, was actually writing his school stories down in pencil in the muddy trenches and sending them back to "The Captain" offices. Copies of the magazine, it was also reported, were much in demand at the Front and were read and re-read until they fell to pieces.

But after the War ended, things didn't go too well with "The Captain". Circulation figures fell and innovations were introduced to revive flagging readers. In 1919 the cover changed from two-colour to three-colour. And by 1923 the title appearing on the cover was "The Captain and Wireless Supplement", with a 16-page tinted insert in the middle all about wireless. There were even short stories on the subject, in "The Captain's" efforts to cash in on the new craze, no doubt written to order. There was one, again in 1923, by Gunby Hadath entitled "The Head Listens In". Advertisements for radio equipment and the like abounded and one felt that if Psmith was still gracing "The Captain's" pages he would have been tuning in to the latest political talks from 2LO.

In the end, some people said it was the advertisers who forced "The Captain's" close-down. Said C. B. Fry in his autobiography "Life Worth Living": "'The Captain' never persuaded advertisers it was read by parents. Advertisers did not believe that boys are likely to buy such articles as soap and whisky. I have always thought that the disbelief of advertisers in the capacity of boys to absorb soap was the snag which eventually tripped up the career of 'The Captain'."

Whatever the reason, soap, whisky, or simply lack of sufficient readers, "The Captain" - the well-loved paper 'for boys and old boys' - made its final appearance in March, 1924. The announcement to unsuspecting readers at the end of the editorial chat was blunt and to the point: "And now I have some news to give you. With this number the publication of 'The Captain' will be suspended. A further announcement of a new series of 'The Captain' and also of 'The Captain Annual' will be made shortly." But it never was.

Footnote: Readers may like to know, as a matter of interest, that there was another boys' magazine called "The Captain" issued by the Wilmo Press in May 1934. Sub-titled 'The Public Schoolboys' Monthly Magazine', it was a slim publication chiefly concerned with sport and only lasted for a few issues.

Before we come to the factual lists of serials, etc., I should like to make acknowledgement to Leonard M. Allen, Frank Vernon Lay, W. O. G. Lofts and Derek Adley for various items of information which I have gleaned from their previous writings.

Now to the lists.....

SERIALS AND SERIES IN "THE CAPTAIN" 1899 - 1924VOLUME 1 (Apr.-Sept., 1899)

| <u>AUTHOR</u> | <u>STORY</u> | <u>ILLUSTRATOR</u> | <u>TYPE</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| D. H. Parry | The King's Red Coat | G. C. Glover | Military advts. with the Royal Dragoons in the 19th century. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Tales of Greyhouse (3 stories) | T. M. R. Whitwell, M. A. Boole, and John Finnemore. | School stories. |
| Ascott R. Hope | The Red Ram | Dudley Cleaver | School story. |
| Albert Lee | The Two Fags | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |

Features on: G. A. Henty, Tom Browne, R. I., W. G. Grace and K. S. Ranjitsinhji.

VOLUME 2 (Oct. '99-Mar. 1900)

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| John Mackie | Heart of the Prairie | Stewart Browne | Advt. story set in N.W. Canada. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Tales of Greyhouse (6 stories) | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |

Features on: Phil May, Jules Verne, Cecil Aldin, G. Manville Fenn and John Tussaud.

VOLUME 3 (Apr. - Sept. 1900)

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Fred Swainson | Acton's Feud | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Tales of Greyhouse (1 story) | E. F. Skinner | School story. |
| Fred Whishaw | The Three Scouts | George Soper | Advts. in the Boer War. |

Features on: Gordon Stables and 'Lord' George Sanger.

VOLUME 4 (Oct. 1900 - Mar. 1901)

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Gordon Stables | Cruise of the "Vengeful" | George Hawley | Advts. in the Royal Navy. |
| W. W. Mayland | King Waterbottle the First | Tom Browne | Humorous story about a waiter who becomes King of an island. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Tales of Greyhouse (4 stories) | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |

VOLUME 5 (Apr. - Sep. 1901)

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| E. Cockburn Reynolds | Jungly Achieves the Impossible | Author | Indian advts. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Sir Billy | George Soper | Old boy of Greyhouse who becomes a barrister. |
| Fred Swainson | Smith's House | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| John Mackie | Tales of the Trenches (4 stories) | J. Macfarlane | Boer War advts. |

Feature on: John Hassall

VOLUME 6 (Oct. '01 - Mar. '02)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Clifford Mills | A Cavalier Maid | E. F. Skinner | Roundheads and Cavaliers drama. |
| Stacey Blake and W. E. Hodgson | In Deep Water | George Hawley | Sea story. |
| John Mackie | Tales of the Trenches (4 stories) | George Soper | Boer War advts. |
| Harold Burrows | Told on the Junior Side. (3 stories) | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |

Features on: Louis Wain (cat artist) and Picture Postcards. Also contains P. G. Wodehouse's first short story for the magazine ("The Babe and the Dragon", a story of St. Austin's)

VOLUME 7 (Apr. - Sep. 1902)

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| R. S. Warren Bell | J. O. Jones | Gordon Browne | School story. |
| Louis Becke | The Jalasco Brig. | George Hawley | Sea story. |
| Fred Swainson | Tales of Eliza's | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |
| Harold Burrows | Told on the Junior Side. (6 stories) | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |

VOLUME 8 (Oct. 1902 - Mar. 1903)

| <u>AUTHOR</u> | <u>STORY</u> | <u>ILLUSTRATOR</u> | <u>TYPE</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| John Mackie | Rising of the Red Man | E. F. Skinner | Red Indian story set in N.W. Canada. |
| F. P. Gibbon | Tales of India | Warwick Goble | Self-explanatory. |

Features on: Dick Turpin and other Highwaymen, and the young Charles Dickens.

VOLUME 9 (Apr. - Sep. 1903)

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Charles Protheroe | Isle of Fortune | George Hawley and E. S. Hodgson | Sea story. |
| Harold Burrows | Lower School Yarns | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | The Long 'Un. (later re-published as "Jim Mortimer") | Gordon Browne | Advts. of a young doctor in London. |

VOLUME 10 (Oct. 1903 - Mar. 1904)

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Franklin W. Calkins | Across the Wilderness | E. F. Skinner | Red Indian advts. |
| P. G. Wodehouse | The Gold Bat. | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Guy N. Pocock | Poor, Dear Harry | Gordon Browne | School story. |

Feature on: Alfred Pearse (artist)

VOLUME 11 (Apr. - Sept. 1904)

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| R. S. Warren Bell | The Duffer (Pt. I) | Gordon Browne | Story of a boy who, after being expelled from school, works in an office in a seaside town. |
| George Hawley | Sailors of the King | Author | Royal Naval advts. during a war between two South American States. |
| Franklin W. Calkins | Tales of the Far West (6 stories) | John Macfarlane, E. F. Skinner, and George Soper. | Self-explanatory. |
| Fred Swainson | Further Tales of Eliza's | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |

Feature on: Tom Browne, R.I.

VOLUME 12 (Oct. 1904 - Mar. 1905)

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| F. L. Morgan | At Hickson's (5 stories) | Alfred Pearse | Stories set in a mixed school in San Francisco. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | The Duffer (Pt. II) | Gordon Browne | See Vol. 11 |
| P. G. Wodehouse | Head of Kays | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Franklin W. Calkins | Tales of the Far West (6 stories) | E. F. Skinner | Self-explanatory. |

Feature on: F. Carruthers Gould (caricaturist)

VOLUME 13 (Apr. - Sep. 1905)

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| F. L. Morgan | At Hickson's (5 stories) | Alfred Pearse | See Vol. 12. |
| H. C. Crosfield | Adventures of John Baywood | Stanley L. Wood | Sea advts. |
| George Ellbar | "O.H.M.S." | E. S. Hodgson | Royal Naval advts. |
| Franklin W. Calkins | Tales of the Far West | George Hawley | Self-explanatory. |
| P. G. Wodehouse | Tales of Wrykyn | T. M. R. Whitwell | School stories. |

VOLUME 14 (Oct. 1905 - Mar. 1906)

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bertram Mitford | Adventures of Dick Selmes | R. Caton Woodville | Advts. in the wilds of S. Africa. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Cox's Cough-Drops (Pt. I) | J. R. Skelton | School story. |
| P. G. Wodehouse | The White Feather | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |

Features on: Christmas with well-known black-and-white artists, and Picture Postcards.

VOLUME 15 (Apr. - Sep. 1906)

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| R. S. Warren Bell | Cox's Cough-Drops (Pt. II) | J. R. Skelton | School story. |
| G. Firth Scott | Track of Midnight | George Soper | Advts. with Australian bushrangers. |

Feature on: R. Caton Woodville

VOLUME 16 (Oct. 1906 - Mar. 1907)

| <u>AUTHOR</u> | <u>STORY</u> | <u>ILLUSTRATOR</u> | <u>TYPE</u> |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| T. S. Gurr | Exploits of Tantia Bheel | George Soper | Indian advts. |
| Fred Swainson | The Informer | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| John Mackie | In Search of Smith | R. Caton Woodville | Advts. in unexplored Australia. |

Features on: Picture Postcards, Mayne Reid, and the Early Explorers.

VOLUME 17 (Apr. - Sep. 1907)

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| P. G. Wodehouse | Jackson Junior | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Herbert Hayens | The Fatal List | R. Caton Woodville | Story of the French Revolution. |

Features on: Rudyard Kipling at School, and Circuses.

VOLUME 18 (Oct. 1907 - Mar. 1908)

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| R. S. Warren Bell | Green at Greyhouse | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Charles Gilson | The Lost Island | R. Caton Woodville | Advts. in the Far East. |

Feature on: G. A. Henty

VOLUME 19 (Apr. - Sep. 1908)

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|---|
| P. G. Wodehouse | The Lost Lambs (later republished, with "Jackson Junior", as "Mike") | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Francis Marlowe | The Train Pirates (Pt. I) | Stanley L. Wood | Story of a train robbery in Canada. |
| Brew Molohan | Ways That Are Wild | Harry Rountree | Story of a gentleman poacher. |
| Herbert Hayens | The Iron Hand | John de Walton | 17th century advts. with Cromwell's Army. |

VOLUME 20 (Oct. 1908 - Mar. 1909)

| | | | |
|------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| Charles Cleig | The Middy of the "Blunderbore" | E. S. Hodgson | Royal Navy story. |
| P. G. Wodehouse | The New Fold (later repub- lished as "Psmith in the City") | T. M. R. Whitwell | Advts. of Psmith and Mike Jackson whilst working in a City bank. |
| Francis Marlowe | The Train Pirates (Pt. II) | Stanley L. Wood | See Vol. 19 |
| Percy Longhurst | Champion's Conqueror | A. Lehany | Story of wrestling in Westmoreland. |
| Christopher Beck | Crew of the Cat-Boat | W. Herbert Holloway | Sea stories of the Florida coast. |

Features on: Kite-flying, and London's Tube Railways.

VOLUME 21 (Apr. - Sep. 1909)

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------|---|
| Clucas Joughlin | People of the Caves | C. Sparrow | Mystery and Advt. in the Isle of Man. |
| C. B. Dignam | Inventions of Brown | Charles Crombie | Humorous stories about an inventor. |
| F. L. Morgan | "The Scragg" | Alfred Pearse | A story of Hickson's, the mixed school in San Francisco. |
| Charles Gilson | Twins of Tendring | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |

Features on: Highwaymen, Captain Marryat, Charles Kingsley, Evolution of the Bicycle, Edward J. Nankivell (Philatelic Editor of "The Captain"), and M. P. Castle (latter's successor).

VOLUME 22 (Oct. 1909 - Mar. 1910)

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|---|
| P. G. Wodehouse | Psmith, Journalist (later republished both under this title and also as "Psmith in New York"). | T. M. R. Whitwell | Psmith's advts. as a journalist in New York. |
| J. S. Martin | Mennan; or Tales of a Border Lad. | E. S. Hodgson, etc. | Advts. of a Scottish boy. |
| W. A. Fraser | The Tiger God | George Soper | Indian advts. |

Feature on: P. G. Wodehouse. Also contains Gunby Hadath's first story for the magazine ("Fozzle's Brilliant Idea")

VOLUME 23 (Apr. - Sept. 1910)

| | | | |
|-------------|--|--------------|------------------------------------|
| John Buchan | The Black General (later republished as "Prester John") | George Soper | Famous story of advt. in S. Africa |
|-------------|--|--------------|------------------------------------|

Feature on: H. Rider Haggard

VOLUME 24 (Oct. 1910 - Mar. 1911)

| <u>AUTHOR</u> | <u>STORY</u> | <u>ILLUSTRATOR</u> | <u>TYPE</u> |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Francis Marlowe | The Brig "Jane Mary" | R. Caton Woodville | 17th century sea story. |
| Desmond Coke | Worst House at Sherborough | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |

Contains W. Fletcher Thomas's composite drawing of more than 30 of "The Captain's" regular contributors.

VOLUME 25 (Apr. - Sep. 1911)

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| G. A. Hope | Kerr of Castleburgh | H. M. Brock | School story. |
| Percy F. Westerman | Sea Monarch | E. S. Hodgson | Sea advts. |

VOLUME 26 (Oct. 1911 - Mar. 1912)

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| R. S. Warren Bell | Black Evans | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| John Mackie | Lost Explorer | John de Walton | Advts. in the Australian Bush. |
| Richard Benson | Tiger of Batol | George Soper | Advts. in the China Seas. |

VOLUME 27 (Apr. - Sep. 1912)

| | | | |
|------------------|--|--------------|---|
| Gunby Hadath | Conquering Claybury. (later republished as "Schoolboy Grit") | H. M. Brock | School story. |
| Frederick Watson | White Man's Gold | John Cameron | Advts. seeking hidden treasure in Brazil |

VOLUME 28 (Oct. 1912 - Mar. 1913)

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------|---------------|
| Max Rittenberg | The Cockatoo | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| P. G. Wodehouse | The Eighteen-Carat Kid (later republished as "The Little Nugget") | H. M. Brock | School story. |
| Percy F. Westerman | The Stolen Cruiser | John de Walton | Sea story. |

VOLUME 29 (Apr. - Sep. 1913)

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
| H. Mortimer Batten | Birdett the Trailer | George Soper | Advts. among Red Indians in N. W. Canada. |
| W. Bourne Cooke | The Black Box | John de Walton | Advts. in the Monmouth Rebellion. |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Mystery of Markham | H. M. Brock | School story. |

Contains Hylton Cleaver's very first story ("The Red Rag", a story of Harley)

VOLUME 30 (Oct. 1913 - Mar. 1914)

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| Charles Gilson | The Fire Gods | George Soper | Advts. in the Congo. |
| John S. Martin | Escapades of Lordie | Paul Hardy | Advts. of a Scottish boy. |
| Frederick Watson | Muckle John | John Cameron | Advts. in the service of Bonnie Prince Charlie. |
| Harold Avery | The New House | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |

VOLUME 31 (Apr. - Sep. 1914)

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Gunby Hadath | The Last of His Line | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Herbert Strang | Old Man of the Mountain | Rene Bull | Mystery of Advt. in Tibet. |

VOLUME 32 (Oct. 1914 - Mar. 1915)

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------|
| H. Bedford Jones | Flamehair the Skald | T. H. Robinson | Viking Advts. |
| Herbert Strang | Prisoners of the Chateau | F. C. Dickinson | First World War story. |
| Hylton Cleaver | Who Cares? (later repub- lished as "Roscoe Makes Good") | H. M. Brock | School story. |

VOLUME 33 (Apr. - Sep. 1915)

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Harold Avery | The Amazing Secret | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Charles Gilson | Held By the Enemy | John de Walton | War story. |

VOLUME 34 (Oct. 1915 - Mar. 1916)

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| Richard Bird | The Dipcote Skippers (later republished as "The Rival Captains") | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Frederick Watson | Master of Adventure | H. M. Brock | Advts. in the time of Bonnie Prince Charlie. |

(cont'd)..

VOLUME 34 (cont'd)..

| <u>AUTHOR</u> | <u>STORY</u> | <u>ILLUSTRATOR</u> | <u>TYPE</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|---|
| W. Bourne Cooke | Wreck Cove | T. H. Robinson | Advts. searching for treasure in 18th century Cornwall. |

VOLUME 35 (Apr. - Sep. 1916)

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Gunby Hadath | His Highness of Highfield | W. F. Thomas | School story. |
|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------------|

VOLUME 36 (Oct. 1916 - Mar. 1917)

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Richard Bird | The Ripswayd Ring | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|

VOLUME 37 (Apr. - Sep. 1917)

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Frederick Watson | Waking Up Warrenders (Pt. I) | H. M. Brock | School story. |
| Herbert Strang | With Haig on the Somme | T. H. Robinson | War story. |

VOLUME 38 (Oct. 1917 - Mar. 1918)

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Herbert Strang | Bright Ideas, Unlimited (3 stories) | C. E. Brock | Humorous advts. of two boy inventors. |
| Edward Platt | Getting Rid of Schmidt | A. E. Horne | |
| R. S. Warren Bell | Playing the Game (later republished as "The Three Prefects") | T. M. R. Whiwell | Advts. on the West Coast of Africa. |
| Frederick Watson | Waking Up Warrenders (Pt. II) | H. M. Brock | School story. |

VOLUME 39 (Apr. - Sep. 1918)

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| Hylton Cleaver | Brother O'Mine | H. M. Brock | School story. |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|

Feature on: Harold Earnshaw and Mabel Lucie Attwell (artists)

VOLUME 40 (Oct. 1918-Mar. 1919)

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Herbert Strang | The Blue Raider | C. E. Brock | Advts. in the South Seas. |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------|

VOLUME 41 (Apr. - Sep. 1919)

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Harold Avery | The Runaway | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
| Herbert Strang | Bright Ideas, Unlimited. (2 stories) | C. E. Brock | See Vol. 38 |

VOLUME 42 (Oct. 1919 - Mar. 1920)

| | | | |
|----------------|---|-------------|--------------|
| Hylton Cleaver | Stormy Days at Harley (later republished as "Captains of Harley") | H. M. Brock | School story |
|----------------|---|-------------|--------------|

VOLUME 43 (Apr. - Sep. 1920)

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|--|
| Herbert Strang | No Man's Island | C. E. Brock | Advts. of three schoolboys on a river holiday in Southern England. |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|--|

VOLUME 44 (Oct. 1920 - Mar. 1921)

| | | | |
|--------------|---|-------------------|---------------|
| Richard Bird | Hooligan Hall (later republished as "The Deputy Captain") | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
|--------------|---|-------------------|---------------|

VOLUME 45 (Apr. - Sep. 1921)

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Hylton Cleaver | The Old Order | H. M. Brock | School story. |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|

Also contains the first in the series of "Sparrow in Search of Expulsion" stories by Gunby Hadath.

VOLUME 46 (Oct. 1921 - Mar. 1922)

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Thompson Cross | The Yellow Flower | John de Walton | Advts. in the Far East. |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|

Also contains three further "Sparrow" stories.

VOLUME 47 (Apr. - Sep. 1922)

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Richard Bird | Bats versus Boats | Thomas Henry | School story. |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|

Also contains five more "Sparrow" stories.

VOLUME 48 (Oct. 1922 - Mar. 1923)

| <u>AUTHOR</u> | <u>STORY</u> | <u>ILLUSTRATOR</u> | <u>TYPE</u> |
|----------------|--|--------------------|---------------|
| Hylton Cleaver | Lucky Lorimer (later re-published as "Second Innings") | H. M. Brock | School story. |

Feature on: Buccaneers of the Spanish Main.

VOLUME 49 (Apr. - Sep. 1923)

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Richard Bird | Liveliest Term at Templeton | H. M. Brock | School story. |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|

VOLUME 50 (Oct. 1923 - Mar. 1924)

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Gunby Hadath | Pulling His Weight | T. M. R. Whitwell | School story. |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|

Feature on: Juan Fernandez, the real-life 'Robinson Crusoe Island'.

SOME NOTES ON A FEW OF THE CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CAPTAIN"THE AUTHORS:

R. S. WARREN BELL: The 'R.S.' stood for Robert Stanley but he never once used his first two names. Born in 1871, the eldest son of the Rev. G. E. Bell, Vicar of Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire. Was originally intended for a career in the legal profession but his leanings were really towards writing and he eventually gave up reading for the Bar. Educated at Edward St. John's College, Leatherhead, and later became a master at a private school, writing his first novel (for adults) in his spare time. This was "The Cub in Love" and was published in 1897. Two years later he joined George Newnes Ltd. as founder and first editor of "The Captain", at the age of 28. For over ten years he was the original "Old Fag". Contributed 10 serials and numerous short stories to the magazine over the years; his school tales were usually about Greyhouse, but he also wrote about Claverdon School too. One of his Greyhouse stories, "Sir Billy", was republished later in "The Gem", as a serial. Published many hard-cover books, both for boys and for adults. One of the best was "Smith's Week" which described sympathetically the trials of a junior schoolmaster's first term and was probably based, in part, on his own experiences. Other popular books included "J. O. Jones", "The Duffer", "Jim Mortimer" and "Tales of Greyhouse". In 1907 he launched another Newnes magazine, a weekly this time, called "Boy's Life", editing the first eight issues; it failed to ring the bell, however, and only lasted a little over six months. Bell resigned from "The Captain" in 1910, at the end of the 23rd volume, to write primarily for the theatre. The following year saw the successful production of his comedy "A Companion for George" at London's Kingsway Theatre. After war service with the R.F.C. and R.A.F. he settled down at Westcliff-on-Sea and resumed his novel and school story writing. He died on the 26th September, 1921, his last short story, "A Good Egg", appearing in "The Captain" two months earlier.

RICHARD BIRD: Real-name: William Barradale-Smith. Famous for his many fine school stories, Bird was a schoolmaster by profession so knew what he was writing about. He contributed five first-class serials to "The Captain" as well as several short stories. When "The Captain" ended in 1924 he wrote several serials for the "Boy's Own Paper" and one for "Chums". Wrote many hard-cover school stories, including "A School Libel", "The Moreleigh Mascot", "The Sporting House" and "Queer Doings at Aldborough". The latter was a very funny story about a boy at a big public school who suddenly becomes invisible (published in 1927). Bird also contributed many adult stories to "Strand" and other magazines.

JOHN BUCHAN: Strictly speaking, not a regular contributor to "The Captain", but he demands inclusion here because of his one and only serial for the magazine. This was "The Black General" which appeared in Volume 23 in 1910. Later republished in book-form it was given the now-famous title "Prester John". In "The Captain's" version it was illustrated superbly by George Soper. Buchan, who later became Lord Tweedsmuir, was born in Perth in 1875, educated in Glasgow and at Oxford University, practised as a lawyer, went to South Africa (setting of "Prester John") as assistant personal secretary to Lord Milner, the High Commissioner, returned to London to practice at the Bar, then, after war service, became a director of Nelson's, the publishers in Edinburgh. Sat as M.P. for the Scottish Universities 1927-35, when he was appointed Governor-General of Canada. In 1937 he became Chancellor of Edinburgh University and died in 1940. In between his distinguished political career he found time to write many books, including several successful thrillers, the most famous of which is, of course, "The Thirty-Nine Steps". His creation, Sir Richard Hannay, figured in several more stories of high adventure, including "Greenmantle", "The Three Hostages" and "Mr. Standfast".

HYLTON CLEAVER: His very first story, "The Red Rag", was published in "The Captain" in 1913. As P. G. Wodehouse had only recently stopped writing his famous school stories for the magazine, there was something of a breach to be filled - and Cleaver filled it brilliantly. He rapidly became one of the most popular school story writers in the country - and deservedly so. Most of his tales were about Greyminster or Harley, and some were based upon his own schooldays at St. Paul's School. His own favourite book, "The Old Order", appeared in "The Captain" in 1921. Wrote five serials for "The Captain" and many short stories. His first book was "Roscoe Makes Good", which originally appeared in "The Captain" as "Who Cares?" Published many other hard-cover books. Wrote many serials for "Chums" and "BOP" too. Was a regular sports writer on the London "Evening Standard" for over 20 years. Was a welcome guest at the London OBBC in March, 1961. Wrote humorous stories for "Chums" under the name 'Reginald Crunden'. Died in September, 1961, at the age of 70.

DESMOND COKE: This famous school story writer's portrait appeared in Volume One of "The Captain" - appropriately, as at the time Coke was Captain of Shrewsbury. He began his literary career very early for, at Shrewsbury, he edited "The Salopian" and later, at Oxford, edited "The Isis". Wrote his classic story of life at Shrewsbury, "The Bending of a Twig", soon after leaving school, and it was published (dedicated to his housemaster, the Rev. Churchill), in 1906. Wrote several other school stories, including "The House Prefect", "The School Across the Road" and "The Worst House at Sherborough". The latter appeared as a serial in "The Captain" in 1910-11. Other novels of school life, intended rather more for adults than boys, were "Stanton", "The Worm" and "Wilson's". He also wrote other adult novels, including "The Comedy of Age", "The Golden Key" and "The Monkey Tree", and several books of essays and what he described as 'burlesques'.

CHARLES GILSON: This popular and prolific adventure story writer's very first yarn appeared as a serial in "The Captain"; it was "The Lost Island" and it appeared in 1907-8, with stirring illustrations by R. Caton Woodville. He wrote three more serials for the magazine, including one of his two school stories, "The Twins of Tendring" (his other school story, "The Substitutes", did not appear in "The Captain" and, so far as I know, made its first appearance in hard covers). Fuller details about Gilson may be found in my "BOP" feature in 1962's Annual.

GUNBY HADATH: Another schoolmaster-author who became justly famous for his excellent public school stories. His first story, "Fozzle's Brilliant Idea"

appeared in "The Captain" in 1909 and he contributed four full-length serials and dozens of short stories to the magazine until its final volume. Also wrote many stories for "Chums", "B.O.P.", etc. Also wrote under the names: John Mowbray, Felix O'Grady and James Duncan. Hadath often brought real-life social problems into his highly-intelligent school stories. In one of his "Captain" serials, "Conquering Claybury" (later republished in hard covers as "Schoolboy Grit"), for example, the plot concerned the difficulties of a lone council schoolboy pitchforked into public school life. Hadath's story anticipated Warren Chetham Strode's controversial play (and later film) "The Guinea Pig" by 35 years! Perhaps Hadath's most popular stories were about his creation 'Sparrow'. Many of the short episodes which later made up the book "Sparrow in Search of Expulsion" appeared originally in "The Captain". A sequel, "Sparrow in Search of Fame", first appeared as a serial in "Modern Boy". Another, "Sparrow Gets Going" was published in book-form but I have been unable to discover if it made its original appearance in serial form or not. A real-life school story hero, Gunby Hadath was Captain of his school (St. Edmund's, Canterbury) and brilliant at almost every sport. At Cambridge he won a classical Tripos M.A. degree and his college colours for rigger, soccer and cricket. He later became Senior Classical Master at a big public school. His first book was a formidable tome on Ancient Philosophy! He also became a member of the Inner Temple and, on leaving schoolteaching, coached pupils for the Bar. He played cricket for the Gentlemen of Surrey. Published over 60 books (mainly school, but some adventure).

JOHN MACKIE: An author who had almost as many adventures as those he wrote about. He once said that he never wrote about incidents of which he had not had personal experience. In the course of his world-wide travels he had hand-to-hand fights with cannibals, hunted down notorious cut-throats with the Canadian frontier police, existed on crows, snakes and roots, fought in the Boer War, and rode 800 miles on horseback in search of gold. Wrote five adventure serials for "The Captain" and several for "Chums". Also published several books.

D. H. PARRY: Wrote the very first serial for "The Captain" - "The King's Red Coat". Also performed the same service for "Chums" with "For Glory and Renown". Also wrote under the name of Morton Pike. For fuller details see my feature on "Chums" in the 1961 Annual.

HERBERT STRANG: The large number of popular books for boys written by 'Herbert Strang' during the first 30 years of the century were, in fact, all the work of a two-man partnership. They were George Herbert Ely (who died in 1958) and James L'Estrange (who died in 1947). If you take a close look at the names you'll quickly see where 'Herbert Strang' came from! The two men wrote around 50 books; neither ever wrote a complete one on his own. The plots were worked out together. L'Estrange, who had travelled widely, supplied the local colour, and Ely did the actual writing. The partnership began in 1903 in Glasgow and was actually more than a literary partnership since they both later joined the Oxford University Press, for which they worked for more than 30 years. They contributed six serials to "The Captain".

P. G. WODEHOUSE: The famous humorous writer was born in 1881 and educated at Dulwich College. He was in the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in the City of London for two years and then got a job on the 'By the Way' column of the old "Globe" newspaper. He paid a visit to America in 1904 and another in 1909, when he sold two short stories for 300 dollars apiece and decided to remain there. Eventually he sold a serial to the "Saturday Evening Post" and for the next 25 years almost all

his books appeared first in this paper. In 1906 he wrote some lyrics to music by Jerome Kern and some years later formed a partnership with Guy Bolton, which resulted in a number of shows and straight plays. Also wrote screenplays in Hollywood. Today famous as the creator of the immortal Jeeves, Mulliner and Psmith, to name only three of his characters, he is the author of over 70 books. Is also a regular contributor to "Punch". His earliest books appeared as serials in "The Captain" and he became the magazine's most popular writer, justly famous for his first-class school stories. Psmith made his first appearance in a "Captain" serial, "The Lost Lambs". For a full survey of Wodehouse's stories of Wrykyn School for "The Captain", see W. L. A. Hubbard's article in the C.D. Annual for 1962.

THE ILLUSTRATORS:

H. M. & C. E. BROCK: Were two members of a large artistic family; there were two more brothers besides H.M. and C.E. and they all worked together in a large old-world studio in Cambridge. The two best-known brothers turned out an incredible amount of first-class illustration work for books and magazines, and also exhibited their paintings and drawings too. Both were R.I.'s and both loved doing 'costume' illustrations, revelling in ladies in poke-bonnets, prim little girls in patterns, dashing young dogs of the Regency and jovial wine-bibbing old cronies. C.E., in particular, illustrated many special de-luxe editions of the works of Jane Austen, Jeffery Farnol, Charles Lamb, etc. H.M. illustrated many serials and hard-cover school stories by Cleaver, Hadath, Coke, Havilton, etc. as well as a new edition of "Alice in Wonderland". He also did some fine work for "Little Folks". Both brothers' work was very similar in style and immediately recognisable. H.M. illustrated 13 serials for "The Captain", specialising in school stories, his boys always appearing extremely life-like and believable. C.E. illustrated 3 of Herbert Strang's very best serials for the magazine.

GORDON BROWNE: Was the son of Hablot Knight Browne, better known as 'Phiz', the famous illustrator of Charles Dickens. Studied at Heatherley's Art School and also in South Kensington. A very prolific illustrator, Browne began his boys' magazine work when he provided drawings for T.B. Reed's "Adventures of a Three Guinea Watch" in "BOP" in 1880. From then on his work appeared in countless magazines, papers, and books, both for juveniles and adults. Much of his work appeared in "BOP" and "Chums" (for which he supplied the original cover picture); for "The Captain" he illustrated some of R. S. Warren Bell's best earlier stories. An R.I. and an R.B.A. he exhibited in oils at the Royal Academy many times.

TOM BROWNE: Born in Nottingham in 1872, Browne left school when he was only 11 to work as an errand-boy for a millinery firm. Did several other such jobs until he was 15, when he was apprenticed to a lithographic form in Nottingham. Began his artistic career by designing cigar-box labels, until his first black-and-white sketches were accepted by "Scraps". Did a vast amount of comic drawing and illustrating from then on. His best-known creations were probably Tired Tim and Weary Willie for "Chips". Did many humorous drawings for "The Captain" as well as illustrating a serial. Was made a member of the R.B.A. in 1895, and of the Institute of Water Colourists in 1901. Was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy.

THOMAS HENRY: Born in Eastwood, Notts. in 1879, in the house opposite that of D. H. Lawrence, and at the age of 14 was apprenticed as a lithographer to Messrs. Forman and Sons, Newspaper Proprietors and Printers. His first real job was to work on the lithographic work for the original colour production of the famous sailor

trade-mark of Players Cigarettes. As well as work for "The Captain", "Chums", etc. he did countless drawings for such magazines as "Happy" and "Crusoe". Famous, of course, for his inimitable illustrations to every one of Richmal Crompton's "William" books. Interesting point is that although Henry (whose real name, by the way, was Thomas Henry Fisher) and Miss Crompton collaborated from 1919, it was not until 1954 that they actually met, at a dinner in Nottingham during the Book Festival of that year. Henry was first asked to illustrate a William story in Newnes "Home Magazine" in 1919 after another artist's effort had failed to please the editor. In "The Captain" and "Chums" Henry almost invariably illustrated school stories and used a very witty, seemingly casual technique. Although he worked on only one full-length serial for "The Captain", he supplied pictures for numerous short school stories. He died on October 15th, 1962, at the age of 83.

JOHN HASSALL: One of the foremost poster artists of his time, Hassall also had the distinction of designing "The Captain" very first cover design and the one which was used on every half-yearly bound volume. He also created the famous figure of the "Old Fag", whose figure appeared at the head of the Editorial Page. After studying at the Antwerp Art School, Hassall was fortunate enough to have the very first drawings he sent to "Punch" accepted. The Royal Academy then accepted the first painting he submitted. Later he was responsible for many famous posters advertising goods which became household words. His daughter, Joan Hassall, followed in her father's footsteps and is today one of the country's most distinguished artists and wood-engravers. She designed the Queen's own personal invitation to her Coronation Ceremony in 1953.

ALFRED PEARSE: Did his best work for the "BOP", starting with its 3rd volume in 1880 and still illustrating for the paper 45 years later. Also illustrated several stories for "The Captain", and did much work for "The Strand" and the "Illustrated London News". In 1901 he was appointed Special Artist of "The Sphere" and accompanied the Duke and Duchess of York (later King and Queen) on their tour throughout the British Empire. He served in the Great War and did many sketches at the Front while under fire. His son, Colbron, was also an artist and he too contributed to "The Captain".

T. H. ROBINSON: Thomas Heath Robinson was one of the famous trio of artist brothers consisting of himself, Gordon Robinson, and, most well-known, W. Heath Robinson, creator of all those crazy and complicated machines and inventions which so often appeared in his drawings. T.H. illustrated only three serials and some short stories in "The Captain", his best work being reserved for "Chums", for which he did numerous and superlative school story pictures. What T.M.R. Whitwell and H.M. Brock were to "The Captain" school stories, so T.H. Robinson was to those in "Chums", especially the ones by Hylton Cleaver. He often used busts of boys' heads and put different school caps on them so that he could copy accurate details of shadow, etc. He illustrated stories in the "Holiday Annuals" and also in "Cassell's Magazine" in the '90's.

HARRY ROUNTREE: Famous for his superb animal pictures, both in colour and black-and-white, sometimes serious but more often than not humorous in content. Was an expert on all aspects of animal and bird life and spent a lot of time at the London Zoo, watching his subjects. Was a witty, mercurial, bubbling character, "as chirpy" someone once said "as the sparrows he draws so well." Came to England from his native New Zealand, arriving with a bundle of drawings and one editorial introduction. The editor, having inspected the drawings, asked him how much money he had. The surprised Rountree told him - and the editor promptly advised him to spend it on a

return ticket to New Zealand! The artist decided to disregard this advice - and forged ahead to make a unique reputation for himself as a superlative animal artist. Illustrated countless books (including "Alice in Wonderland") and contributed to many magazines, papers and children's annuals. Illustrated only one serial for "The Captain" but did many humorous drawings for it.

T.M.R. WHITWELL: After searching for many months I have been unable to discover any basic facts about this superb school story artist, but feel that he deserves a mention here if only for his unique record of having illustrated no fewer than 31 full-length serials for "The Captain", all school stories - and including all Wodehouse's early stories. Was the first artist to picture the immortal Psmith and also illustrated the hard-cover edition of "Mike" when it was published in 1909.

LAWSON WOOD: An artist who became one of the foremost humorous illustrators of his day. Was very versatile but is perhaps especially remembered for his graphic drawings of prehistoric subjects, fat policemen, old men, mischievous children and animals, particularly his famous chimpanzee character "Gran'pop", who had his own regular Christmas annual for many years. Wood was a third generation artist - his father was landscape painter Pinhorn Wood, and his grandfather was L. J. Wood, R.I., well-known for his architectural subjects. After giving up his original youthful ambition of entering the Army, Wood began his art studies early, mainly at the Slade and Heatherley Art Schools. At 18 he joined the publishing house of C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., eventually becoming chief staff artist. He remained here for six years, then decided to concentrate upon humour as a free-lance, achieving spectacular success in this field. His colour prints hung on the living-room wall of many a home. Did many humorous drawings and cartoons for "The Captain" and also illustrated several short stories.

ADDITIONS TO NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS TO "THE CAPTAIN"

AUTHORS

HAROLD AVERY: Born Headless Cross, Worcestershire, 1867, and was the son of a local J.P., William Avery. Educated at New College, Eastbourne. Served in the Army during the 1914-18 war. Wrote his first story for boys in 1894, but it was his very popular serial for "BOP" in 1896, "The Triple Alliance", which really put him on the map. It was later published in book form and ran into several editions, the latest of which is still in print today. Subsequently wrote numerous school stories, several more appearing in "BOP" and three full-length serials in "The Captain". His many books include: "The Dormitory Flag", "Mobsley's Mohicans", "Play the Game", "The Cock House Cup", "Heads or Tails" and "Off the Wicket". Was also a prolific short story writer, contributing to many juvenile papers and annuals. Lived for much of his life in Evesham, Worcestershire, and died there in 1943.

CHRISTOPHER BECK: Pen-name of the popular boys' writer T. C. Bridges. Was born in 1869 and won a scholarship to Marlborough College. Was intended for a career in the Church but, on leaving school in 1886, went out to the coast of Florida to farm and hunt. (His series of stories for "The Captain" - "The Crew of the Cat-Boat", in 1908-09, - were set in this region and so obviously had authentic backgrounds.) Returned to England in 1894 and took up a writing career. His first two articles, on fishing in Florida, appeared in "The Field" then, after contributing free-lance items to many magazines, including "Answers", he joined the staff of the latter as a sub-editor. Resigned after about four years to concentrate on free-lance writing. He is well remembered for his three serials in "Boys' Realm" about Paddy Leary, an Australian boy at an English public school. Also wrote the first story for the 1d.

"Union Jack", "With Pick and Lamp". Later wrote numerous hard-cover books for boys, mainly adventure stories. His autobiography, "From Florida to Fleet Street", gives some interesting sidelights on working as a boys' writer in the early years of the century. Died in 1944.

STACEY BLAKE: Born in Bradford, 1878. Contributed a serial called "In Deep Water" (written in collaboration with W. E. Hodgson) to "The Captain" in 1901-2. Was a prolific writer for boys' papers around this period. Some of his best stories concerned 'Moreton Stowe, Special Correspondent' and appeared in "Big Budget" in early-1900's. When the "Champion" was started 20 years later, F. Addington Symonds engaged Blake to revive the character. Other popular creations of his were Captain Kettle Jnr. ("Big Budget") and Captain Christmas ("Penny Pictorial"). Also wrote several Sexton Blake stories, introducing Captain Christmas into some.

DESMOND COKE: ADD: Spent six years as a schoolmaster at Clayesmore School.

* * * * *

THE ST. FRANK'S SERIES IN THE GEM - (cont'd from page 11)...

why the St. Frank's serials were so abruptly discontinued when apparently at the height of their success. Perhaps at this late hour it hardly matters. Ours not to reason why. Let us be content to look back over those 100 memorable issues when St. Frank's added a crowning touch of distinction to the golden reprint years of the Gem.

* * * * *

Would EXCHANGE Frank Richards' Autobiography for any two RED covered MAGNETS.

TOM SATCHELL, 63 CANTWELL RD., PLUMSTEAD, LONDON, S.E.18.

My special thanks to:- Eric Fayne - Harry Broster - Ben Whiter - Frank V. Lay - Henry Webb - and others for enjoyment caused throughout 1963.

F. S. (STAN) KNIGHT, 288, HIGH STREET, CHELTENHAM.

NELSON LEES WANTED to complete sets for binding. Old Series 114-121-123-128-136-137-139-143-144-145-146.

JOHN GUNN, QUEENS HEAD HOTEL, MATLOCK, DERBYSHIRE.

Gunby Hadath, John Mowbray books WANTED; also Thriller, Detective Weekly, S.B.L's. C.D. Annual 1948, S.P.C. 1-50, Captain Vols. 27, 31, 35, 45 and 50.

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GEMS WANTED: 217, 802, 812, 813, 816, 817, 968, 1189.

MISS E. B. FLINDERS, 18, CONQUEST CLOSE, HITCHIN, HERTS.



by JOHN UPTON

* Memories of *
by
JOHN
UPTON
* The Picture Show *

A year or two ago, going through stacks of papers in the attic, I came across a bundle of early "Nursery Worlds" which had belonged to my mother. Of no great interest to me but for one thing: turning them over, I found just a few vintage copies of "Picture Show" and "Picturegoer" magazines. To one who, though born (with a favourite film, "King Kong") in 1933, loves to read of the early days of the cinema, and especially those years in which the silent screen attained its zenith and demise, these few copies have become treasures indeed. No doubt there are many collectors of old papers for whom not only such magazines but the era in which they appeared hold many treasured memories. An article stemming from them may not, therefore, be so very out of place in C. D. Annual, and I hope this resume of the contents of two issues will both entertain and amuse.....

"Picture Show" - 22/12/23.

The gossip page tells us that on 27th October Hollywood was twelve years old. Lilian and Dorothy Gish are in Italy filming "Romola"; an ex-slave, 113 years old, appears in "The White Rose", starring Mae Marsh and Ivor Novello.

The week's films include: "The Dauphin of France"; "Her Social Value" ("a little shop girl, possessing far finer instincts than the rest of her family and discontented with her lowly station, marries a leading architect - with disastrous results"); "My American Wife" (Gloria Swanson, Antonio Moreno): and "Short Skirts" ("Natalie Smith was a gay little flapper of seventeen. Chafing at parental restraint and the general frowsiness of the older generation, she decides to take the reins into her own hands...") Who says that teenage rebellion is a phenomenon of the fifties and sixties!

There is an article upon "The Power of the Producer", highlighting the work of giants D. W. Griffith and Erich von Stroheim, while in the correspondence column the Valentino - Ramon Navarro controversy flourishes: "...I think Rudolf Valentino will have his work cut out to remain in his present omnipotent position in the feminine hearts of the world now that Ramon Navarro has arrived" ("Maid of Kent", Broadstairs); "I would far rather receive a flashing message from Ramon's bright, expressive eyes than half a dozen glances charged with doubtful meaning from Valentino's slumbrous orbs". (K. Dunn, Ashley).

John Stuart and Gerald Ames are working on "The Loves of Mary Queen of Scots", "one of the finest historical films ever made" (Fay Compton as Mary); Mary Clare is Queen of Henry II (H. V. Bramble) in "Becket".

On another page a critical period in the history of British films is discussed - "unless we want our own artistes to leave this country for America it is up to us to ask for British films at our favourite cinemas, for if we are swamped out of existence by cheap foreign screen plays our own producing companies will eventually give up the fight...." Said the Prince of Wales at the luncheon given by the National British Film League: "...I think we shall all agree that Great Britain has many natural advantages as a film making centre. From John o'Groat's to Land's End this country is a good background, and we all know there is plenty of good raw material amongst our population for film artistes, and we must not neglect them...." One sighs, remembering the many slumps in the British industry since 1923, and the numbers of actors who have found work elsewhere.

Gladys Cooper, playing Flora Macdonald to Ivor Novello's Young Pretender in "Bonnie Prince Charlie", confides her great film ambition to May Herschel Clarke: that she wants to be a stunt actress. "In view of Miss Cooper's reputation as a mistress of emotion," says Miss Clarke, "I was somewhat surprised at the interest she evinced in stunts."

Gladys Cooper explains: "The film acting I like best is that which gives me something strenuous to do, such as riding, climbing - or even jumping out of windows! I do all these things in this film. The jump had particularly exciting results, because I missed one of the ropes Mr. Novello had to throw me, to assist me in my escape, and fell fifteen feet. How I did it without injury is still a miracle to me." One imagines that in spite of her ambition, the actress was not over pleased with the co-star's failure. However, he made up for it on location - "there were several occasions when Mr. Novello had to rescue me from the kindly attentions of the crowd" of film fans.

Evidently Gladys Cooper would have been in her element in the situation Norma Shearer described in "Picture Show" 20/2/32: "...Trunks and branches were soaked with kerosene. At a given signal they were to be ignited, and then Irene (Rich) and I were to race madly between them, a distance of about a hundred yards. We made the first 'take' but something went wrong. We dashed a second time. Again something happened to spoil the shot. So it was necessary to make the run a third time while the fire was still blazing. By this time the flimsy trees were burning fiercely. Fiery branches were falling in every direction. The set was a regular inferno of heat and falling flames. We must do it, or the entire forest would have to be rebuilt. Irene and I took a long breath and plunged into the mass, not knowing what moment we would be struck by a flaming brand. That run seemed a hundred miles long instead of a hundred yards. I thought we would never reach the end safely. But we did, and without a scratch. Then, two seconds later, the entire forest tumbled...."

One wonders how much of detail such as this was supplied by studio hand-outs. Nevertheless, on the whole Miss Cooper was wise, one feels, to stick to the "costume stuff" she so exquisitely adorns," in the words of May Herschel Clarke.

The article on the inside back page commences: "Even though there are a few who disparage dancing as a vulgar, unnecessary pastime...." Again, proof there is nothing new under the sun! Julianne Johnston declares: "I think every girl should commence dancing lessons as soon as she is out of the cradle." Miss Johnston adds: "Don't attempt to take your lessons in an ordinary day frock with long skirts which hamper the movements. I wore a one-piece bathing suit of thick stockinette but I realise, of course, that every girl cannot do this. They should certainly, however, wear a simple little gym suit, preferably with bloomers rather than a skirt." Four exercises are then described for the pupil, and Miss Johnston finishes: "If you would always be well supplied with partners, start your exercises at once." As if to supply an antidote to the strenuous activity recommended, we also have on this page Pola Negri's favourite dish, "Du Barry cakes", and the recipe for same.

"Picture Show", 26/1/24.

Jackie Coogan, and members of "Our Gang", are included on the cover.

I wonder what became of Baby Peggy, the first of whose "big Baby Peggy Productions" is mentioned on page three: "Captain January", which "has to do with an old lighthouse keeper who finds a tiny baby washed ashore from a shipwreck. He

NITA NALDI Beautiful Art Plate 16 x 10 ^{with} inside.

Picture Show

EVERY MONDAY 2d

JANUARY 26th 1924. Vol. 10. No. 248.

They really play in Pictures

Special Article Inside



MIRIAM BATTISTA enjoys a romp.



JACKIE COOGAN goes fishing in "Circus Days."



The only time the members of "Our Gang" are quiet is when they are asleep.

rears the little one in his lighthouse home, and a wonderful love develops between the hoary old sea captain and the dainty little girl. She derives her education from three great books, the Bible, Shakespeare's works, and the Dictionary." This idyllic set-up is interrupted by the appearance of the "'villain' in the story," "A wealthy and well-meaning aunt, who discovers her long lost niece at the lighthouse, and tries to take the little girl away from her daddy captain."

Baby Peggy (described as a "born mimic" on another page) has had "a small bungalow built to house her during her three years sojourn with her new producers, complete in every detail, with an attractive chaise-longue, just big enough for milady to recline her three feet two inches for a few minutes between scenes. Interviewers and other visitors are forced to make themselves comfortable in tiny rockers." An interesting picture it conjures up, too. Obviously Baby Peggy was the most significant forerunner of Shirley Temple.

The films of the week include: "The Foolish Virgin" ("as the girl finishes up shooting herself," comments the critic sternly, "there isn't even a happy ending to lighten up the gloom") and "Lost in a Big City" (with Baby Ivy Ward, as a little blind girl, carrying "a big load on her shoulders"). "Aeroplane races, wrecked motor-cars, burning shacks, a little girl falling over a precipice... these are only a few of the thrills to be found in this picture," says I.N.C. with more enthusiasm.

One prefers not to visualise the scene when an irate Baby Peggy confronted Baby Ivy Ward at the premiere.

Mary Philbin gives good advice to women (use no make-up), and we also learn that "heroes of the screen need not be handsome": "All you youths who want to be movie actors, and yet are not quite sure of yourselves because you do not resemble Apollo, take heart. Kenneth Harlan holds out a word of hope to you... Even ordinary good looks are not essential to success. And Kenneth says all this in spite of the fact that he himself is conceded to be one of screendom's handsomest men. 'It is

simply absurd," says Harlan, 'to say that homely men are not successful on the screen.... A winning personality is the greatest asset... On the screen especially personality counts more than looks...'"

Kenneth Harlan's encouragement to far from handsome youths bent on a movie career is matched, at the end of this issue, by the advice of Pauline Frederick to girls. She considers that "style is a far greater asset to a woman than beauty. Style is the thing every time... Remember the old saying," she adds, "'fine feathers make fine birds...'" Using, somewhat improbably, a phrase beloved of Frank Richards, she continues: "Beauty alone soon palls, but the woman with style presents an ever-changing picture, and is the cynosure of all eyes. ...Beauty is very nice to have, and so is a lovely motor-car, but just the same it's the smart little auto which is the bright spot on the roadway."

The writer of the article comments: "So the little girl who is merely passable looking or who is even plain can take comfort from Miss Frederick's words, for she possesses both style and beauty in generous quantities...."

On to the "blonde gypsy", Mae Murray, who amplifies: "Style depends a tremendous amount upon grace... no girl can be beautiful, stylish, or graceful unless she pays a tremendous amount of attention to her carriage. The greatest beautifier, the greatest body energy builder, too, is walking." It is announced with confidence that "if you go to Los Angeles almost any evening you'll see Mae out walking." She resumes: "I was once questioned on my excessive energy, my neat carriage, and I couldn't give an answer." However, walking, she decided, was the clue: "I can cure almost anything that is wrong with me by walking. Walking, I fear, is becoming a lost art. And to this fact I lay up many of our mental disorders, the crimes that infest cities, unhealthy pleasures, and lots of disagreeable things. There are many people nowadays who don't know what a good walk is." Those who find it "impracticable to walk" are advised "to throw yourself flat on a rug and relax, taking long, deep breaths. If you cannot lie on the ground, try the bed or the settee or whatever flat object that is near you." But if you prefer indigestion, why not cook a batch of Raisin Muffins - Mlle. Valia's somewhat unlikely favourite dish?

More great names mentioned: Violet Hopson and Stewart Rome have just finished "The Stirrup Cup Sensation"; Mary Pickford, in her latest film, "Rosita", has turned from childhood portrayals to that of a grown up woman; then there are Richard Barthelmess, Renee Adoree, Carmel Myers, who says rather wistfully: "I want to act for the films until the public no longer want me. When that time comes, however, no dreaming of the good old screen days for me. I shall return to the speaking stage, so in the meantime I prepare." A poignant declaration when one remembers the revolution wrought by the talkies only four-five years later, and all the stars who, overnight, were no longer wanted.

There is a fascinating article, entitled "Before they were famous", which describes the early career of Mary Pickford, and her introduction to Griffith at the Biograph Studio in 1909.

In the gossip about British players, a paragraph brings to life the restaurant of the old Stoll studios: "It is an amusing experience to have lunch ... especially on a big day, for you find yourself sitting next to all kinds of screen celebrities, dressed up in their paint and motley. Stewart Rome as an Irish boy, and Henry Victor in luxurious brocade, wearing a powdered wig; Marie Blanche in gleaming silk; George Robey with whiskers sticking out round his face, and wearing furs and a tail....."

Just two copies of "Picture Show", and what a tremendous (cont'd on page 47)..

Foreword: By W. O. G.
Lofts

CATALOGUE OF COMIC PAPERS

by W. O. G. LOFTS and D. J. ADLEY

TONS OF FUN FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL
IN THIS GREAT NEW COLOURED COMIC



When some years ago, I was compiling lists of periodicals for my Annual articles '100 years of boys papers' I jotted down the titles, dates and runs of comics that I discovered in my researches, in the hope that they would come in useful some day. About 1958 Derek Adley suggested that it would be a very good idea to try and compile a list of every comic that had ever been published, and produce it for a C.D. Annual. Since that date over five years ago, the list has like Topsy just grew and grew, and we now both feel confident and proud that the list is complete as possible, and it is certainly the first ever published of this kind in any publication either professional or amateur.

Additional information given here, and which one will not find in British Museum, and indeed Fleetway Publications files, is the complete runs of papers that had two titles - that is to say, usually when a comic ceased publication it was incorporated into another, and carried the old title under the new one - in much smaller print.

The main idea of course to enable the casual readers of the old paper to still see the name displayed on the bookstalls. Even so, it is hard to understand why some carried on with two titles for years, whilst others only ran the secondary title for a few issues.

As explained in an article some years ago, it is very hard to define at times what was actually a comic, and what was not. In the very early days, most comics were of an adultish nature, and some indeed could be classed as joke magazines. It was not until about the start of the first world war that the juvenile type of comics we know so well came into its own. Another great difficulty in compiling our data has been in the modern type of comics - we feel that some like 'Tiger' and 'Lion' should really be classed as Picture story papers, and one must not forget the thousands of American reprinted Tarzan and Horror comics which so much has been written about in recent years.

One could like the brook go on for ever, writing about the history of each individual comic, but that is an impossibility in the space available. I would rather this list of comics just speak for itself, and I trust that the majority of readers who must have started their reading days in childish delight in scanning them, may revive much pleasure and nostalgia in seeing many of them listed in print.

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Issues</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Publisher</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
|---|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| All Fun Comic | 26 | 1939 | 1946 | A. Soloway Ltd. | 1 |
| All Picture Comic | 16 | 12.3.1921 | 25.6.1921 | Sphinx Publishing Co. | |
| All Star Comic | 26 | 1939 | 1946 | A. Soloway Ltd. | 2 |
| Ally Slopers Haporth | 1 | 23.1.1899 | 23.1.1899 | Gilbert Dalziel | |
| Ally Slopers Half Holiday | 1788 | 3.5.1884 | 9.9.1916 | Dalziel Brothers | |
| Ally Slopers Half Holiday (1 - 23) | | 5.11.1922 | 14.4.1923 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | 47 | | | The Sloperies Ltd. | 3 |
| Half Holiday (Nos. 24 - 47) | | 21.4.1923 | 29.9.1923 | | |
| Beano Comic | SR | 30.7.1938 | | D. C. Thomson | |
| Beezer | SR | 21.1.1956 | | " | |
| Best Budget | 12 | 15.3.1902 | 31.5.1902 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. | 4 |
| Big Budget | 614 | 19.6.1897 | 20.3.1909 | Pearsons | |
| Big Comic (1 - 207) | | 17.1.1914 | 29.12.1917 | J. Henderson | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | 246 | | | | |
| Big Comic and Sparks (208 - 246) | | 5.1.1918 | 28.9.1918 | | 5 |
| Bimbo | SR | 18.3.1961 | | D. C. Thomson | |
| Bo Peep (called Bo Peep and Little Boy Blue for a time) | 235 | 19.10.1929 | 14.4.1934 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Bouncer | 9 | 11.2.1939 | 8.4.1939 | Target Publications then A.P. | |
| Bubbles & The Children's Fairy | | 16.4.1921 | 5.1.1935 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | (1 - 716) | | | Amalgamated Press | |
| Bubbles | 1024 | (717-1024) | | | |
| Buster | | 12.1.1935 | 24.5.1941 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | (1 - 39) | 28.5.1960 | 18.2.1961 | | |
| Buster & Radio Fun | | 25.2.1961 | 19.8.1961 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | (4 - 65) | | | | |
| Buster | SR | 26.8.1961 | 8.9.1962 | Fleetway Publications | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | (66 - 120) | | | | |
| Buster & Film Fun | | 15.9.1962 | 29.6.1963 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | (121 - 162) | | | | |
| Buster | | 6.7.1963 | | | |
| Butterfly 1st Series (1 - 446) | 656 | 17.9.1904 | 31.3.1917 | | |
| Butterfly & Firefly 2nd Series | | 7.4.1917 | 17.10.1925 | Amalgamated Press | 27 |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | (447 to 1206) | | | | |
| Butterfly | | 24.10.1925 | 18.5.1940 | | |
| Champion Comic Volume 1 | 26 | 9.1.1894 | 3.7.1894 | | |
| " " Volume 2 | 26 | 10.7.1894 | 1.1.1895 | | |
| " " Volume 3 | 26 | 8.1.1895 | 29.6.1895 | Greyfriars Publishing Co. | |
| " " Volume 4 | 28 | 6.7.1895 | 11.1.1896 | | |
| Charlie Chicks Paper | 1 | 2.1934 | 2.1934 | F. W. Woolworth | |
| Cheerful Comic | 28 | 17.9.1928 | 20.4.1929 | C. A. Ransom | |

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Issues</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Publisher</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
|--|---------------|-------------|--------------|---|--------------|
| Chicks Own (The) (1 - 707))) | | 25.9.1920 | 14.4.1934) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Chicks Own & Little Bo Peep)) | | 21.4.1934 | 5.8.1939) | Amalgamated Press | |
| continued as:- (708-984))) | | | | | |
| Chicks Own & Happy Days)) | 1605 | 12.8.1939 | 20.4.1940) | | |
| continued as:- (984-1021))) | | | | | |
| Chicks Own (1022-1052))) | | 27.4.1940 | 24.5.1941) | Amalgamated Press | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Chicks Own and Bubbles (1053-1322))) | | 31.5.1941 | 22.9.1951) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Chicks Own (1323-1605))) | | 29.9.1951 | 9.3.1957) | | |
| Chuckler | 238 | 31.3.1934 | 15.10.1938 | Target Publications | |
| Chuckles | 517 | 10.1.1914 | 1.12.1923 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Comet (New Series) | 587 | 20.9.1946 | 17.10.1959 | J.B. Allen then A.P. | 6 |
| Comic Adventures | 26 | 1939 | 1946 | A. Soloway Ltd. | 7 |
| Comic Bits | 10 | 19.2.1898 | 23.4.1898 | Unity Publishing Co. | |
| Comic Capers | 26 | 1939 | 1946 | A. Soloway Ltd. | 8 |
| Comic Cuts (1 - 2580))) | | 17.5.1890 | 28.10.1939) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Comic Cuts The Jolly Comic)) | | 4.11.1939 | 2.12.1939) | | |
| continued as:- (2581-2585))) | | | | | |
| Comic Cuts (2586-2609))) | 3006 | 11.5.1940 | 18.5.1940) | Amalgamated Press | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Comic Cuts & Larks (2610-2829))) | | 25.5.1940 | 27.9.1947) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Comic Cuts (2830-3006))) | | 11.10.1947 | 12.9.1953) | | |
| Coloured Comic | 415 | 21.5.1898 | 28.4.1906 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. | |
| Comic Home Journal | 488 | 11.5.1895 | 10.9.1904 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Comic Life | | | | Hendersons then A.P. | 9 |
| Comic Pictorial Nuggets | 29 | 7.5.1892 | 19.11.1892 | James Henderson | |
| Comic Pictorial Sheet | 1601 | 29.9.1891 | 28.9.1904 | " | 10 |
| Crackers (1-546))) | | 23.2.1929 | 5.8.1939) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Crackers & Sparkler (547-549))) | 615 | 12.8.1939 | 26.8.1939) | Amalgamated Press | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Crackers (550-615))) | | 2.9.1939 | 31.5.1941) | | |
| Dandy | SR | 4.1.1937 | | D. C. Thomson | |
| Dan Leno's Comic Journal | 93 | 26.2.1898 | 2.12.1899 | 28, Maiden Lane, W.C. | |
| Dazzler | 294 | 19.8.1933 | 8.4.1939 | Target Publications then A.P. | |
| Eagle | SR | 14.4.1950 | | Hulton Press then Longacre Press then Odhams Press. | |
| Favorite Comic | 324 | 21.1.1911 | 31.3.1917 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Film Fun (1 - 27))) | | 17.1.1920 | 24.7.1920) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Film Fun & Picture Fun (28-44))) | | 31.7.1920 | 13.11.1920) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Film Fun (44-665))) | | 20.11.1920 | 15.10.1932) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Film Fun & Kinema Comic (666-690))) | | 22.10.1932 | 8.4.1933) | | |
| continued as:-)) | 2225 | | | Amalgamated Press | |
| Film Fun (691-1756))) | | 15.4.1933 | 12.9.1953) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Film Fun and Chips (1757-1925))) | | 19.9.1953 | 8.12.1956) | | |
| continued as:-)) | | | | | |
| Film Fun (1926-2225))) | | | | | |
| Firefly | 111 | 20.2.1915 | 31.3.1917 | Amalgamated Press | 11 |
| Fitness and Sun | | 1895 | | J. B. Allen | 12 |
| Frolie (or Frolix) | | | | | 28 |
| Funny Bits | 82 | 10.10.1883 | 29.4.1885 | J. Marshall | |
| Funny Cuts 1st Series | 958 | 12.7.1890 | 10.11.1908 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. | |
| " " 2nd Series | 608 | 17.11.1908 | 3.7.1920 | Trapps, Holmes then A.P. | |
| Funny Folks | 1614 | 12.12.1874 | 28.4.1894 | James Henderson | |
| Girl | SR | 2.11.1951 | | Hulton Press then Longacre Press then A.P. | |
| Gleam | 147 | 3.8.1901 | 21.5.1904 | James Henderson | 13 |
| Golden | 135 | 23.10.1937 | 18.5.1940 | Amalgamated Press | |

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Issues</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Publisher</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
|---|---------------|--------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Golden Penny Comic | 276 | 14.10.1922 | 28.1.1928 | Fleetway Press | |
| Gosport Courier | 1 | 7.3.1947 | 7.3.1947 | J. B. Allen | |
| Halfpenny Comic | 467 | 22.1.1898 | 29.12.1906 | Newnes then Trapps, Holmes & Co. | |
| Happy Comic | 28 | 17.9.1928 | 20.4.1929 | C. A. Ransom & Co. | |
| Harold Hare's Own Paper | SR | 14.11.1959 | | Fleetway Publications | |
| Happy Days | 45 | 1.10.1938 | 5.8.1939 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Huckleberry Hound Weekly | SR | 7.10.1961 | | City Magazines Ltd. | |
| Illustrated Chips (1st Series) | 6 | 26.7.1890 | 30.8.1890 | | |
| " " (2nd Series) | | 6.9.1890 | 18.5.1940 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Illustrated Chips and Joker (2594-2826) | 2997 | 25.5.1940 | 28.12.1947 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Illustrated Chips (2827-2997) | | 4.1.1947 | 12.9.1953 | | |
| Jack and Jill | SR | 27.2.1954 | | Amalgamated Press | |
| Jingles (1-334) | | 13.1.1934 | 1.6.1940 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Jingles and Golden (335-414) | 741 | 8.6.1940 | 19.6.1943 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Jingles (415-741) | | 3.7.1943 | 29.5.1954 | | |
| Joker | 330 | 18.7.1891 | 28.10.1897 | Greyfriars Publishing Co. | 14 |
| Joker (1-117) | | 5.11.1927 | 25.1.1930 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Joker and Monster Comic (118-159) | 655 | 1.2.1930 | 15.11.1930 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Joker (160-655) | | 22.11.1930 | 18.5.1940 | | |
| Jokes | 22 | 20.1.1898 | 16.6.1898 | Greyfriars Publishing Co. | 15 |
| Jolly Comic | 250 | 19.1.1935 | 28.10.1939 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Jolly Bits | 6 | 8.8.1892 | 17.9.1892 | Charles Fox | |
| Jungle Jinks and Chuckles (1-4) | | 8.12.1923 | 29.12.1923 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | 62 | | | Amalgamated Press | |
| Jungle Jinks (5-62) | | 5.1.1924 | 7.1.1925 | | |
| Junior Express (1-38) | | 4.9.1954 | 11.6.1955 | | 16 |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Junior Express Weekly (39-73) | | 18.6.1955 | 11.2.1956 | Beaverbrook Newspapers | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Express Weekly & Rocket (74-285) | | 18.2.1956 | 16.4.1960 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| T.V. Express Weekly (286-346) | | 23.4.1960 | 17.6.1961 | Then T.V. Publications Ltd. | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| T.V. Express (347 -) | | 24.6.1961 | | | |
| Kinema Comic | 651 | 24.4.1920 | 15.10.1932 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Knockout Comic (1-64) | | 4.3.1939 | 18.5.1940 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Knockout Comic & Magnet (65-362) | | 25.5.1940 | 2.2.1946 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Knockout Comic (363-759) | 1251 | 9.2.1946 | 12.9.1953 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Knockout & Comic Cuts (760-785) | | 19.9.1953 | 13.3.1954 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Knockout Comic (786-1251) | | 20.3.1954 | 16.2.1963 | | |
| Larks 1st Series | 462 | 1.5.1893 | 3.3.1902 | Dalziel Bros. then | |
| Larks 2nd Series | 239 | 7.6.1902 | 29.12.1906 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. | |
| Larks | 656 | 29.10.1927 | 18.5.1940 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Lot-O-Fun | 1196 | 17.3.1906 | 16.2.1929 | James Henderson then A.P. | |
| Lucky Tub | | Published approx. 1920s. | | New Picture Press | 17 |
| Magic Comic | 80 | 22.7.1939 | 25.1.1941 | D. C. Thomson | |
| Merry Moments | 194 | 12.4.1919 | 23.12.1922 | Newnes | 32 |
| Merry Moments | 28 | 27.1.1928 | 20.4.1929 | C. A. Ransom & Co. | |
| Merry Thoughts | 35 | 5.2.1910 | 31.12.1910 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. | 18 |

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Issues</u> At least | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Publisher</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|------------|--|--------------|
| Merry Midget | 17 | No. 17 dated | 2.1.1932 | Provincial Comics | 19 |
| Merry & Bright (Green) 1st Series | 337 | 22.10.1910 | 31.3.1917 | | |
| Merry & Bright The Favorite Comic, (1 - 446) 2nd Series | 928 | 7.4.1917 | 17.10.1925 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Merry & Bright (447-928) (Pink) | | 24.10.1925 | 19.1.1935 | | |
| Mickey Mouse Weekly (1-802) | | 8.2.1936 | 24.9.1955 | Willbank Publications Ltd. | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> (803-920) | 920 | | | | |
| Walt Disneys Mickeys Weekly | | 1.10.1955 | 28.12.1957 | then Odhams | 20 |
| Walt Disneys Mickeys Weekly | 56 | 4.1.1958 | 24.1.1959 | Walt Disney Productions Inc.) | |
| Monster Comic | 14 | 15.3.1898 | 14.6.1898 | Sketchy Bits & Co. | |
| Monster Comic | 383 | 23.9.1922 | 25.1.1930 | Fleetway Press then A.P. | |
| My Favourite | 351 | 28.1.1928 | 13.10.1934 | Amalgamated Press | |
| My Funnybone | 86 | 4.9.1911 | 22.4.1913 | The Milford Press | |
| New Joker | 11 | 4.11.1897 | 13.1.1898 | Greyfriars Publishing Co. | 21 |
| Okay Comics Weekly | 20 | 16.10.1937 | 26.2.1938 | A. Soloway | |
| Pictorial Comic Life | 1543 | 14.5.1898 | 21.1.1928 | Henderson then A.P. | |
| Picture Fun | 595 | 16.2.1909 | 24.7.1920 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. then A.P. | |
| Playbox | 1279 | 14.2.1925 | 11.6.1955 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Playhour (1 - 126) | | 16.10.1954 | 9.3.1957 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Playhour & Chicks Own (127-172) | | 16.3.1957 | 25.1.1958 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Playhour (173-224) | SR | 1.2.1958 | 24.1.1959 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Playhour & Tiny Tots (225-229) | | 31.1.1959 | 28.1.1959 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Playhour (230-) | | 7.3.1959 | | | |
| Playtime 1st Series (Small) | 243 | 29.3.1919 | 17.11.1923 | | |
| Playtime 2nd Series (Large) | 307 | 24.11.1923 | 12.10.1929 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Puck | 1867 | 30.7.1904 | 11.5.1940 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Rattler (1 - 269) | | 19.8.1933 | 15.10.1938 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | 294 | | | Target Publications | |
| Rattler & Chuckler (170-294) | | 22.10.1938 | 8.4.1939 | | |
| Rainbow | 1898 | 14.2.1914 | 28.4.1956 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Radio Fun (1 - 779) | | 15.10.1938 | 12.9.1953 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Radio Fun & Wonder (780-823) | 1167 | 19.9.1953 | 17.7.1954 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Radio Fun (824-1167) | | 24.7.1954 | 18.2.1961 | | |
| Robin | SR | 28.3.1953 | | Hulton Press then Longacre Press then Odhams | |
| Rocket | 157 | 26.10.1935 | 22.10.1938 | Target Publications | |
| Scraps | 1394 | 7.9.1883 | 30.4.1910 | James Henderson | |
| Sketchy Bits | 782 | 29.4.1895 | 9.6.1910 | 11, Gough Square then H. Shurey | |
| Skits | 23 | 27.6.1891 | 28.11.1891 | British Publishing Co. | |
| Smiles | 133 | 5.5.1906 | 10.11.1908 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. | |
| Sparkler | 251 | 20.10.1934 | 5.8.1939 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Sparkler | At least 13 | No. 13 dated | 5.12.1931 | Provincial Comics | 22 |
| Sparks (1 - 198) between 5.1.1918 & 28.9.1918 issued as Big Comic | | 21.3.1914 | 29.12.1917 | | 5 |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Sparks & Big Comic (247-276) | | 5.10.1918 | 26.4.1919 | James Henderson then A.P. | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Sparks (277-327) | | 3.5.1919 | 17.4.1920 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> | | | | | |
| Little Sparks (328-331) | | 24.4.1920 | 15.5.1920 | | |
| Little Sparks New Series | 124 | 22.5.1920 | 30.9.1922 | | |

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Issues</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Publisher</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
|--|---------------|-------------|------------|---|--------------|
| Stretford Courier | 1 | 3.1947 | 3.1947 | J. B. Allen | |
| Sun | 558 | 11.11.1947 | 17.10.1959 | J. B. Allen then A.P. | 12 |
| Sunbeam 1st Series | 173 | 7.10.1922 | 23.1.1926 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Sunbeam 2nd Series (1-745) | 747 | 30.1.1926 | 11.5.1940 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Sunbeam & Puck (746-747) | | | 18.5.1940 | 25.5.1940 | |
| Sunday Fairy (1 - 22) | 25 | 10.5.1919 | 4.10.1919 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Children's Sunday Fairy (23-25) | | | 11.10.1919 | | 25.10.1919 |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Children's Fairy | 76 | 1.11.1919 | 9.4.1921 | | |
| Sunny Comic | 28 | 17.9.1928 | 20.4.1929 | C. A. Ransom | |
| Sunshine | 39 | 16.7.1938 | 8.4.1939 | Target Publications then A.P. | |
| Swift | SR | 20.3.1954 | | Hulton Press then Longacre Press then Odhams | |
| Target (1-176) | 200 | 15.6.1935 | 22.10.1938 | Target Publications | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Target & Rocket (177-200) | | | 29.10.1938 | | 8.4.1939 |
| Tiger Tims Tales | 28 | June 1919 | 24.1.1920 | Amalgamated Press | 23 |
| Tiger Tims Weekly 1st Series | 94 | 31.1.1920 | 12.11.1921 | Amalgamated Press | |
| Tiger Tims Weekly 2nd Series | 965 | 19.11.1921 | 18.5.1940 | | |
| Tiny Tots (1 - 658) | 1334 | 22.10.1927 | 25.5.1940 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Tiny Tots & Sunbeam (659-1028) | | | 1.6.1940 | | 14.3.1953 |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Tiny Tots (1029-1191) | | 28.3.1953 | 28.4.1956 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Tiny Tots & Rainbow (1192-1284) | | 5.5.1956 | 8.2.1958 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Tiny Tots (1285-1334) | | 15.2.1958 | 24.1.1959 | | |
| Tip Top (1 - 320) | 727 | 21.4.1934 | 18.5.1940 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Tip Top & Butterfly (321-519) | | | 25.5.1940 | | 17.1.1948 |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Tip Top (520-727) | | 24.1.1948 | 29.5.1954 | | |
| Tip Top Comic | 28 | 27.2.1928 | 20.4.1929 | C. A. Ransom | |
| Topper | SR | 7.2.1953 | | D. C. Thomson | |
| T. V. Comic | SR | 9.11.1951 | | News of the World then T.V. Publications | |
| T.V. Fun (1 - 37) | 333 | 19.9.1953 | 29.5.1954 | Amalgamated Press | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> T.V. Fun, Tip Top & Jingles | | | 5.6.1954 | | 10.7.1954 |
| <u>continued as:-</u> T.V. Fun (44-312) | | 17.7.1954 | 5.9.1959 | | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> T.V. Fun (313-333) | | 12.9.1959 | 30.1.1960 | | |
| T.V. Land | SR | 1.10.1960 | | T.V. Publications Ltd. | |
| Up-To-Date Comic | 28 | 17.9.1928 | 20.4.1929 | C. A. Ransom | |
| Valiant (1 - 20) | SR | 6.10.1962 | 16.2.1963 | Fleetway Publications | |
| <u>continued as:-</u> Valiant & Knockout (21- | | | 23.2.1963 | | |
| Wonderland Tales | 106 | 19.7.1919 | 23.7.1921 | Amalgamated Press | 24 |
| Worlds Comic | 855 | 6.7.1892 | 10.10.1908 | Trapps, Holmes & Co. | |
| Yogi Bear's Own Weekly | SR | 27.10.1962 | | City Magazines Ltd. | 25 |
| Zip | 92 | 4.1.1958 | 3.10.1959 | Odhams Press | 26 |
| The Wonder (½d.) (1 - 27) | 27 | 30.7.1892 | 28.1.1893 | Amalgamated Press | |
| The Funnywonder (1-325) | 325 | 4.2.1893 | 22.4.1899 | | |
| " " (1-109) | 133 | 29.4.1899 | 25.5.1901 | Amalgamated Press | |
| The Wonder (½d.) (110-133) | | | 1.6.1901 | | 9.11.1901 |
| " " (1d.) (1 - 25) | | 16.11.1901 | 3.5.1902 | | |
| The Wonder & Jester (1d.) (26-27) | 2010 | 10.5.1902 | 17.5.1902 | | |
| The Jester & Wonder (1d.) (28-533) | | | 24.5.1902 | | 20.1.1912 |
| The Jester (1d.) (534-856) | | 27.1.1912 | 30.3.1918 | | |
| (cont'd) .. | | | | | |

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Issues</u> | <u>From</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Publisher</u> | <u>Notes</u> |
|--|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|
| The Jester (1½d.) (857-998) | | 6.4.1918 | 18.12.1920 | | |
| The Jolly Jester (1½d.)(999-1090) | | 25.12.1920 | 23.9.1922 | Amalgamated Press | |
| " " (1d.)(1091-1163) | | 30.9.1922 | 16.1.1924 | | |
| The Jester (1164-2010) | | 23.2.1924 | 18.5.1940 | | |
| Penny Wonder (1 - 46) | | 10.2.1912 | 21.12.1912 | | |
| The Wonder (1d.) (47) | 47 | 28.12.1912 | 28.12.1912 | | |
| " " (1d.) (1 - 64) | 64 | 4.1.1913 | 21.3.1914 | | 29 |
| The Halfpenny Wonder (1 - 39) | | 28.3.1914 | 19.12.1914 | | |
| The Funny Wonder (½d.)(40-162) | | 26.12.1914 | 29.4.1917 | | |
| " " " (1d.)(163-210) | | 5.5.1917 | 30.3.1918 | | |
| " " " (1½d.)(211-444) | | 6.4.1918 | 23.9.1922 | Amalgamated Press | 30 |
| " " " (1d.)(445-1365) | | 30.9.1922 | 25.5.1940 | | |
| The Funny Wonder & Jester (1d.)(1366-1374) | | 1.6.1940 | 27.7.1940 | | |
| " " " (1½d.)(1375-1412) | | 3.8.1940 | 19.4.1941 | | |
| " " " (2d.)(1413-1443) | | 26.4.1941 | 16.5.1942 | | |
| The Wonder (2d.)(1444-1760) | | 30.5.1942 | 12.9.1953 | | |

NOTES

1. This was published in 7 volumes as follows: volumes 1 - 6 had 4 issues, volume 7 had 2 issues.
2. As note 1.
3. No. 1 dated 5.11.1922 was also numbered as 1723.
4. Full title 'Best Budget of Fiction and Fun' this ran between the two series of Larks.
5. Big Comic and Sparks run 208 to 246 continued as Sparks and Big Comic run 247 to 276; for complete run check both items by dates.
6. Taken over by the A.P. with No. 71 dated 31st May, 1949. In No. 1 the editor stated that this was the revival of the paper after a 7 year lapse, hence it was called 'new series'.
7. As note 1.
8. As note 1.
9. See Pictorial Comic Life as full run is shown under that title, which was the original one.
10. Several issues were published each week - Nos. 1 to 90 were price 6d. and Nos. 91 to 1601 price 1d.
11. This was only a comic towards the end of its run.
12. Fitness and Sun was the title of the first series of Sun Comic and was issued in 1939. This was not a comic but more of a 'health magazine'. The second series was issued as Fitness and Sun Nos. 1 to 4 and then continued as Sun Comic. A.P. took over Sun with No. 41. In number 25 of the Comet the editor offered £1 per copy for pre-war copies of Fitness and Sun.
13. Some controversy has existed as to whether this was a true comic - perhaps it would be better to describe it as a Victorian Humorous Paper.
14. Continued as 'New Joker'.
15. Nos. 10 to 22 were published by John Marshall.
16. This was at first a children's newspaper but gradually changed to a comic. For the record there was a rival children's newspaper called 'Junior Mirror' which ran for 75 issues 1.9.1954 to 29.2.1956.
17. This was listed in a Press Guide at the British Museum but no trace of the actual copies were found.
18. Published as Merry Thoughts and Scraps between 17.5.1910 and 24.9.1910
19. This comic was originally called the Midget. Only issue found is No. 17; length of run not known.

20. The New Series of 56 issues commenced 4.1.1958 published by Walt Disney Productions Inc. after a court case which decided that Odhams copyright for the Disney characters had expired.
21. Continued as 'Jokes'.
22. Only issue found was No. 13 but it is believed ran to at least 16 issues.
23. First issues were not dated. The first to be dated was No. 7, 30.8.1919. Published fortnightly at first and probably was not a true comic.
24. No. 47 entitled Wonderland Tales Weekly. No. 51 entitled Wonderland Weekly.
25. In Huckleberry Hound Weekly dated 20.7.1962 a free issue of Yogi Bear's Own Weekly was given away stating that this new paper would appear on the book-stalls from week ending 27.7.1962. This free issue was a complete comic and different to the actual No. 1 - a sort of number one of number ones.
26. (See Note 20). After the court had declared the new publishers right to publish Walt Disney's Mickey's Weekly, Odham's continued with the new paper 'Zip' as an answer to their rivals and although it had a short run it did in fact last longer than 'Walt Disney's Mickey's Weekly'.
27. The title Butterfly and Firefly was used for a time after No. 446 but only on the inside pages therefore we have drawn the line at 446.
28. The British Museum reference refers to this as a comic but actual papers cannot be found.
29. Not a comic but a boys' weekly like the Boys' Realm. We have only included it so as to show full run of Wonder.
30. With number 331 the cover states that Wonder now incorporates Funny Cuts, World's Comic and Smiles but as this wasn't part of title (i.e. The Funny Wonder and Funny Cuts) we have not recorded any run.
31. The firm of Target Publications of Locksbrook Road, Lower Weston, Bath, sold their three remaining comics (namely Bouncer, Dazzler and Sunshine) for a substantial sum of money to the A.P. The A.P. purchased these comics for one reason only and that was to stop their publication so that their own comics would gain better circulations. Readers were told in the last issues that the comics would be "joining" with certain A.P. comics the next week and although we have shown these incorporations, the name was not shown in the title of the comics issued the following week. We feel however that these details should be recorded.
32. No. 1 was issued free with Tit-Bits No. 1956, 12th April, 1919, folded inside. Possibly No. 2 also was given the following week.

Comics shown under publishers and including
titular changes and amalgamations

Amalgamated Press - later Fleetway Publications Ltd.

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Bo-Peep | 1919 to 1934 | incorporated with Chicks Own |
| Bubbles | 1921 to 1941 | incorporated with Chicks Own |
| Buster | 1960 still running | |
| Butterfly | 1904 to 1940 | incorporated with Tip Top |
| Chicks Own | 1920 to 1957 | incorporated with Playhour |
| Chuckles | 1914 - 1923 | followed by Jungle Jinks |
| Comic Cuts | 1890 to 1953 | incorporated with Knockout |
| Comic Home Journal | 1895 to 1904 | followed by Butterfly |
| Crackers | 1929 to 1941 | no incorporation |
| Favorite Comic | 1911 to 1917 | incorporated with Merry and Bright |
| Film Fun | 1920 to 1962 | incorporated with Buster |
| Firefly | 1915 to 1917 | incorporated with Butterfly |
| Golden | 1937 to 1940 | incorporated with Jingles |
| Happy Days | 1938 to 1939 | incorporated with Chicks Own |
| Harold Hare's Own Paper | 1959 still running | |
| Illustrated Chips | 1890 to 1953 | incorporated with Film Fun |

| | | | |
|--|--------------|---------------|--|
| Jack and Jill | 1954 | still running | |
| Jingles | 1934 to 1954 | | incorporated with T.V. Fun |
| Joker | 1927 to 1940 | | incorporated with Chips |
| Jolly Comic | 1935 to 1939 | | incorporated with Comic Cuts |
| Jungle Jinks | 1923 to 1925 | | followed by Playbox |
| Kinema Comic | 1920 to 1932 | | incorporated with Film Fun |
| Knockout Comic | 1939 to 1963 | | incorporated with Valiant |
| Larks | 1927 to 1940 | | incorporated with Comic Cuts |
| Little Sparks | 1920 to 1922 | | followed by Sunbeam |
| Merry and Bright | 1910 to 1935 | | replaced the same week by Jolly Comic |
| My Favourite | 1928 to 1934 | | followed by Sparkler |
| Playbox | 1925 to 1955 | | no incorporation |
| Playhour | 1954 | still running | |
| Playtime | 1919 to 1929 | | followed by Bo-peep |
| Puck | 1904 to 1940 | | incorporated with Sunbeam |
| Radio Fun | 1938 to 1961 | | incorporated with Buster |
| Rainbow | 1914 to 1956 | | incorporated with Tiny Tots |
| Sparkler | 1934 to 1939 | | incorporated with Crackers |
| Sunbeam | 1922 to 1940 | | incorporated with Tiny Tots |
| Sunday Fairy, Children's Sunday Fairy,) Children's Fairy) | 1919 to 1921 | | continued as Bubbles |
| Tiger Tim's Tales | 1919 to 1920 | | continued as Tiger Tim's Weekly |
| Tiger Tim's Weekly | 1920 to 1940 | | no incorporation |
| Tiny Tots | 1927 to 1959 | | incorporated with Playhour |
| Tip Top | 1934 to 1954 | | incorporated with T.V. Fun. |
| T.V. Fun | 1953 to 1960 | | incorporated with Valentine |
| Valiant | 1962 | still running | |
| Wonderland Tales | 1919 to 1921 | | incorporated with Young Folks Tales |
| Wonder/Jester etc. | 1892 to 1940 | | incorporated with following series of Wonder* |
| Penny Wonder etc.* | 1912 to 1953 | | incorporated with Radio Fun |

Comics taken over by the Amalgamated Press from other Publishers

| | | | | |
|---|----------------|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bouncer | <u>Note 31</u> | 1934 to 1938 | incorporated with Jolly | <u>T.O.F.</u> Target Pub. |
| Comet | | 1946 to 1959 | incorporated with Tiger | J. B. Allen |
| Comic Life | | 1898 to 1928 | followed by My Favourite | Hendersons |
| Dazzler | <u>Note 31</u> | 1933 to 1939 | incorporated with Golden | Target Pub. |
| Funny Cuts | | 1890 to 1920 | incorporated with Funny Wonder | Trapps, Holmes |
| Golden Penny Comic | | 1922 to 1928 | no incorporation | Fleetway Press |
| Lot-O-Fun | | 1906 to 1929 | followed by Crackers | Hendersons |
| Monster Comic | | 1922 to 1930 | incorporated with Joker | Fleetway Press |
| Picture Fun | | 1909 to 1920 | incorporated with Film Fun | Trapps, Holmes |
| Sparks | | 1914 to 1920 | continued as Little Sparks | Hendersons |
| Sun | | 1947 to 1959 | incorporated with Lion | J. B. Allen |
| Sunshine | <u>Note 31</u> | 1938 to 1939 | incorporated with Jingles | Target Pub. |
| <u>J. B. Allen</u> | | | | |
| Comet | | 1946 to 1959 | | <u>T.O.B.</u> A.P. |
| Fitness and Sun | | | | |
| Gosport Courier | | 1947 |) incorporated with Comet | |
| Stretford Courier | | 1947 | | |
| Sun | | 1947 to 1959 | | A.P. |
| <u>British Publishing Co.</u> | | | | |
| Skits | | 1891 to 1891 | | |
| <u>City Magazines Ltd.</u> | | | | |
| Huckleberry Hound Weekly | | still running | | |
| | | 1961 to | | |
| Yogi Bear's Own Weekly | | still running | | |
| | | 1962 to | | |
| <u>Daily Express (Beaverbrook Newspapers)</u> | | | | |
| Junior Express (Express Weekly) etc. | | 1954 to 1960 | | T.V. Publications |
| <u>Gilbert Dalziel & Dalziel Brothers</u> | | | | |
| Ally Slopers Half Holiday | | 1884 to 1916 | | |
| Ally Slopers Haporth | | 1899 to 1899 | | |
| Larks | | 1893 to 1906 | | Trapps, Holmes |

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <u>Fleetway Press</u> | | | <u>T.O.B.</u> |
| Golden Penny Comic | 1922 to 1928 |) A.P. | |
| Monster Comic | 1922 to 1930 |) | |
| <u>Charles Fox</u> | | | |
| Jolly Bits | 1892 to 1892 | | |
| <u>Greyfriars Publishing Co.</u> | | | |
| Champion Comic | 1894 to 1896 | incorporated with Joker | |
| Joker | 1891 to 1897 | continued as New Joker | |
| Jokes | 1898 to 1898 | | John Marshall |
| New Joker | 1897 to 1898 | continued as Jokes | |
| <u>James Henderson</u> | | | |
| Big Comic | 1914 to 1918 | Amalgamated with Sparks | |
| Comic Life (see Pictorial Comic Life) | | | A.P. |
| Comic Pictorial Nuggets | 1892 to 1892 | continued as Nuggets | |
| Comic Pictorial Sheet | 1891 to 1904 | | |
| Funny Folks | 1874 to 1894 | | |
| Gleam | 1901 to 1904 | | |
| Lot-O-Fun | 1906 to 1929 | | |
| Pictorial Comic Life | 1898 to 1928 | Changed to Comic Life | |
| Scraps | 1883 to 1910 | | |
| Sparks | 1914 to 1920 | | A.P. |
| <u>Hulton Press then Longacre Press then Odhams</u> | | | |
| Eagle | still running | | |
| | 1950 | | |
| Girl | still running | | |
| | 1951 | | |
| Robin | still running | | |
| | 1953 | | |
| Swift | still running | | |
| | 1954 | | |
| <u>John Marshall</u> | | | |
| Jokes | 1898 to 1898 | | T.O.F. |
| Funny Bits | 1883 to 1885 | | Greyfriars Pub. Co. |
| <u>The Milford Press</u> | | | |
| My Funnybone | 1911 to 1913 | | |
| <u>George Newnes</u> | | | |
| Halfpenny Comic | 1898 to 1906 | | T.O.B. |
| Merry Moments | 1919 to 1922 | | Trapps, Holmes |
| <u>New Picture Press (see also the Sloperies Ltd.</u> | | | |
| Lucky Tub (1 st d. weekly) | Published around 1920s or 1930s | | |
| <u>News of the World</u> | | | |
| T.V. Comic | still running | | transferred to |
| | 1951 | | T.V. Publications |
| <u>Odhams</u> | | | |
| Micky Mouse Weekly | 1936 to 1955 | | transferred from Willbank Publica- tions Ltd. |
| Zip | 1958 to 1959 | | |
| <u>Pearsons</u> | | | |
| Big Budget | 1897 to 1909 | | |
| <u>Provincial Comics Ltd.</u> | | | |
| Merry Midget | At least 1931 to 1932 | | |
| Sparkler | At least 1931 | | |
| <u>C. A. Ransom & Co.</u> | | | |
| Cheerful Comic | 1928 to 1929 | | |
| Happy Comic | 1928 to 1929 | | |
| Merry Moments | 1928 to 1929 | | |
| Sunny Comic | 1928 to 1929 | | |
| Tip Top Comic | 1928 to 1929 | | |
| Up-to-date Comic | 1928 to 1929 | | |
| <u>Sketchy Bits & Co.</u> | | | |
| Monster Comic | 1898 to 1898 | | |

The Sloperies Ltd. (New Picture Press Ltd.)

Ally Slopers Half Holiday 1922 to 1923
 Half Holiday 1923 to 1923

H. Shurey (previously published by another company at 11 Gough Square, E.C.)
 Sketchy Bits 1895 to 1910 Shurey from 1909

A. Soloway Ltd.

All Fun Comic 1939 to 1946
 All Star Comic 1939 to 1946
 Comic Adventures 1939 to 1946
 Comic Capers 1939 to 1946
 Okay Comics Weekly 1937 to 1938

Sphinx Publishing Co.

All Picture Comic 1921 to 1921

Target Publications Ltd. (Bath) All drawn by an artist named Diamond

Bouncer 1939 to 1939 T.O.B.
 Chuckler 1934 to 1938 continued as Rattler and A.P.

Dazzler 1933 to 1939 T.O.B.
 Rattler 1933 to 1938 continued as Rattler and A.P.

Rattler and Chuckler 1938 to 1939 continued as Rattler and Chuckler

Rocket 1935 to 1938 continued as Target & Rocket
 Sunshine 1938 to 1939 T.O.B.

Target 1935 to 1938 continued as Target & Rocket A.P.
 Target and Rocket 1938 to 1939

D.C. Thomson

Beano Comic 1938
 still running
 Beezer (The) 1956
 still running
 Bimbo 1961
 still running
 Dandy 1937
 still running
 Magic Comic 1939 to 1941
 Topper (The) 1953
 still running

Trapps Holmes & Co.

Best Budgett 1902 to 1902 continued as Larks (2nd)
 Coloured Comic 1898 to 1906 incorporated with Smiles
 Funny Cuts 1890 to 1920 T.O.B.

Merry Thoughts 1910 to 1910 A.P.
 Picture Fun 1909 to 1920 T.O.B.

Smiles 1906 to 1908 incorporated with Funny Cuts A.P.
 Worlds Comic 1892 to 1908 incorporated with Funny Cuts

Comics taken over by Trapps Holmes from other Publishers

Halfpenny Comic 1898 to 1906 incorporated with Funny Cuts T.O.F. Newnes
 Larks 1893 to 1906 incorporated with Worlds Comic T.O.F. Dalziel Bros.

T.V. Publications

T.V. Express 1960 T.O.F.
 still running Daily Express

T.V. Land 1960
 still running

T.V. Comic 1951 T.O.F.
 still running News of the World

Unity Publishing Co.

Comic Bits 1898 to 1898

Walt Disney Productions Inc.

Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse 1958 to 1959

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <u>F. W. Woolworth</u> | |
| Charlie Chicks Paper | 1934 to 1934 |
| <u>Willbank Publishing Co. (later Odhams Press)</u> | |
| Mickey Mouse Weekly | 1936 to 1957 |
| <u>28 Maiden Lane</u> | |
| Dan Leno's Comic Journal | 1898 to 1899 |

NOTE: In some cases, especially with the A.P., amalgamations between two comics were announced but when the comic appeared only one comic's name appeared on the cover. In these cases we have decided to show these as no amalgamation (with the exception of Note 31). i.e. Merry and Bright was to be amalgamated with Jolly Comic but on appearance the title was just Jolly Comic.

During the period 1940 to 1950 there were simply hundreds of comics issued, some bearing no dates and in fact some with no numbers. Some were only published for one issue and it would be almost impossible to list them all. The following list is a selection of those traced and details of run dates etc. have only been included where positively known.

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----|-----------|------------|---|
| Ace of Comics | 1 | June 1948 | June 1948 | William Foster Ltd. |
| Ace of Fun Comics | 2 | June 1948 | June 1948 | Estuary Supply Co. |
| Ally Sloper | 1 | 1948 | 1948 | D. McKenzie (Glasgow) |
| Bonza | 4 | | | Ensign Publications Ltd. |
| Bright and Breezy | | | | P.M. Productions Ltd. |
| Bumper Comic | 16 | | | International Publications. |
| Cheery Chicks | 12 | | | Alda Reubens |
| Chummy Comic | 12 | July 1947 | June 1948 | Alda Reubens |
| Comical Cracks | 4 | | | Ensign Publications Ltd. |
| Comical Pranks | 3 | | | Ensign Publications Ltd. |
| Comic Chuckles | | | | Martin & Reid. |
| Comicolour Comic | | 1946 | | Gerald Swan |
| Comic Wonder | 7 | 1949 | | Paget Publications |
| Crasher Comic | 7 | 27.9.1949 | 18.10.1949 | Kayebon Press |
| Cute Fun | 43 | | | Gerald Swan |
| Dazzle | 4 | | | International Publications (Glasgow) |
| Dazzle | 5 | | | |
| Elmo's Own | 9 | | | inc. with Sheriff 1949 |
| Ensign | 4 | | | Chascal Ltd. |
| Everyday Comics | 3 | 1940 | | Ensign Publications Ltd. |
| Felix Funnies | 5 | | | Popular Fiction |
| Flash | 11 | | | S. G. Bruce |
| Flash Comics | 16 | | | Amaz Ltd. |
| Flicker Fun | | | | Camden Magazine Co. |
| Funfare Comic (The) | | | | Philmar Ltd. (London) |
| Funny Cuts | 7 | 1949 | | Martin & Reid |
| Funny Features | | | | Paget Publications |
| Funny Tuppenny | 4 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Fresh Fun | | 1940 | | Martin & Reid |
| | | | | Gerald Swan |
| | | | | inc. with Laughitoff |
| Happy Times | 5 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Happy Tuppenny | | | | Rayburn Productions |
| Happy Yank | 4 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Jimmy Brindle | | | | Jimmy Brindle Ltd. |
| Jingo | 4 | | | Ensign Publications Ltd. |
| Jolly Adventures | 9 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Jolly Chuckles | 11 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Jolly Fun | | | | Martin Reid |
| Jolly Jinks | | | | Martin & Reid |
| Jolly Western | 9 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Joyride | 5 | | | William Foster |
| Kiddyfun | 9 | 1945 | | Gerald Swan |
| King | 4 | | | Ensign Publications Ltd. |
| Krasher Komic | 6 | | | Reynard |
| Laugh Fun Book | | | | Philmar Ltd. (London) |
| Laughitoff | | 1942 | | Gerald Swan |
| Lucky Comic | | 1949 | | |
| Merry Go Round | 14 | | | Martin & Reid |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Merry Go Round | 4 | | | J. B. Allen |
| Merry Maker | | | | |
| Merry Moments | 4 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Meteor | 5 | 1949 | | Paget Publications |
| Mick Martin | | 1950 | | |
| Mighty Comic | | 1945 | | Philip Marx |
| Miniature Comic | | 1944 | | P.M. Productions Ltd. |
| Monster Comic | | 1945 | | Philip Marx |
| New Funnies | at least 25 | | | Gerald Swan |
| Oh Boy! | | | | Paget Publications |
| Picture Pranks | | | | Martin & Reid |
| Premier | 7 | 1949 | | Paget Publications |
| Radiant Comic | | 1943 | | P.M. Productions Ltd. |
| Red Spot | | | | Martin & Reid |
| Sheriff & Elmo's Own | | | | Screen Stories |
| | at least 3 | | | Publications |
| Slick Fun | | 1940 | | Gerald Swan |
| Smasher Comic | | | | C.A.S. Ltd. |
| Sparkler Comic | | | U.S.A. Reprints | L. Miller |
| Sparkler Comic | | | No numbers | Philmar Ltd, London |
| Sparkling Comic | | | | Philip Marx |
| Squibs - Fun Comic | | | No numbers | Martin & Reid |
| Star Comic | | | | L. Miller |
| Streamline Comics | 4 | | | Cardal |
| Super Duper | 17 | | | Cartoon Arts Productions |
| | | | | (Glasgow) |
| Super Star | 4 | | | Martin & Reid |
| Surprise | 5 | 1949 | | Paget Publications |
| Thrill Comic | | 1940 | | Gerald Swan |
| Thrills & Fun | | | | Martin & Reid |
| Topical Funnies | | 1940 | | Gerald Swan |
| Tupney Comic | 11 | 1949 | | Paget Publications |
| Wags | | | Same as Okay | T.V. Boardman |
| | | | Comics Weekly | |
| Wonderman | 24 | 1949 | | Paget Publications |

ADDENDA

1. In the years between the two world wars several newspapers issued a children's supplement or comic once a week and some of these newspaper comics bring back fond nostalgic memories to us. Perhaps the most well-known was Boys and Girls Daily Mail published by Associated Newspapers and remembered for Teddy Tail, drawn by Foxwell, the Bruin Boy illustrator for the A.P.

Here are a few details of newspaper comics: Boys and Girls Daily Mail, Boys and Girls Own (Evening World), Children's Own Favourite.

2. Before the days of the comic proper, humorous papers were published, many of which have been included in this list such as Skits and Gleam. Even before these, there were the comic papers of the day - far removed from the comic as we know it. However, for interest, here are a few that have been traced:-

Issues

| | | |
|-----------------|----|--|
| Comic Echo | 10 | 29.11.1873 to 31.1.1874 |
| Comic News | 24 | 18.7.1863 to 24.12.1863 |
| Comic News | 3 | No. 3 only in British Museum 15.5.1847 |
| Comic Times | 2 | No. 2 only in British Museum 7.9.1850 |
| Comick Magazine | | 1796 |

3. This catalogue was intended to be one of British comics leaving out the British reprints of American comics such as the 'Marvel Man' and 'Superman' types, but we cannot make up our minds about the item below as although it is American type we believe it to be of British origin

Tarzan 36 issues 18.9.1951 to 3.4.1953

However, there were so many series of Tarzan and several publishers and in the main these were American reprints. Therefore, we will leave the Tarzan details out of our lists to save confusion

4. Since the last war another kind of picture paper has developed and it is difficult to classify these as either comics or boys' and girls' weeklies. Probably they should come under a new classification as picture-story weeklies. For the sake of the record here are a few instances:-

| | | | | | |
|-------|----|-----------|------------|----|---------------------|
| Bunty | SR | 18.1.1958 | Victor | SR | 25.2.1961 |
| Judy | SR | 16.1.1960 | Boys World | SR | 26.1.1963 |
| Lion | SR | 23.2.1952 | | | Longacre Press Ltd. |
| Tiger | SR | 11.9.1954 | Rocket | | dates unknown |
| | | | | | News of the World |

Note: SR = Still Running

5. There was a comic paper given away free with Boys Leader No. 1. Vol. 1 dated 12.9.1903 entitled Funny Pips, front page 'The Adventures of Sunny Jim and Dismal David'. This has not been listed with the other comics as we cannot trace whether Funny Pips was issued independently or not.

* * * * *

MEMORIES OF THE PICTURE SHOW (continued from page 33)...

amount they tell about the days of the silent cinema. Comparatively few, I suppose, are so fortunate as to possess a complete run of the magazine to its cessation; but those who do own a more vivid and fascinating record of the cinema during its heyday than any book could provide. The same goes, of course, for "Picturegoer". Both magazines finished up as pallid, self-conscious, inferior imitations of their former exuberant selves. But for the collector, the film historian, these old issues remain unique.

* * * * *

WANTED: Lees, Nuggets, B.F. Libs. containing St. Franks, S.O.Ls., Greyfriars, St. Jim's. State prices.

J. COOK, 178, MARIA ST., BENWELL, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYPE, 4. S.A.E. please.

S.O.Ls. 2nd Series BLAKES - Always pleased to hear from fellow collectors who have these for disposal.

HILLIARD, 45 MOORBRIDGE LANE, STAPLEFORD, NOTTINGHAM.

Any complete series of St. Franks stories prominetely featuring Fullwood subsequent to his reform.

H. E. SALMON, 38, WARWICK ROAD, IPSWICH, SUFFOLK.

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Bound Vols. Saturday Magazine, 1837. Penny Magazine, 1838. 25 monthly copies Punch 1878-1895. All in good condition.

A. V. HOLLAND, 68, THORNTON STREET, WELLINGTON, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

By
Roger
M.
Jenkins

Flaws in the Diamond

By
Roger
M.
Jenkins

A REVIEW OF SOME OF THE DEFECTS IN THE COMPANION PAPERS

Whereas the topographical details of Greyfriars and St. Jim's were sometimes inconsistent with previous information, the district around St. Frank's was on the whole not too greatly changed over the years. I always get the impression that Edwy Searles Brooks had a great deal of the background detail of St. Frank's all ready planned before the series began: for instance, he once said in one of his chats, "I have every nook and cranny of the place in my mind's eye - the exact number of steps one needs to take when walking from the fountain, in the middle of the Triangle, to the Ancient House, and so on; just how far it is from Big Arch to the Head's House; how many corners to turn going from Handforth's study, in the Remove passage, to William Napoleon Browne's in the Fifth Form passage." Charles Hamilton, on the other hand, seemed to provide only such background detail as the individual plot demanded, and this would not always square up with existing information. In other words, he improvised as he went along. Both methods have their merits, the former method having the virtue of thoroughness, the latter the virtue of spontaneity. If details were forgotten, well how many readers, I wonder, were moved to protest against the disappearance of the Black Rock from the Greyfriars scene? But this somewhat carefree approach led to what I consider were even more noticeable defects - those in the sphere of nomenclature.

I think it was Tom Hopperton who once remarked that Charles Hamilton must have ransacked Burke's peerage and Debrett in order to provide his good steady characters with such appropriate names as Manners, Lowther, Blake and Digby. These were the family names of famous peerages, and were just the sort of names that would have been on the roll of a famous public school. D'Arcy, however, was a name which was perhaps almost too good to be true. And how convenient that bullies and shady characters went by such names as Skinner, Crooke and Gore. So far, so good. But who can refrain from a touch of uneasiness about the two protagonists Tom Merry and Gordon Gay? They are both genuine names, right enough, but do they not resemble those in a comic strip or the earlier boys' papers which had symbolic names like Standfast and so on? Rookwood did not come into existence until 1915, and by that time Charles Hamilton had had time to learn by his mistakes, though it sometimes crosses my mind that Jimmy Silver is another symbolic name, indicative of his sterling qualities, but it was at any rate a considerable improvement on Jack Fisher, which was what Hinton wanted to call the Rookwood hero. On the whole, no-one could quarrel with any of the names so far mentioned. Some are ideal, and all have worn well. But there are others I shall never be happy about.

Some of these names are borne by detestable characters like Snoop and Snipe. Are there such names? And what of outsiders? If Mr. Lambe the vicar and Miss Bunn at the cakeshop and Mr. Flatt the Music Master had chosen their occupations well, was it to be believed that people could exist with names like Dr. Pillbury, the Greyfriars medico, or Mr. Tiper, the Rylcombe printer? It is a most amazing co-incidence that an author should be able to give most of his characters such apposite, well-chosen names, and at the same time treat the others as though he had just been playing a riotous game of Happy Families.

Another defect which often seems apparent is the social set-up of the stories.

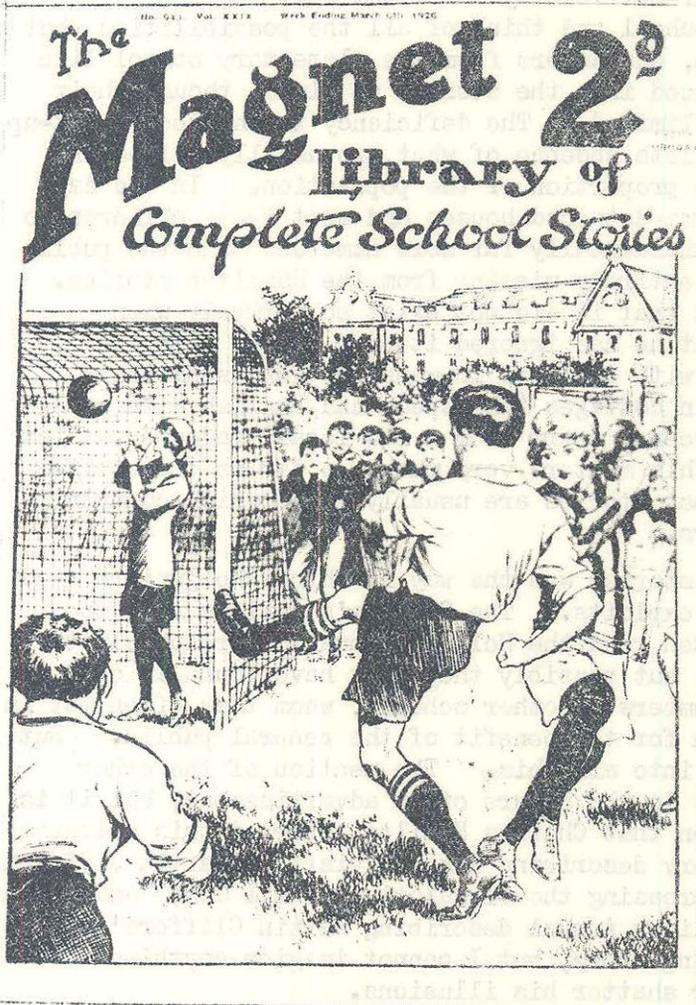
Let me say right away that I do not think there was anything snobbish about Charles Hamilton's outlook. The stories had to be written about boarding-schools because they alone possessed the corporate self-sufficiency which was half the fun of the thing. Imagine writing about a day-school and think of all the possibilities that would have been lacking. In any case, characters from the elementary school like Courtfield Council School were introduced into the stories at times, though their appearances were necessarily somewhat limited. The deficiency in the social set-up to which I referred is really the complete absence of what are usually called the middle middle-classes who form a large proportion of the population. In the days of the Magnet and Gem they lived in semi-detached houses and sent their children to the local grammar schools, which are incidentally far more numerous than the public schools. This stratum of society is entirely missing from the Hamilton stories. Why is it left out? I can only think that it did not exist so markedly when Charles Hamilton was at school and that he has ignored it ever since, with the result that he still peoples the land with dwellers in mansions (who send their sons to public schools) and dwellers in cottages (who speak bad English with even worse accents). There are no in-betweens, apart from a few local tradesmen. Let me hasten to add that I do not think this matters very much, so far as the stories are concerned, especially since the best stories are usually those which contain fewest references to outside characters.

Another small incongruity in the stories was the way in which the juniors read the papers which chronicled their own exploits. The St. Jim's juniors read the Magnet, and the Greyfriars juniors often read the Holiday Annual. Presumably they never read about their own adventures, but possibly they must have found it odd that the exploits of their opposite numbers at other schools, whom they often met in matches, should be recorded as fiction for the benefit of the general public. But it does not do to enquire too closely into all this. The mention of the other weekly papers and annuals was no doubt in the nature of an advertisement, but it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that Charles Hamilton carried this whimsey a little too far when he wrote a Gem story describing Gussy's visit to Martin Clifford to give him some suggestions about increasing the circulation of the Gem; and again when he wrote a story for the 1924 Holiday Annual describing Martin Clifford's visit to Greyfriars. This was a very amusing story, but I cannot imagine anything more likely to bewilder the young reader or shatter his illusions.

Finally, I come, somewhat reluctantly, to the rather thorny topic of the substitute writers. It is a pity that, in his understandable eagerness to refute the old chestnut that the Magnet and Gem must have been written by a syndicate of authors because no one person could have kept either paper going for so long, Charles Hamilton often used to proclaim rather extravagantly that he wrote every story in both papers from start to finish. When he was asked about the substitute writers he could only refer to them in the bitterest of terms. This is what he said of Pentelow: "This man took advantage of his position as editor to push me out into the cold. That was theft. In order to make his thefts effective, he put my name instead of his own on what he wrote. That was forgery. By palming off the stuff on the public, deluding them into the belief that it was written by me, he was guilty of swindling." Most of the time, of course, the substitute writers were used only when Charles Hamilton was unable to deliver the goods, but in Pentelow's time Charles Hamilton's own stories were deliberately put aside to make room for Pentelow's own effusions. There was also another occasion in the late 'twenties when Charles Hamilton had a bitter argument with the editor of the Gem, as a result of which he deliberately abstained from contributing more than a handful of stories

THE SURPRISE FOOTBALL MATCH!

Read how the Greyfriars boys play a team of girls!



HOW TEMPLE MANAGED TO SCORE A GOAL!

A surprising incident in the football match between Temple & Co. of the Upper Fourth and the Greyfriars. See the long complete school story inside!

Here we have the cover of a substitute story, typical of such stories discussed by Roger Jenkins in his article.

(with the exception of Pentelow, whose work was not required anyway), and so little of the work of the substitute writers is worth remembering that they fully deserve the epithet of hack writers. Sometimes they made silly mistakes, like the writer who forgot that Wally Bunter was the same age as the Removites, and brought him back as a form-master. At other times they would resort to themes which were either unusual - like the famous Vernon-Smith story entitled "Sent to Borstal" - or downright unbelievable - like the Gem series describing the siege of St. Jim's by Soviet troops, landed by their own aircraft. This series was in fact by Edwy Searles Brooks, and was the sort of thing he did best - a description of a mass re-action to some untoward circumstance. But very few indeed of any substitute stories by any writer are worth reading apart from curiosity's sake. One of the few exceptions to

for that paper from 1927 to 1939. What the precise point at issue was on that occasion has not been vouchsafed to us, but no doubt he was objecting again to the work of substitute writers appearing under his pen names. Apart from these two occasions, however, it may safely be said that it was lack of time which prevented him from contributing more than he did. There were very few imitations in the Magnet and Gem before the first World War, and most of these appeared only because his European travels had temporarily delayed the arrival of his manuscripts at Fleetway House. Later, he was inundated with extra work demanded by Rookwood, Cedar Creek, St. Kit's, the Rio Kid, and other minor series and this was when the imitators were called upon in force. I hold no brief for the substitute writers - indeed my voice has been raised as loud as any over the past twenty years in decrying their work - but it must be admitted that the Magnet and the Gem would probably both have gone out of existence soon after 1914 had they not been employed. On the other hand, I see no reason to endorse a suggestion that has been made to the effect that the substitute writers deserve a hearty vote of thanks for keeping the papers going. They did their work, I fancy, for pecuniary not sentimental reasons

this is the famous Gem story "Misunderstood", a rare example of a substitute writer handling the characters in a convincing and dramatic fashion.

It is interesting to note the difference between the early imitations and the later ones. In very early days, it was considered sufficient if the writer just used the characters and the background; in the days of the white cover, some attempt was made to use Hamiltonian language and situations, whilst from the middle 'twenties onwards the imitations were very cleverly done indeed, especially in the poor neglected old Gem. Indeed it is necessary to read several chapters in some cases before becoming certain that the number in question is in fact an imitation: usually it is because the master touch is missing rather than because something appears markedly wrong that one can really be certain that the story is spurious.

Half the charm of the old papers lies in the fact that we read them in our youth and were influenced by them to an extent which would not be possible now that we are older. What, I have been asked, if it was a story by a substitute writer which you particularly remembered from early days: is it now to be rejected simply because it was not written by Charles Hamilton? Well, the answer is that old recollection is, as I have said, only half the charm. For the other half we must have a good story with some convincing touches of characterisation, and it must be well written. How many people can put their hand on their heart and maintain that any of the imitations were superior to the real thing? I can remember reading the Bullseye in my youth, and being very thrilled with it. For years I wanted to get hold of some copies again, but when I did I saw it for what it was - rather trashy excitement, not without some originality, but certainly nothing that would bear re-reading. It was pleasant to have seen the old papers again, but I did not want to keep them - the mental feast had become a surfeit. In the same way, you will probably find that the substitute stories you remember with fond though hazy recollection are not gold, but dross, written by a vastly inferior author, and penned, not out of affection for the characters of his own creation, but for the simple reason that he had been ordered by the editor to carry on as a stop-gap until Charles Hamilton could resume writing the stories again. Can you imagine even a gifted author doing well under such adverse conditions? When it is realised that most of the imitators were far from gifted and have left little, if nothing, apart from their imitations, behind them, it is obvious that the chances of their having written a good story for the Magnet and Gem are very small indeed.

What the substitute writers never realised was that the conclusion of the story was not of really great importance. It matters little, for instance, whether Figgins' plot against the School House is successful or whether the Famous Five get even with Loder this week, next week, now, or never. What does matter are the little incidents in the story, those inimitable touches of characterisation that only Charles Hamilton could provide. The substitute writers thought that so long as there was a plot of sorts and all came right in the end they had done their work adequately. They were quite wrong. What matters is what Bunter said to Mr. Quelch when he is caught rifling the drawers of his master's desk, or how Gussy explained to Trimble in the politest of tones and with the best will in the world that they were meeting friends and so of course Trimble would realise it was impossible for a bounder like himself to accompany them.

It was the same with the sports stories. The substitute writers thought that the description of a race or a football match made an exciting climax to a story. Once again they were quite wrong. What they never realised was that such a story was nothing but an empty shell. Sport alone can never successfully form the main plot of a story: it can form only a background for a personal feud or some similarly

dramatic theme. The substitute writers touched rock bottom when they wrote about mammoth sports contests which were nothing more or less than a list of various athletic events without the shadow of a plot to form any sort of basis whatsoever. They are about as interesting as an account of Sports Day in a school magazine. Charles Hamilton once expressed himself tersely if inelegantly when he wrote to me and said "The story called 'School and Sport' was muck". In his stories sport is never more than an ancillary, but those of you who have read the Stacey series in the Magnet or the Cardew as captain series in the Gem will know how tense and exciting a description of a game can be when something more than the prestige of the school depends upon the result. Again, if treachery is afoot and the match is to be sold to the other side by a disaffected member of the team, a description of the match need lose no reader's interest. Charles Hamilton could always write an engrossing account of a match when it was really relevant to the story, and if perhaps his bowlers were luckier than most in obtaining hat tricks we may rest assured that such success was demanded by the exigencies of the plot. The substitute writers never bothered about the relevance of any such item: more than once they described a boxing match between Tom Merry and Bob Cherry under the delusion that the result of the match would be a dramatic climax to a series of various events and a suitable ending to the story. But perhaps it is not altogether fair to the imitators thus to catalogue their defects: they were, as I have said, only stop-gaps and could not be expected to provide first class work. Perhaps the most logical conclusion is this: no-one can depict Sherlock Holmes or Sanders of the River so well as their respective creators did, though there has been no lack of imitators in these cases as well. In the same way, I am simple enough to believe that no-one could ever write about Charles Hamilton's schools so well as Charles Hamilton himself. What do you think?

* * * * *

DISPOSAL: Pre-war American Mags. "Amazing" stories, "Black Mask", "Wonder Stories" "Air Aces" etc. Post-war boys papers "Wizards" "Adventures" "Rovers" "Hotspurs" etc.

J. R. SWAN, 3, FIFTH AVENUE, PADDINGTON, LONDON, W.10.

WANTED: NELSON LEES, original series, 11, 16, 19, 23, 27, 31, 32, 33, 38, 39, 47, 49, 53, 54, 64, 133, 141. NELSON LEE 1st new series, 188, 189. 2nd new series 120, 152, 153, 154. THRILLERS 278, 279, 343, 359, 360, 361, 365, 369, 371, 372, 379, 381, 382, 383, 386, 442, 443, 485. Also B.F.L. 1st. 749 "Corinth for The Cup". Also early Hank Janson books. High prices.

V. E. COLBY, 8 BERESFORD AVENUE, BEVERLY HILLS, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

WANTED: MONSTER LIBRARIES - preferably mint or fairly good condition.
GEMS 12 numbers 1436 to 1448.

A. W. HANSON, 68, HUMPHREY LANE, URMSTON, LANCS.

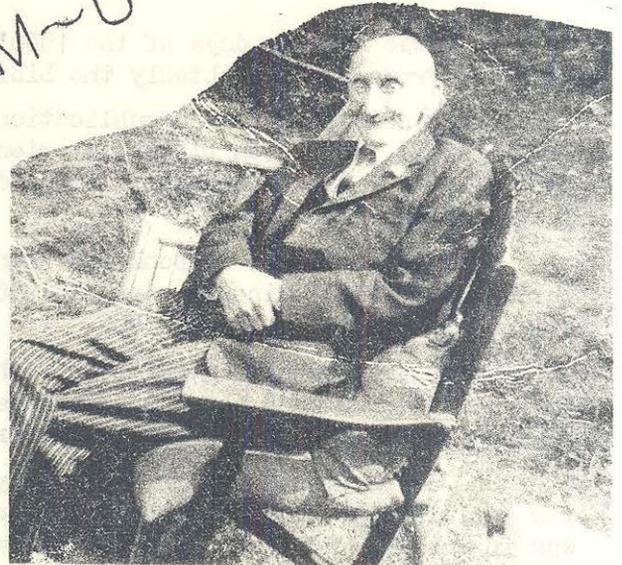
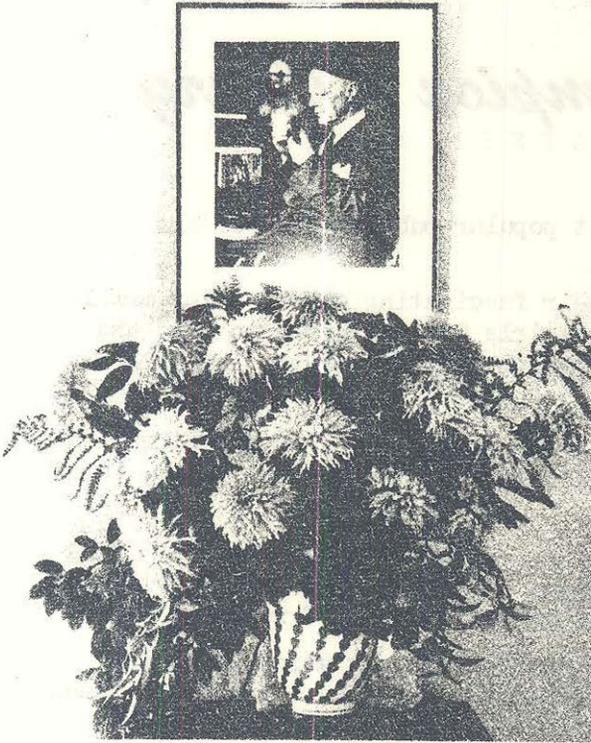
WANTED: Diamond Libs., Nugget Libs., Boys Comic Lib., Comic Papers pre 1914.

W. CLOUGH, 3 FONTHILL GROVE, SALE, CHESHIRE.

WANTED: Bound Volumes of Gems prior to No. 801.

MARSTON CLARK, 2, ST. PAULS COURT, ST. LEONARDS, SUSSEX.

M-U-S-I-N-G-S



It is two years since Frank Richards died.

C. H. Chapman, the celebrated artist, at club meeting at WOKINGHAM, July 1963.



Frank Richards' desk
at his sister's home
at Golder's Green



Analysing The Champion Library

by ALBERT WATKIN

In these halcyon days of the 1960's the most popular publications of the Fleetway Press are undoubtedly the Libraries.

These neat pocket-size publications with their fascinating covers cater mainly for boys and girls with picture stories - a Schoolgirls Own for girls to read and the 'Miracle - Oracle and Woman's World Library' which provide for the romantic tastes of adults.

This library type of book has been with us for a long time. In his 'Libraries Through the Years' (in C.D. Annual 1956) Bill Lofts records the first of them, Boys' Friend Library in September 1906.

Since then we have never been without one on the news stand and the only thing that has altered much about them has been the price. Practically always having 64 pages and no illustrations they have provided a very solid piece of reading.

One of the most popular in its day was the Champion Library which reprinted the serials from the Champion and its companion paper the Triumph. Its first issue was in February 1929 and it became a war casualty in June 1940. Thus it spanned the whole of the 1930's - an interesting period in boys' reading and if making a survey of it does not show what boys wanted, at least it shows what they got. The Champion Library spread itself over a very wide field in the realm of boys' reading

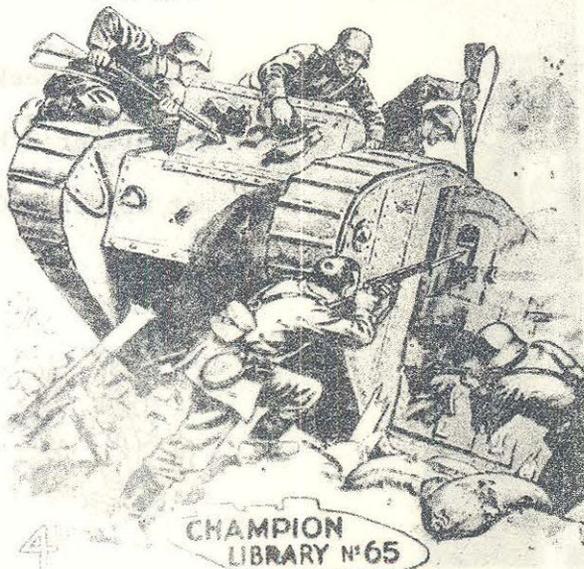
matter, and there must have been something to suit any boy no matter how varied his taste. It ran for 274 issues printed with a cover in yellow and brown tonings and black printing, a pattern which it never found any occasion to alter. Before its advent serials from the Champion and Triumph were being reprinted in the Boys' Friend Library but this ceased when the Champion Library was launched.

The following authors contributed to the 274 titles:-

| | | | |
|----------------|----|------------------|---|
| Edwin Dale | 37 | Pat Haynes | 5 |
| Cecil Fanshaw | 34 | John Marshall | 5 |
| Rupert Hall | 33 | H. Wedgwood | |
| Donald Dane | 31 | Bellfield | 4 |
| Herbert Macrae | 25 | Norman Taylor | 3 |
| Dick Shaw | 16 | Victor Nelson | 3 |
| Jack Maxwell | 14 | Peter Garnett | 3 |
| Douglas Dundee | 13 | Warren J. Lawson | 3 |
| Hal Wilton | 11 | Stephen Thomson | 3 |
| John Ascott | 8 | Geoffrey Gunn | 2 |
| Duncan Sterne | 6 | John Gale | 2 |
| Peter Lang | 5 | Mark Grimshaw | 2 |

PALS OF THE FIGHTING TANKS.

HERBERT MACRAE



| | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|---|
| Dugald Moray | 2 | Bernard Buley | 1 |
| Jack Stirling | 1 | Geoffrey | |
| Reg. Wilson | 1 | Meredith | 1 |

Mr. E. R. Home-Gall with his two pseudonyms of Edwin Dale and Rupert Hall accounted for a grand total of 70 stories, far more than Mr. E. L. McKray who used the pen names of Jack Maxwell, Pat Haynes and Mark Grimshaw.

John Ascott and Victor Nelson were the pen names of John William Bobin who wrote under various names for about 21 papers. As "Mark Osborne" he wrote Sexton Blake stories in the S.B. Library and Union Jack, and others in the Boys' Friend, Boys' Journal and Pluck. Under the pen names of Gertrude Nelson and Adelle Ascott he wrote in several girls' papers. His life-long interests were horse and dog racing and boxing and the majority of his stories were on these subjects that he knew so well. He died in 1935.

Norman Taylor (who was also Norma Taylor) was Noel Wood-Smith who wrote two Greyfriars stories in the Magnet as well as stories in Dreadnought, Pluck, Boys' Friend, Young Britain, School Friend and Schoolgirls' Own.

Reg. Wilson's real name was Reginald George Thomas. He wrote for 17 papers including Sexton Blake Lib., Chums, Scoops, - the Thomson papers and various girls' papers. He was a prolific writer and is credited with over 12,000 stories during his lifetime. He died about 1958.

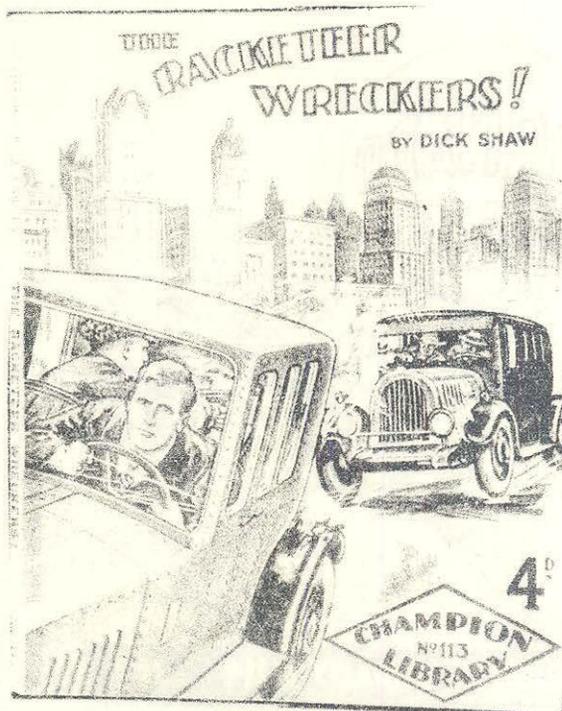
In the list of 28 I suspect that there could be further duplication. For instance Dundee and Moray have a similar ring.

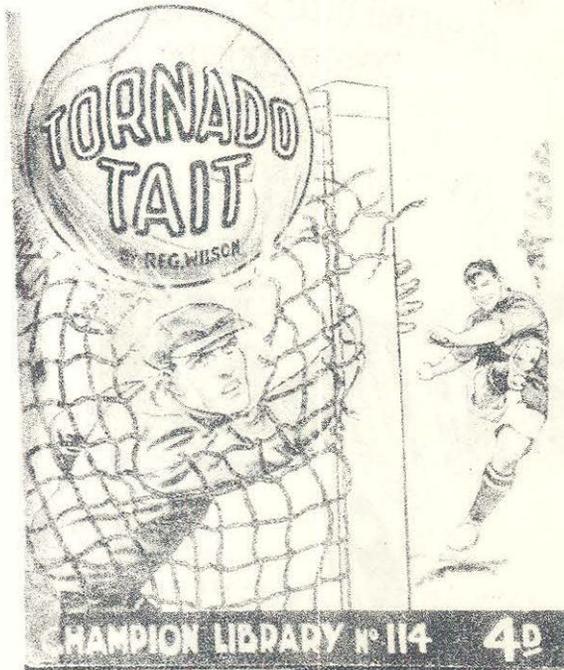
The battle-cry of the Champion and Triumph was "Adventure" "Great War" "Sport" and "Mystery" and I have attempted to make a classification of the series along these lines. A word about "Mystery". If it was a battle cry it was also the essence of the Champion Library. It flowed through all the stories. Every football story had one which was usually solved on the last page along with the winning of the Cup, and it prevailed in all the other sport stories as well as in the front-line trenches in World War I, in the ranks of the Foreign Legion, in the backwoods in Canada, and in every other far away spot that the stories carried you off to. I have therefore left "Mystery" out of it altogether, but have included a group of "Crime and Detective"

The 274 break-down as follows:-

| | | | | | |
|-----------|----|-------------------|----|---------|----|
| Adventure | 99 | Great War | 34 | Western | 11 |
| Sport | 99 | Crime & Detective | 29 | School | 2 |

In making the classification I found that the majority of stories fell readily into their correct group. However I did encounter a few that blended two subjects.





Stories such as "The Cowboy Jockey", "The Heavyweight Mountie", "The Boxing Legionaire", "The Boxing G. Man", required a closer look at to decide the real essence of the story, but I finished up eventually with each story placed in one category only.

To comment it might be more interesting to start at the bottom of the list. 2 school stories? This does not sound much from a paper where the sky was the limit and which tried to cater for all tastes. Was the school story on the way out in the 30's? But the Champion and Triumph never went in much for the school story. The two stories were of the hilarious type and the schools unrealistic, different to the staid Greyfriars, St. Jim's and St. Frank's which endured for so long. "Fireworks Flynn - the Sporting Schoolmaster", appeared in the second-to-last issue of the Champion Library and had the paper lasted longer it is certain that he would have appeared more often as he was a very popular character in the

Champion right up to the last.

Second bottom on the list was Western with 11 stories - another low rating for a subject long popular in the realm of fiction. However, I might mention here that I only included stories that were located in the U.S.A. There were a lot of Canadian stories with a semi-western flavour, but I have included these in the Adventure Section. Canada was a popular spot in the Champion Library and gave a wide scope.

The western stories dealt with the usual run-of-the-mill cattle rustlers, outlaws, bandits, train-robbers, the tenderfoot and the fighting sheriff. All were good reading and must have fully satisfied the western fan.

Next on the list is Crime and Detective at 29 and of these 19 were located in England and 10 in America. The English stories were concerned mostly with the private-detective except for one which was about a dog-detective and one about a master-crook. This was the only case in which there was any glorification of a criminal. These were all good, clean, fast moving stories, with baffling plots, just the type of story that should have been appearing in the Sexton Blake Library.

First on the scene was Duncan Sterne with 5 stories about his popular creation - Norton Keen. In his first story "On the Trail of the Fifth Ace" he told of how Norton Keen came to be associated with his future assistant Billy Bent, the waif from the Liverpool Docks; and the two went on to crack some pretty tough cases. Donald Dane featured his detective - Raymond Dexter and Cecil Fanshaw his - Rodney Manderson - in good stories.

Then there was Colwyn Dane. The Champion Library would never have been complete if it hadn't have featured a couple of stories of this great detective. Created by Rupert Hall and then taken over by Mark Grimshaw he ran for about 30 years

in the old Champion with his faithful assistant Slick Chester. To thousands of boys in the 20's and 30's he must have been a better known detective than Sexton Blake. He dealt with countless types of criminals but was never better than when dealing with the Orientals. Cunning as they were Dave could always outwit them.

As to the 10 American stories, they differed from the English ones in that they did not feature the private detective. Possibly the great American private-eyes of Chandler, Chase and Spillane had not yet arrived on the scene. The stories dealt with gangsters and racketeers, the Ku-Klux-Klan, and two popular figures of the day, the speed-cop and the G-Man. One story was about life in an American prison.

Next on the list is Great War with 34 stories. The Great War of course was fought on land, sea and in the air and of the 34 stories 23 were on land, 5 sea and 5 air, while one was a Secret Service story that combined both land and sea. These Great War stories were a grand part of the Champion Library. They were not just mere rambling adventure tales. The various authors obviously wrote from their own personal experiences and used historical facts. Thus we had a series of stories that traced the course of the war. The retreat from Mons and the battle of the Marne, Ypres and Hill 60 in 1915. Arras in 1917 with the vast attack with troops, guns and tanks, Vimy Ridge and the Somme and Paschendaele. These were graphic stories that lived. You could feel the thundering field guns, the crashing bombs over shell-swept No-Man's Land, the chattering machine guns, feel the bayonet tearing into yielding flesh. They told of the life of the man in the trenches, life on the big guns, the horror of the first gas attack, the spies in the front line, the prisoners, while "Dick Reckless - Dispatch Rider" gave a good insight into the trials and tribulations of a dispatch rider. One story told of the Gallipoli campaign while another told of the move of Australian troops from France to Gallipoli with the epic of a torpedoed troopship in between.

The stories of the war at sea were equally as vivid. Curled up in an armchair with one you could soon feel yourself swaying on the murky, grey North Sea.

The ones that captured the imagination most were the stories of the Q Boats or mystery ships. These disguised merchantmen, dauntlessly let their ship be shelled and torpedoed in order to lure the German U Boats to their doom. One story was about the Coastal Motor Boats, the swiftest craft in the navy, and their perilous encounters with submarines and destroyers, the reckless exploits beneath the devastating guns of Germany's coastal defences and grim battles with the clever spies. Two other stories told of life on the big battle-ships.

The stories of the air told vividly of the men who flew the flimsy planes and fought their war, intermingled with spies and grand adventure.

At the top of the list there is a tie between Sport and Adventure, but it is really



a hollow tie as so much adventure was crammed into the sport stories. With 99 each they represent a fair slice of the total number of issues, and perhaps show where the greatest demand was.

The 99 sports stories break down as follows:-

| | | | |
|-------------------|----|------------|---|
| Football | 25 | Ice Hockey | 7 |
| Motor Car Racing | 20 | Cricket | 6 |
| Motor Bike Racing | 20 | Rowing | 1 |
| Boxing | 10 | Cycling | 1 |
| Horse Racing | 9 | | |

When we look at it we notice a big difference in the two king sports of Football and Cricket. It was probably the demand and the appeal.

Football topped the poll and would probably do so again in a popularity-poll today. They were all grand stories of the various football teams' struggles to win honour and glory and a league cup. Second division, third division, hoboos, gypsies, sailormen, garagemen, they were from all walks of life. All of course were located in England except for one which told of a tour of South America with encounters with bandits, cattle rustlers and bull fights. One other story was well blended with the Secret Service but they all had their thrills interwoven with baffling mystery.

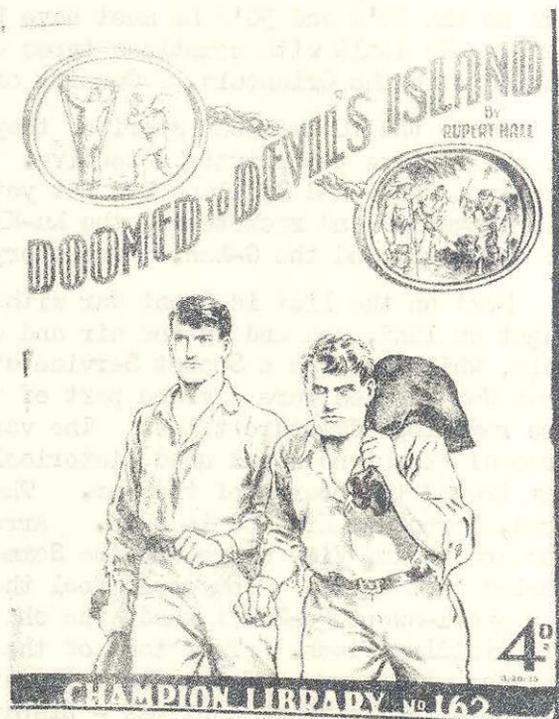
In second place equal are motor car racing and motor bike racing. It is doubtful whether these two would retain a high place in today's popular sports, but in those days they seemed to have captured the imagination of boys. The motor racing was on both track and road. One was a round-the-world race and others took in the Monaco Grand Prix and the Swiss and French G.P's. One was located in America and all the stories flowed along grandly, with a mixture of crime, mystery and general excitement.

The general theme of most of motor-cycling (or to give them their more popular name - speedway) stories was Test Matches between England and Australia. Two of the stories were located in Australia which seemed to be the only other country indulging in the sport.

When the flame-belching motor bikes dashed down the straight, there were thrills galore, not to mention treachery, excitement and mystery.

Then we come down to boxing. Here was a grand selection of stories written by men who followed the sport closely and they would be just as popular with today's youth if today's youth could only find the time and inclination to read them.

Next on the list with one story less are the horse-racing stories. Here again some grand adventures of a sport that has not lost any favour in the last thirty or forty years. They traced the lives of the stable-boys, apprentices and jockeys with thrills of the turf and the trickery and treachery that went on too.





Down now to ice-hockey. Here was a sport that came on the scene late in the life of the Champion Library, though not particularly at the expense of any other sport.

Apparently it was just starting to catch on, and had the Library had a longer life no doubt a lot more stories would have appeared. Of the 7 that did appear 4 were located in Canada and 3 in England.

Next the cricket stories. These were all good and varied. The main theme was the unknown boy who turned out to be a demon bowler or a devastating batsman. One each was imported from Australia and India but they were mostly of humble English stock. The stories combined mystery and suspense too. The rowing and cycling stories added to the variety.

The adventure section offered a large field because the world lay on the Champion's doorstep. However the sea seemed to offer the largest single scope.

There were 21 of them and broken down again, 8 were pirate stories, 5 tales of the South Seas, 3 speedboats, 3 tales of salvaging and treasure hunting under the sea, 1 of adventure in the South China Seas and 1 of whaling. There were 13 stories of Canada and the Yukon and 4 were tales of the lumber camps, 3 the Canadian Mounted Police, 2 the Rockies, 2 adventure in Canada, 1 gold prospecting and 1 tale of the Yukon. Air stories featured in 12 issues. There were no space stories of course as this was an age that had not arrived. The stories dealt with the early conquests of the air, with air circuses and air pirates and air races thrown in. There were 11 stories of the Foreign Legion, a long popular subject and one which would still rate well today. 6 stories of the African jungle and 5 each of the African desert and the Arctic - two extremes, and the Far East. There were 3 of highwaymen and 3 tales of South America and 2 set in a mythical Europe.

The following subjects gave 1 each - South Africa, Australia, the movie industry, the gladiators in early Roman times (I wondered whether I should have included this one in the sport section), Science fiction, Amazon river, circus life, India, Devil's Island, Caveman days in Britain, Nigeria and a tale of Napoleonic days. Thus was the bill of fare; and every boy who read should have found something to absorb him.

The honour of writing No. 1 in the Library went to Herbert Macrae with "Pals of the Great War" a tale of one of his most popular characters 'Fighting Mac'. He followed it up with a sequel in No. 7 "Driving Back the Invaders" and again with No. 59 "With Fighting Mac at Arras". Macrae was a versatile writer in a grand team. Of the 34 war stories he wrote 16 of them and 10 authors wrote the other 18. He certainly knew his ground on the Western Front and even tackled one of the air war stories and also touched on the Gallipoli campaign. He wrote one of the two only

school stories in the series, could write a baffling crime mystery, a Foreign Legion story adventure, a motor racing story and capably gave one an American setting. One of his other popular characters was Spike Milligan. As with Dick Shaw, his stories disappeared altogether from later issues of the Library, so it could reasonably be presumed that both these fine authors died many years ago.

Greatest contributor of course was Mr. E. Home-Gall. In the long list of writers of boys' adventure stories, he must lie very close to the top, but he has not received due recognition in Collector's Digest. Perhaps some capable hand will write his story some day.

Another prolific contributor was Cecil Fanshaw who could turn his hand to almost anything. He never wrote a Great War probably for the fact that he wasn't there. He would have been capable of one but writing with colleagues who were old soldiers may have had its drawbacks. But then again, he didn't sail on the Spanish Main either and it is here that he is remembered most. Pirates - both ancient and modern were his long suit and after that their counterpart - the highwayman. He wrote adventure stories on a wide variety of subjects - the Foreign Legion, Canadian Mounted Police, the turf, westerns and mysteries.

One more of the more versatile writers was Donald Dane. He too wrote splendid tales on a grand scale from Great War to school.

Three authors who were making their mark as the library finished were Warren J. Lawson, Peter Garnett and Stephen Thomson, but they were all a grand lot deserving of more recognition than they get today.

When it is considered that the Champion Weekly outlived the Magnet, had a longer life, and at one time had a larger circulation, it must have left a whole army of supporters behind and it is surprising that so little interest is taken in it in C.D. circles today.

Perhaps its day is still to come.

* * * * *

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A Tale of Old St. Frank's

By Jim Cook

In a recent visit to St. Frank's the name of Mr. Field cropped up during a discussion on watches. I had been invited to tea in Study D in the Ancient House and as it was such a gloomy afternoon with a cold wind coming in from the sea the proposed trip to the Bannington Palladium with several juniors had been put off in preference to the warmth and comfort around the study fires.

Handforth had been unusually quiet during the meal and when the table had been cleared we all sat round the fire. The weather had worsened and sullen, dark masses of cloud had brought on a premature night. The high wind had so far staved off the rain but several splashes had begun to smite the study window and we knew we were in for a very rough evening.

Church and McClure, Handforth's study mates, were busily roasting chestnuts and it wasn't until they handed their leader one in the grip of the coal tongs that the sudden feel of the hot nut in his fingers brought him back to earth. I had become familiar with the Handforthian roar since knowing him but the din he kicked up must have reverberated throughout the five Houses at St. Frank's but, strangely enough, all I could hear after he simmered down was the rain on the window and the buffeting of the wind as it hit the school buildings and flew on victoriously over Bannington Moor.

The transition period of Handy's outburst and his calm was very swift. And in a very few moments I was listening to an unrecorded account of an event which happened to Walter Church during the time when St. Frank's was comprised only of two Houses, the Ancient House and the College House.

The episode would have remained in the distant past had not McClure mentioned the fact of his visit to Bellton the next day to get his watch examined by the watchmaker. Mr. Field is the village jeweller and although not really a watchmaker he is quite able to repair clocks and watches. Evidently this remark of McClure's had set off a spark in Handforth's memory and the ensuing reverie we had seen in him was now explained.

It happened on such a stormy evening as this, Handforth told me, that poor old Church set out on his bicycle to Bellton. If Mr. Crowell's watch hadn't suddenly decided to go on strike he wouldn't have asked Church to take it to the village jeweller for repair. If Simon Kenmore of the sixth, now of the East House but at that time of the College House, hadn't arranged to meet a Mr. Snagg in Bellton to back a horse; if a little girl had paid less attention to her cream bun as she left Mr. Bink's shop the affair wouldn't have come to be written by me or exploded in Handforth's memory. But big trees from little acorns grow and all these incidents went to form a pattern, a design of anxiety and mental torture, that was to make that September evening a never forgotten time of anguish and strain.

Church had deposited the watch at the jeweller's and after promising Mr. Field to collect it the next day Church wheeled his bicycle over to the road and started off back to St. Frank's. It was getting dark although the evening was early but rain and a strong wind made him prefer the cosiness of Study D to the wet and

deserted village. A gleam of light from old Binks's shop was reflected in the wet High-street and Church very reluctantly decided not to stay and purchase some of those very luscious cakes from the village tuck shop. So he rode past, his face against the wind, up the empty road. Then several things happened at once. A sound of a motor car in his ears, a vision of a little girl with a bun in her hand, the whimper of an animal, and as he fell his last thought before he blacked out was that he had seen Solomon Levi appear from nowhere.

From this point Church himself took over from Handy and related what occurred after he had apparently run over the girl. I preferred to listen to Church as Handforth's version was getting difficult for me to set down.

"My black-out was only short" said Church, "for Levi was crossing the road and hurrying to assist me. A little bundle of blue clothes lay beneath my cycle and I could see Kenmore leaving a car that had stopped a few yards on. P.C. Sparrow was also there and after Levi had helped me to my feet it suddenly dawned on me that I had run over the little girl and that her lifeless body was being extricated from my bicycle by the village policeman."

They used the car to take the small, pathetic bundle to the mortuary in Bannington and P.C. Sparrow, after taking statements from Kenmore and the driver of the car who was a Mr. Snagg, one of Bannington's "sportsmen", took Church to the village police-station to await the arrival of Inspector Jameson of the Bannington Police. And when the inspector had heard the details he forthwith charged Church with causing the death of the girl.

Poor Church never knew how he returned to St. Frank's that night. Nelson Lee, after a very long time, had arrived at the village police-station and after a battle of words with the inspector had accompanied Church back to St. Frank's. Somehow word had reached the school that Church had been arrested on a charge of manslaughter and Nelson Lee was bringing him back on bail.

It was raining very hard now and outside in the Triangle it had become so gloomy that it was difficult to see the opposite Houses. The faces of Handforth & Co., were very solemn as Church went on with his story.

Kenmore (Church continued) had seen the accident from the car. In his statement to the police he described how Church had ridden very fast up the High street and had suddenly veered from the centre of the road into the pavement outside Mr. Binks' shop. It was, Kenmore explained, as if Church had suddenly decided to call at the shop when he had almost passed it and had turned off into the shop front at right angles. The small girl, running from the shop with a cream bun in her hand, had met the full force of the junior on his cycle. Kenmore maintained that Church had ridden directly into the girl and this was proved by the position of the bicycle as P.C. Sparrow had found it. The village constable had been trained to watch for the unusual and the fact that the bicycle was over the kerb-stone in the direction of the tuck shop was a point against Church.

"And you say you were charged with the death of that little girl?" I stared at Church.

I was beginning to feel at a loss. There were several loose ends hanging about that didn't make sense.

"I can see it now," replied Church. "That awful scene of the inquest and the appearance in court. I was accused of killing the little girl and Kenmore's evidence convicted me of the offence out of hand. I didn't stand a chance."

Charles Hamilton's School Stories

Some reflections on looking back---possibly unfair

By Frank Hancock

There have been a great many changes in this twentieth century of ours, indeed within the lifetime of some quite young people. Two world wars have drastically changed the old settled order of things, and the ingenuity of man has produced the aeroplane, wireless, talking pictures, and finally television. At least one thing has remained constant for most of this period - the output of fine school stories from the pen of Charles Hamilton.

These changes have had their effect upon the habits of the people, reading habits more than anything else, and this is plainly borne out by a study of the publications for juveniles to-day. Up to 1940 the Magnet and Gem had over 20 pages, most of which were packed with reading matter, and the long school story was enjoyed by many. Alas, the paper shortage put paid to that. These papers did not re-appear on the cessation of hostilities, and most juvenile publications to-day contain much less reading - sometimes none at all - and many more pictures.

In fairness to the modern youngsters, they live under conditions vastly different in many ways to those which prevailed even a few years before the war. Many of us go back to pre-television days, before talking pictures, and even to the days when wireless itself was just beginning. We had to read for much of our entertainment; to-day they don't have to, they just press a switch, and there it is, with no effort. Whatever the reason, they do not experience that weekly dip into Hamiltoniana which we enjoyed so much. A great pity - they don't know what they're missing.

I well remember my own introduction to Hamiltoniana. About the year 1922 the father of a school pal of mine, a man in his forties, used to take the Boys' Friend every week. His own son - something of a moron, I now perceive - showed no interest whatever, and his mother, bless her, gave me the old copies. So I became acquainted with Jimmy Silver & Co., and Rookwood has remained my first favourite ever since. I also read quite a few Magnets, and a Gem now and then, and then settled for the Popular, because I got three for the price of one, as it were, and twopences were not too plentiful in those days. When I started working things naturally became easier and I usually got the Magnet and Popular, and of course the Holiday Annual most years.

There were other fine stories, of course, besides Hamilton's, in these various publications, but they had little interest for me. It was the stories of school life, then, as now, which pleased me most.

I wonder what is the secret of the perennial appeal of the school story? Perhaps it is because the public school is a little world of its own in which the boys have to live their own lives and stand on their own feet. They can't go home to mum and dad after class every day, and have to fight their own battles. The fact that most of the readers were probably working-class or lower middle-class boys didn't make any difference; maybe reading about a world of which they had no part

was part of the attraction. As someone once asked, how many readers understood the classical quotations with which the work of Charles Hamilton is so liberally besprinkled? I believe part of the secret of his success is that he never wrote down to his readers. So his stories have lasted.

St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood, to take them in chronological order, are his most famous schools. There were others, of course, quite a number, but these three are the ones he wrote about most. For a generation two of them, and some of the time three, were featured weekly without fail. All the work of one man. All? Well, not quite. Shall I say 95% Rookwood, 75% Greyfriars, and 65% of St. Jim's stories were his work. I don't think I should be very far out. It is a great achievement, even allowing for the large number of reprints in the Gem. And how well they did service, in the Magnet, Gem and Boys' Friend, and often later in the Popular and the Schoolboys Own Library.

Inevitably, with such a colossal output over so long a period, there was some repetition as regards plot. The barring-out series; the popular captain displaced by an unscrupulous rival; the spoilt and wayward younger brother; the crook schoolmaster; the boy from the underworld; all these did sterling service over the years. Yet it did not matter; for the readership of the papers probably changed almost entirely every two or three years or so, so that the repetition of a familiar plot would not be noticeable to the young contemporary reader. It is only in retrospect that this repetition becomes apparent, so that criticism on this score is hardly fair. Moreover, nearly all the various stories still make excellent reading, even to-day.

The characters, too, tended to be of similar types. Wingate, Kildare and Bulkeley; Loder, Knox and Carthew; Jack Wingate, Teddy Lovell and Reggie Manners; Coker, Grundy and Gunner; there is no great difference in their character and doings. So were the cads, more or less, Peel, Racke, Skinner and the rest, except that Skinner was endowed with a sense of humour which rather endears him to me, in spite of his caddish tricks. The leading juniors were also similar in a general way, Harry Wharton, Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver; Vernon-Smith, Cardew and Mornington - they played similar roles, but had a much greater share of the limelight, and more trouble was taken in the creation of their characters. They had distinctive personalities of their own. The same may be said of the three fat boys, Billy Bunter, Baggy Trimble and Tubby Muffin - each somehow makes a different impression. Billy Bunter was - I should say, is - fat, lazy, greedy, conceited, unscrupulous and stupid, yet with a certain amount of low cunning. Tubby Muffin is similar, yet he always impressed me as being a more straightforward, good-natured type than Bunter. Baggy Trimble I always liked least of the three. I could never find anything attractive or interesting about Baggy. Unlike Bunter, Muffin and Trimble played comparatively minor roles; their characters were never developed as Bunter's was. At a pinch we could accept Rookwood and St. Jim's stories without Muffin and Trimble, but I can't imagine Greyfriars without Bunter putting in an appearance and entertaining us in his own inimitable manner. There is only one Bunter in the entire realm of schoolboy fiction!

The masters, too, tended to be cast in the same mould. Ratcliff and Selby at St. Jim's, Hacker at Greyfriars, and Manders at Rookwood, although subtly different in some ways, played a similar role in harassing the juniors, being tyrannical, and usually being discomfited in the end. Of the Heads, Dr. Chisholm is less reposeful and serene than Dr. Locke and Dr. Holmes, rather colder, and more severe. He has more faults and is therefore, I think, more human and believable. There is not

much to choose between Prout and Greely, or Dalton and Lascelles, except that perhaps the first-named in each case had more of the limelight. St. Jim's does not seem to have had a fighting form-master; at least I have never encountered one in my reading of the Gem, which admittedly has not been very extensive.

We all have our own views as to the best character created by the author - and also the worst. The recent 'C.D.' popularity competition clarified the former question in the general sense. I wonder what result an unpopularity competition would produce? In my opinion Fisher T. Fish was Charles Hamilton's greatest failure; at least I think so now, looking back over the years. Fishy, of course, is the creature of his period. He appeared at a time when, for one reason and another, there was a good deal of anti-American feeling in this country. He is the concentrated essence of every bad trait in the American character - maybe I should say the 'stage' American character. Generally he is portrayed as a mean, grasping individual whose soul does not rise above the making of money, selling worthless articles at inflated prices, making loans to his schoolfellows at high rates of interest, and also as a funk, and no good at games. One is also reminded of Eben Hacke of Cedar Creek, and Texas Lick, who had a brief sojourn at Rookwood. In fact I think the author rather overdid it. He lays it on so thick that one begins to have some sympathy for the Transatlantic junior. Fishy, in fact, was so thoroughly objectionable that Wharton Lodge, Mauleverer Towers, and the homes of the other Removites were closed to him, and he seems to have spent most of his holidays at the school - a truly dreadful fate for a schoolboy. Poor old Fishy!

Here again I must admit that this is hardly fair criticism to-day, for when I first read about Fishy and his goings-on all those years ago I thought it very good fun. Yet, if any of the old Greyfriars stories are ever reprinted I think Fisher T. Fish would 'date' them more than any other character, so much has closer contact with the Americans and the American way of life changed our ideas.

When we get away from the atmosphere of the English public school the picture is rather different. The Rio Kid, for instance, one of Charles Hamilton's best creations, was true blue, and would be a credit to this or any other country.

Another character I never enjoyed reading about was Tom Dutton. Tom, of course, was very hard of hearing - don't we know it! - and I have never considered jokes about other people's ailments very funny. We all know the drill; Bunter, Peter Todd, or Mr. Quelch, addresses some simple remark to Tom, who confuses the main word with a similar word rhyming with it, and again, and again ----. This grew to be a sort of ritual in the Magnet, at least in term time, which had to be dragged in every few weeks, and I for one soon grew heartily sick of it.

There were two devices of plot, ventriloquism and disguises, which have come in for a good deal of criticism from several quarters. Billy Bunter, of course, is the ventriloquist, although Van Ryn could also do it. It was played down rather in the later years. I think it a good deal more credible than the disguises. During the war years I know a boy of sixteen or so who used to appear at local concerts and socials giving a ventriloquial turn. He was very good, and really could make his doll talk intelligibly without any perceptible motion of his own lips. So, having seen it done at close quarters by a mere boy, I can swallow the ventriloquism.

But those disguises! Wibley, of course, is the star performer, and some of his exploits are weird and wonderful. He even made up Billy Bunter as an African native prince on one occasion so effectively that Bunter was able to present himself at Greyfriars and defy detection.

Teddy Grace also accomplished some remarkable feats of impersonation at Rookwood. Annoyed with Jimmy Silver at not being given the leading feminine part in a forthcoming production (Putty being convinced that he was far and away the best actor in the junior school at Rookwood) he arrived at the school disguised as a girl, rather shabbily dressed, and pretended to be Jimmy's cousin whom Jimmy did not wish to know because she was poor, thereby causing the captain of the Fourth a good deal of embarrassment and temporary unpopularity. He also disguised himself as a female of uncertain age, and even more uncertain temper, and claimed to be Mr. Manders' deserted wife, chasing that unfortunate gentleman up and down Rookwood with his umbrella - an exploit which very nearly earned him the sack.

But the real daddy of them all was one early Greyfriars story which related how the Remove football team hit a bad patch, losing several games in succession, whereupon some of the other Removites became disgruntled and formed a rival eleven. The regular team left the school one half-holiday and returned disguised as girls, skirts, wigs and all, challenged the upstart team to a game, beat them, and departed, of course without being recognised. If I remember rightly it was Solly Lazarus who accomplished this miracle of make-up.

Good, amusing yarns, well written, but when I first read them all those years ago I remember thinking, even at that tender age, 'Well, that's a bit steep---'

There are some other devices of plot which happen at intervals down the years, and always rather irritated me. For instance, Billy Bunter hides under the seat of a railway carriage, because somebody is after him, from motives of curiosity, or because he is bilking the railway. He usually manages to overhear a private conversation, or witness something, of great importance to the story. Now I have been in a good many railway carriages, but I've never been in one where it would have been possible to hide effectively under the seat, especially a person of Billy Bunter's size.

Then again, the recipient of a missile always staggers back and sits down with a thud. I've lost count of the number of times a cushion has been hurled at Bunter, who staggered back and sat down with a thud. Even Prout, when his topper was knocked off by a flying orange on the first day of term, staggered back and sat down on the station platform with a thud.

The geography of the various schools is also a bit weak; the distances between various places, and even the direction in which they lie, varies from time to time. Even inside the schools, one is never quite sure where the studies, dormitories, and various other places are, whether on the ground, first or second floors. I wish Charles Hamilton had done what Edwy Searles Brooks did some years later; drawn up a map of the school and surrounding district, and stuck to it. He doesn't worry, and simply makes the geography fit the story.

No doubt many will consider that these are little, niggling points, hardly worth criticising, and I dare say they are right. Nevertheless, when one reads and re-reads the stories they stand out anew each time, and have rather an irritating effect.

One of my favourite pastimes is to read the excellent 'Who's Who's' for the three schools which were published in the early Holiday Annuals, and which I understand were compiled by G. R. Samways, as much for the guidance of substitute writers as for the entertainment of the reader. These contain the names of many interesting-sounding characters who are seldom if ever met with in the stories. At Greyfriars, for instance, there is Coker minor, the brainy, but weak and under-sized brother of

the great Horace (why does Horace never ask him to help with his prep?), Tremaine, who, we are informed, took the place of the late lamented Courtney as a prefect, and his pal Faulkner. In the Fifth there is Smith, elder brother of Smith minor, that 'forgotten man' of the Remove, who also has a younger brother in the Second (a good story might have been written about three brothers at the same school). Then there is Lange of the Shell, a 'mad' inventor of the Skimpole type, and young Paget, the little dandy of the Third.

At Rookwood there is Kingsley Brayne of the Sixth, a very popular fellow and good at games; Tobias Jobson of the Fifth, who 'rougas it' somewhat because he is the poorest fellow at Rookwood, and Lacy of the Modern Fourth, a Mornington-type character. Bertie de Vere, a 'thorough-paced little blade' in the Third, who tries in vain to lead Algy Silver astray, also sounds interesting.

Over at St. Jim's Lefevre, the popular and capable captain of the Fifth, does not get much of a look-in, being overshadowed by Cutts in the stories.

It seems a pity that some of these characters were never allowed to play a leading part. If they had been, of course there would have been fewer stories about the popular favourites of whom we are all so fond, and that would never have done - unless the author had written many extra stories, and he could hardly have written more than he did. And there are those who say the stage was overcrowded, anyway. It's just my point of view - what's yours, as our respected Editor would say.

Incidentally, how many of the characters listed in the 'Who's Who's' are Hamilton characters? Were they all mentioned by him in his stories, or were some written in by Mr. Samways? If these 'Who's Who's' were to be published at all a fairly large number of names was probably necessary in order to give the impression of size, as Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's were supposed to be fairly large public schools with from two to three hundred boys each. It would hardly have done, in the case of Greyfriars for instance, to give a more or less complete cast of Remove boys, and two or three fags, Shell, Fifth, Sixth, etc. The average boy reader would also expect each Form to have at least enough fellows to make up a football or cricket team.

Comparisons have recently been made between the Hamilton stories and the 'hard-backed' school stories, and it has been stated that the boys in the latter behaved more like boys and less like grown-ups, and that the plots were not so far-fetched. This may well be true in many cases, but how many stories did these 'hard-backed' authors write? Two or three a year? Obviously they were not under anything like the same pressure as Hamilton.

Create a public school, people it with two or three hundred boys and a dozen or fifteen assorted masters and staff. Have a small number of strong characters who almost always play the leading parts, assisted fairly often by new arrivals who always depart when their brief day is done. Have a larger number of lesser-known characters who often get a mention, but whose function is mainly that of the supporting cast. Finally, have in the background the vast mass of the school, most of whom are simply supposed to be there and never rate a mention. Write a story about their doings every week. Charles Hamilton did this for a generation, always with one school, sometimes with two, and even for short intervals with three. Small wonder there is some repetition!

The moral tone of the stories was always high. Right triumphed, and the cads received their deserts in the end, which of course is as it should be. Just now

and again one feels a slight qualm. Take Arthur Carter, for instance. Carter was Billy Bunter's cousin, and his rival for the favours of rich Uncle Carter. He did his best to discredit Bunter in the eyes of his uncle by playing all manner of dirty tricks. He failed, and in the end was spotted and expelled, as he richly deserved to be. Carter was an orphan. What happened to him, this boy of fifteen, when he was kicked out of Greyfriars? Did anybody look after him?

Now this kind of speculation is, of course, monstrously unfair. Charles Hamilton wrote stories about schoolboys for schoolboys, and what might happen to them in later life was no concern of his. What they did at school, and in their holidays, is his concern, and ours too. Moralising about what might have happened after they left school is not.

It is easy now to look back over the years, when one can survey the whole mass of the author's work, and pick our flaws here and there. But the general level of excellence is quite remarkable, and the overwhelming majority of the genuine Hamilton stories are immensely readable even to-day. What else can rival their enduring popularity? Sexton Blake and St. Frank's to some extent, yes. Of the rest, the Boys' Own Paper, Chums, Rover, Adventure, Wizard - how many people are eagerly seeking back numbers to-day?

Many years ago that rising young author, Charles Hamilton, decided to devote his main attention to the school story. For this we can all be thankful.

If only Fishy hadn't been such an out-and-out ----- !

* * * * *

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Greyfriars Holiday Annuals 1921, 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1933, 1936, 1938, 1939 and 1940. Chums Annuals, Scout loose and Annuals. Bunter Books, Billy Bunters Own, Tom Merry's Own. Marvels, Plucks, Boys Journal, Boys' Friend Libraries.

Magnificent Bound Run of The Comet and Sun

" " " The Thriller Comics Library

" " volume SOL 185, 183, 188 BFL 355

" " " SOL 184 BFL 370 374 378

Magnets, Gems, Nelson Lees, Union Jacks, Detective Weeklies, Modern Wonders, Scoops, Greyfriars Herald, etc. etc. SOLs 406, 103, 126, 88, 83, 362, 335, 402, 12, 83, 401, 24, 208, 338, 224, 387, 401, 236, 383, 395, 369, 368, 38, 62, 67, 72, 77, 34, 33, 25, 22, 18, 9. Aldine First-Rate, Detective Tales, Tip-Top, True Blue, Dick Turpins. The Lone Texan, Frank Richards. Hard cover school tales by Avery, Goodyear, Coke, Bird, Hadath, etc.

WANTED: Chuckles, Boys Realm (small), Firefly, Football Favourite, Football Weekly, Nugget Weekly, Sports & Adventure, Surprise (A.P.), Boys Wonder, Aldine Half-Holiday, Cheerful - Garfield Boys N1, Claude Duval, Diamond Lib. Diamond War Library, Life & Adventure, Flag Lib. Redskin Lib. New Redskin Lib. Vanguard (Thomson), Bubbles, Big Budget, Comic Life, Larks, Merry & Bright, Monster Lib. My Favourite, Sparks, Sunbeam, Tiger Tims, Tip Top, Big Comic, Lot O' Fun, Film Fun, Kinema Komic, Champion, Triumph, Boys Cinema. Many Champion Libraries.

FRANK VERNON LAY

52, OAKLEIGH GARDENS, WHETSTONE, LONDON N.20.



Years ago it was the custom for the various papers to run clubs, usually with the idea of stimulating circulation. These clubs faded from sight and mind very swiftly, but they were probably fun while they lasted. Above we reproduce the certificate which was issued to Collectors' Digest reader Charles Baker, of Caernarvon, by CHUCKLES, way back in 1914. He has retained it ever since. We wonder how many similar certificates are still in existence.

WANTED: Last Series "Modern Boy". Details and price please:-

R. HODGSON, "BLUE GABLES," 47, GORDONDALE RD., MANSFIELD, NOTTS.

WANTED: Modern Boy Annual 1933 also Modern Boy Books, Aircraft, Motors, Ships, Engines, Engineering.

WALLIS, 64, OAKWOOD PARK ROAD, LONDON, N.14

FOR SALE: 2 Volumes "SCOUT" 1910, 1911; one full year - one half year. Also "BOYS JOURNAL" containing Outlaw of the Shell, John Fennimore. Also 70 Modern "Blakes" immaculate.

STAN KNIGHT, 288, HIGH STREET, CHEL TENHAM, GLOS.

Some Pre-Bunter Stories

~ ~ ~ for Boys ~ ~ ~

By RICHMAL CROMPTON
(Creator of the world-famous 'WILLIAM')

* * *

Stories for boys flood the book market these days and it's difficult to realise that the story written expressly for children is of comparatively recent origin, appearing first in the eighteenth century. Before that time the unfortunate child was regarded as an immature adult and treated accordingly - imbibing Ovid and Livy almost with its mother's milk - and when the story book for children at last emerged it was written more for instruction than entertainment. There was always a pill in the jam. Look at a few of the titles;

"THE CHILDREN'S FRIEND, CONSISTING OF APT TALES AND MORAL DRAMAS ALL INTENDED TO INCULCATE VIRTUE IN THE RISING GENERATION." (1786)

"A LITTLE BOOK FOR CHILDREN WHEREIN ARE SET DOWN SEVERAL DIRECTIONS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN AND SEVERAL REMARKABLE STORIES BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN OF LITTLE CHILDREN, SOME OF WHOM ARE RECENTLY DECEASED." (1702) A gruesome production this would seem!

"THE HALF HOLIDAY OR MIRROR OF THE MIND, CONSISTING OF NUMEROUS STORIES AND INTERESTING TALES, CALCULATED TO ENLIGHTEN THE MINDS AND IMPROVE THE HEARTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN OF EITHER SEX."

In all these stories Nemesis lies in wait for the child who deviates in the slightest degree from the strait and narrow path of duty. Master Edward (in TALES OF THE COTTAGE) disobeyed the parental order never to leave his home unescorted. Hardly had he stepped outside the park gates of his home ("a large white house near Windsor") when a villain seized him and dragged him off to work as a chimney sweep. He was rescued at last by a stranger to whom he appealed for help, and the rescuer - evidently a stickler for appearances - took him to a tailor and "converted the little chimney sweep into a gentleman" before conveying to his home and restoring him to his mother who "now dressed in deep mourning, pressed the lovely boy to her bosom and shrieked when she beheld the marks of the barbarian's inhumanity."

Hardly less distressing is the story of Master George (in TALES UNITING INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT). Master George had been warned to exercise caution in crossing the streets, but - alas! - he was thoughtless and giddy. "He would run across streets where carriages were driving at full speed. See the dreadful consequences of his giddiness and folly. He slipped and fell under a loaded wagon. The wheel passed over his leg and shattered it in the most shocking manner. Mangled and racked with pain, he shrieked most hideously. His father sent in haste for a surgeon. The surgeon came, examined George's leg and found it so terribly smashed that he could not cure it but must cut it off entirely at the knee. The surgeon took out his instruments, cut the flesh all round with a sharp knife and cut through the bone with a saw. Thus poor George's leg was completely taken off. At last a wooden one was made for him; with that he now hobbles about as well as he can and at every step he repents of his giddiness and says to himself 'Ah, how cautious children ought to be in walking the streets!'"

Perhaps the most harrowing of all is the story of Master Tom Tindall. Master Tom Tindall (in TALES UNITING INSTRUCTION WITH AMUSEMENT), though warned by his papa

of the danger of throwing squibs, persisted in this foolish pastime. One evening Tom, running about the streets and throwing squibs, threw one unknowingly at his father. The squib burst directly in Mr. Tindall's eyes. Tom, unaware of this, pursued his reckless course. But, just as he was about to throw a handful of squibs into a carriage full of ladies, they burst in his hand and blew up into his face. One whole side of his face was dreadfully burnt and his left eye entirely and permanently blinded. He returned home to find his papa in even worse plight, for both Mr. Tindall's eyes were permanently blinded. "However" continues the story "it was not long before an end was put to Mr. Tindall's misfortunes, for the loss of his sight and the thought of his son's wickedness grieved him so much that he broke his heart in a few months and died." Unfortunately Mr. Tindall was not a gentleman of independent means and, after paying for the burial, there was not enough money to apprentice Tom to a decent trade. So Tom became a chimney sweep, dressed in coarse shirt and breeches, woollen night cap and old shoes, sleeping upon straw, and living on a diet of coarse bread. "He often bitterly laments his ill conduct," ends the story, "and wishes he had followed his poor father's advice. If he had done so, he might have been at a genteel boarding school with both his eyes safe instead of being a chimney sweep, blind in one eye. Let his punishment serve as a lesson to other boys and teach them how wicked and dangerous it is to play with squibs."

The youthful readers of these books should, of course, have turned out models of rectitude, but one suspects that they took it all with a grain of salt and turned out as human and erring as the rest of us.

There are few school stories among them, but the headmaster is always a figure of terror and doom. This is how - in *YOUNG WILFRED OR THE PUNISHMENT OF FALSEHOOD*, *A TALE OF TRUTH AND CAUTION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE RISING GENERATION* - he addresses a youthful offender detected in a lie.

"Thou unparelled hypocrite! Thou prince of liars! I feel for your unhappy parents and your miserable mother, who must curse the hour in which she brought you into the world. I foresee, with pain I say it, unless a miracle work a speedy reformation you must inevitably come to an untimely end. As it is, it is my duty to make you remember this day as long as you live."

And the worthy doctor, with the help of his birch rod, proceeded to perform his duty.

Dr. Dunston, the Headmaster of Merevale, in Eden Phillpotts' *THE HUMAN BOY* (a delightful book, published, I believe, shortly after the first world war) is in the same tradition.

Young Smythe had heard that the members of a certain tribe wore the skin of some fierce animal next their own skin in order to be endowed with courage, ferocity and long life. Young Smythe, wishing to enjoy the benefits of courage, ferocity and longevity, cut off the tail of the tiger skin that formed the heart rug in Dr. Dunston's study and wore it beneath his underclothes. The crime was discovered and the flood of the doctor's eloquence engulfed the unfortunate child.

"You come amongst us," said the doctor "from a presumably Christian home - an inexperienced and ignorant youth - and yet at ten - for that is your age, Huxley Smythe - you develop a disgraceful yearning to deteriorate from the state of civilisation into which you were born; you disgrace your intellect and morality by deliberate efforts to become demoralised. You have striven to acquire the physical brutality of palaeolithic man, sir, and - worse, far worse - you deliberately endeavour to impress

upon your nature the disgusting attributes of one of the most pestilential animals that an inscrutable providence has created and let loose upon this planet. Never in the whole course of my scholastic experience have I met anything quite so painful as this depravity in a child of ten," adding the sinister warning, "Shed no tears, sir. The time has not yet come for tears."

Perhaps the first really human headmaster in fiction appeared in Tom Brown's School Days.

Tom, East and Tadpole have returned late and covered with mud - "three, small limping, shivering figures" - from the famous Hare-and-hounds race. They are sent to report to the Doctor in his study. Quaking, they sidle into the room.

"The Doctor looked up from his desk task; he was working away with a great chisel at the bottom of a boy's sailing boat. Round him stood three or four children; the candles burnt brightly on a large table at the further end, covered with books and papers; and a great fire threw a ruddy glow over the rest of the room. All looked so kindly and homely and comfortable that the boys took heart in a moment, and Tom advanced from behind the shelter of the great sofa. The Doctor nodded to the children, who went out, casting curious and amused glances at the young scarecrows.

"Well, my little fellows," began the Doctor, drawing himself up with his back to the fire, the chisel in one hand and his coat tails in the other, and his eye twinkling as he looked them over; "what makes you so late?"

"Please, sir, we've been out big side Hare-and-hounds and lost our way."

"Hah! You couldn't keep up, I suppose?"

"Well, sir," said East, stepping out and not liking that the Doctor should think lightly of his running powers, "we got round Barney, all right, but then -"

"What a state you're in, my boy," interrupted the Doctor, as the pitiful condition of East's garments was revealed to him.

"I tumbled on my face..."

"You're not hurt, I hope?" said the Doctor.

"Oh, no, sir."

"Well, now, run upstairs, all three of you, and get clean things on, and then tell the housekeeper to give you some tea. You're too young to go on such long runs. Let Warner know I've seen you. Good night."

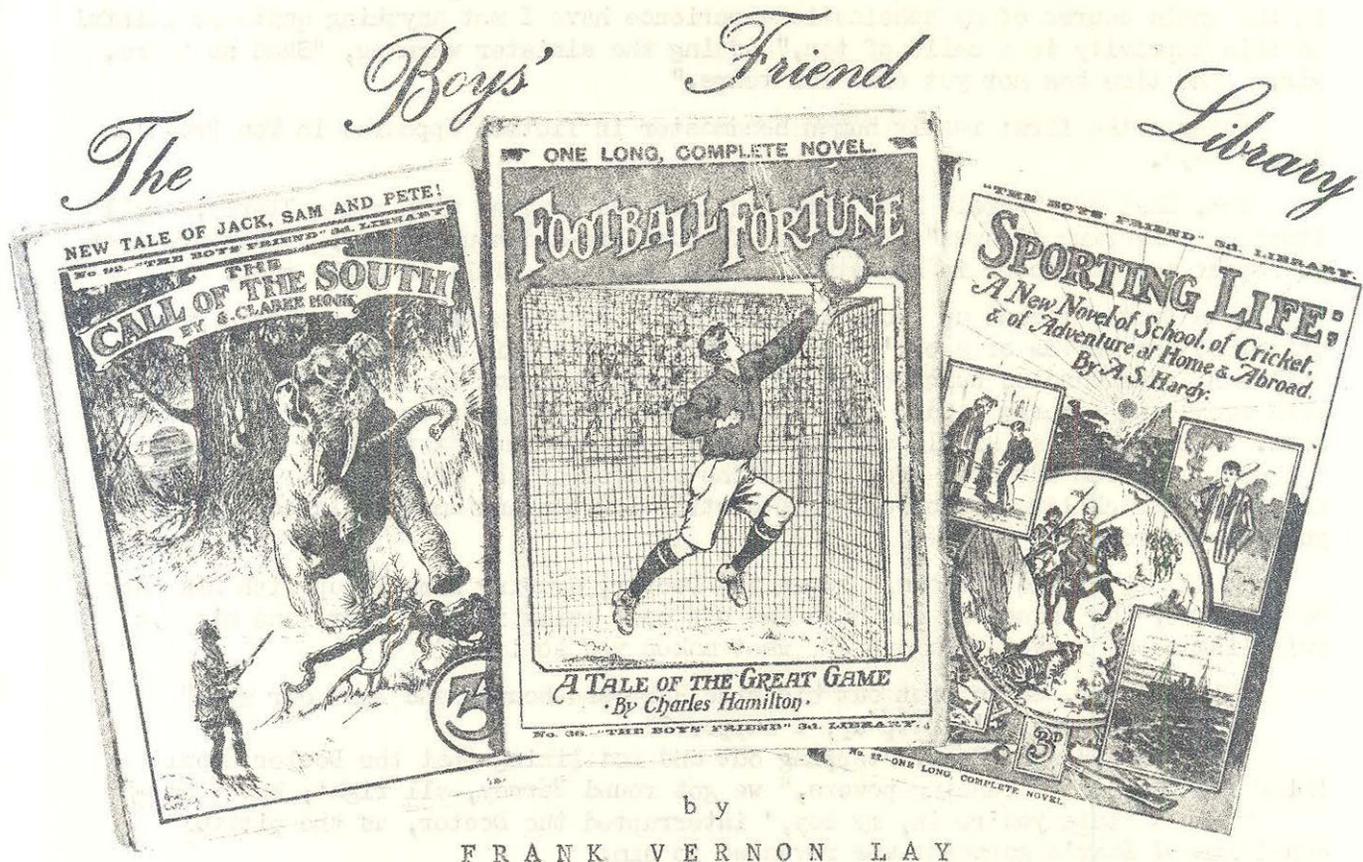
"Good night, sir." And away scuttled the three boys in high glee."

The headmasters of fiction would make an interesting study. Dickens alone had three of them - Squeers, Creakle and Doctor Strong. Perhaps some enterprising member of the Old Boys' Club will undertake it one day?

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Talbot Baines Reed wrote a story with a fearful moral warning. It was entitled "THE TROUBLES OF A DAWDLER".)

* * * * *

WANTED: MAGNETS - 860, 1054, 1065, 1090, 1093, 1100, 1103, 1112, 1116, 1131, 1133, 1135, 1148, 1150, 1152, 1154, 1169, 1172, 1175, 1177, 1180, 1182, 1186, 1189, 1195, 1197, 1200, 1209, 1223-1225, 1245, 1246, 1248, 1251, 1252, 1254, 1256, 1257, 1260, 1261, 1271, 1288, 1290, 1295, 1307, 1308, 1310, 1314, 1318, 1321, 1325, 1342, 1346, 1347, 1501. ALSO S.O.Ls. Nos. 41, 59, 65, 77, 85, 99, 103, 105, 111, 119, 121, 127, 133, 135, 137, 143, 145, 147, 151, 153, 155, 157, 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 181, 185, 189, 191, 193, 195, 197, 199, 207, 209, 233, 239, 241, 249, 151, 352, 355, 358, 361, 364. MR. F. HIGHFIELD, 106 PARKSIDE, HEAGE, NR. BELPER, DERBYS.



The study of The Boys' Friend Library over its long span of thirty-five years provides a fascinating glimpse into the changing fashions of boys' reading. Long before Greyfriars and St. Jim's were the kingpins of Amalgamated Press popularity Jack, Sam & Pete were household names and in 1905 Hamilton Edwards, editor of the Big Three, The Boys' Friend Weekly, The Boys' Realm and The Boys' Herald thought up the idea of having their adventures recorded in booklet form - the inspiration no doubt stemming from the successful libraries published by their great rivals the Aldine Press.

These new booklets were to be reprints of earlier serials and series of Jack, Sam & Pete in complete or abridged form and were advertised as The Jack, Sam & Pete Library. However this name did not appear on the first two issues, there being no other name than the title of the story and No. 3 was issued as No. 3 The Boys' Friend Library although the story was still one of Jack, Sam & Pete. Obviously the powers that controlled Amalgamated Press policy had decided that a Boys' Friend Library to suit all tastes and not exclusively Jack, Sam & Pete would be a better proposition. Events were to prove them right. There is no doubt that the continued success of The Boys' Friend Library led to the appearance many years later of The Schoolboys Own Library and The Sexton Blake Library. These differed from The Boys' Friend Library, however in the fact that they recorded respectively school and detective stories only, whereas the scope of The Boys' Friend Library as we shall see, was not

confined to any particular genre.

The Amalgamated Press were on to a very good thing indeed. The first series of the Library ran from 1st September, 1905 to May 1915, a total of 764 issues and the second series from June 1915 to June 1940, a total of 724 issues and making a grand total of 1488 issues. Whether but for the paper shortage it would have continued is unknown but one suspects that from certain signs such as two changes of name from No. 701 the writing was on the wall. Commencing with 705 of the four issues that were published each month two were retitled The Bulldog Library and two The Knockout Library.

The cost to the Amalgamated Press was negligible. Ninety per cent of the stories were reprints from most of the weekly boys' papers and as the author had already been paid for the story the cost to the Amalgamated Press was merely an ex gratia payment of £5. 5. 0. to the author. At first the authors were rather sore about this but the occasional cheque arriving unexpectedly, as many of them were quite unaware their stories were being reprinted, soon mollified their feelings. For the odd original story a fee of £60 was paid.

The early editorship is rather obscure but in the twenties a man named Balfour Ritchie was editor (he wrote some unpublished St. Frank's stories held in reserve for The Nelson Lee Library) and he is presumed to have collaborated with Edwy Searles Brooks in B.F.L. 633 The Idol of St. Frank's which first appeared as a serial in the Union Jack in 1920. In the thirties Percy Clarke (Martin Frazer of Sexton Blake fame) was editor and rewrote many early tales. John Andrews, Charles Wentworth and St. John Watson were editorial names.

The great charm and appeal of the B.F.L. lay in the wide variety of tastes that were catered for; - detective tales featuring Sexton Blake, Nelson Lee and Ferrers Locke, all the famous schools are there, Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Cedar Creek, St. Frank's, St. Basil's, Calcroft, Haygarth, Welstead, Wycliffe, Highcliffe, Bombay Castle etc., but only one of Rookwood, flying stories by G. E. Rochester and Capt. Hawke, pirate stories by S. Walkey, Stuart Martin and Draycott M. Dell, Biggles stories by Capt. Johns, Westerns included the famous Rio Kid, and Hamilton's other popular creation Ken King of the South Seas was also well to the fore. There were historical yarns by D. H. Parry as himself and under his several pseudonyms. The much sought-after Blue Crusader series of A. S. Hardy were so popular as to be almost unobtainable to-day at a reasonable figure and the same may be said of Pentelow's Mapleton Rovers series. Five years of searching by the writer has failed to locate a single one of these. Pentelow's cricket epics must not be forgotten nor the nostalgic romances of Cornwall, the Polruan stories of Maurice Everward. Mention should also be made of the circus yarns of old-time H.T. Johnson, motor-racing by Alfred Edgar, whilst Eric Townsend's many adventure stories bring back happy memories. In his hey-day he was much in demand. Science-fiction was well represented, the most famous being the much reprinted A Trip to Mars by Fenton Ash who wrote several good science-fiction stories for that much neglected periodical Young Britain. There is also an insatiable demand for the "Britain Invaded" series of John Tregellis who under his more well-known pseudonym of David Goodwin was a most prolific and popular author. He was a great favourite with our first editor, the late Herbert Leckenby. His hard-cover melodramas published under his real name of Sidney Gowing were well received both here and in the States.

It is not possible in a short article to list all the authors and their famous characters and each of us has his or her own favourites and it is safe to say that most of them will be found at least once. The most notable omission is perhaps the

ever-popular stories of Slapton School by John Finnemore which first appeared in the Boys Realm and the same author's fine school tale The Outlaw of the Shell which first appeared in The Boys' Journal. The explanation may be that Finnemore was one of the few authors who was able to sell his stories to the Amalgamated Press without selling the copyright as his stories were later published in book form by W. & R. Chambers Ltd. and in more recent years by Latimer House. Good stories never die and many of the Boys' Friend Libraries would stand reprinting to-day in hard-cover form.

A most elusive B.F.L. is No. 681 The Devil-tree of El Dorado by F. Aubrey. This magnificent tale of South America is a much sought after item in its hard-cover form and how it came to be published in the Boys' Friend Library is a mystery. Whilst it can be read and enjoyed by boys it is definitely an adult adventure story in its own right. The famous Jules Verne also had three of his books appear as B.F.Ls. namely The Begum's Fortune, Adrift in the Pacific and Dick Sands the Boy Captain, and the latter was distinguished by the fact that it was the only story to be dignified by being published in two separate issues. The famous or shall we say notorious creation of Leslie Charteris also appeared in one B.F.L. As this story appeared before the Saint tales in The Thriller it would appear to be the first appearance of the Saint but whether this was a reprint from another paper the writer does not know and any information would be welcome. As far as the writer knows no attempt has been made to date to trace the original publication of all Boys' Friend Libraries that were known to be reprints except in the case of Charles Hamilton, Edwy Searles Brooks, S. Clarke Hook, J. N. Pentelow, Murray Roberts (Robert Murray) creator of the famous Captain Justice based no doubt on the redoubtable Captain Kettle of Cutliffe Hyne, Sidney Drew whose Ferrers Lord and Gan Waga stories have many admirers, Cecil Hayter who built his famous character Lobangu from Rider Haggard's more famous Umslopogaas, A. S. Hardy and his Blue Crusaders, Randolph Ryle (J. N. Pentelow) and his Mapleton Rovers, and Jack North's (also J. N. Pentelow) famous school epics; J. W. Wheway's famous football stories etc., but was Seldon Truss's Number Nought (B.F.L. 2nd 284) an original story? Where did the two Claverhouse cricket stories credited to Walter Hammond originate and who was the real author? Were The Mystery Champion by Reginald Crundon and The Despot of the World by G. E. Rochester reprints from Chums? Walkey's Cruise of the No-Surrender has also defied all attempts at locating its origin, and it is hoped that this article may lead its readers to provide its writer with information on this and other origins.

The most well-known and sought-after and consequently most expensive B.F.Ls. are 288 (1st) The Boy Without A Name and its sequel 328 (1st) Rivals and Chums both Highcliffe tales by Charles Hamilton and regarded by many as his best work. The former is certainly worth £10 at to-day's prices and it is hoped that plans to get it published in hard-cover format will eventually mature. Other famous B.F.Ls. are Maxwell Scott's much reprinted Birds of Prey (1st No. 4) The Silver Dwarf (1st No. 16) and The Missing Heir (1st No. 17) Henry St. John's Boys of St. Basil's (1st No. 5) Michael Storm's Brooks of Ravenscar (1st No. 43) Captain of Abbotscrag (1st No. 70) Sidney Drew's Wolves of the Deep (1st No. 32) Lion Against Bear (1st No. 33) Cecil Hayter's Quest of the Ruby Scarab (1st No. 83) Through Unknown Africa (1st No. 429) In the Hands of the Headhunters (1st No. 433) David Goodwin's Redcastle at St. Simeons (1st No. 143). School & Sport (1st No. 319) for many years credited to J. N. Pentelow but now known to have been written by G. R. Samways (compare this with his Pride of the Ring by Mark Linley (1st No. 461), the Greyfriars Herald original of this story was so ably reviewed by Tom Hopperton in C.D. 200!)

If you wish to read some rattling good stories the writer personally would recommend BFL 1st 635 The Bell of Santadino by E. Townsend, 1st 669 The Vengeance of the Tong by G. H. Teed, 1st 700 Sinister Island by S. & F. Warwick, 1st 12 Guy Prescott's Trust by Craven Gower, 1st 740 The Lure of Ophir by Earle Danesford (Addington Symonds 1st editor of The Champion and reprinted from The Rocket) 1st 749 Corinth for the Cup J. W. Wheway, 2nd 79 The Three Gold Feathers G. H. Teed, 1st 235 The School Under Canvas Prosper Howard (Charles Hamilton), 1st 407 For Buried Wealth J. C. Collier.

It is interesting to compare Scorned by the School (1st 403) and The Cad of the School (1st 405) stated to be by the author of The Stowaway's Quest (1st 398) who was presumed to be L. J. Beeston with The Impostor of the Fourth (2nd 615) by Edwy Searles Brooks under his pen-name of R. W. Comrade. This latter was a rewrite of the Castleton twins series in the Nelson Lee and further rewritten and condensed as The New Boy at Westchester by Edward Thornton published by Swan. The plot is so similar that one is forced to the conclusion that they were either by the same hand or deliberately plagiarised; no doubt time will tell.

No doubt many readers will be upset by the omission of their favourite author but it is impossible in the compass of such a short article to do justice to the many authors who appeared over so many years. No mention has been made of Gilbert Chester, Alec Pearson, John Hunter, L. C. Douthwaite, Michael Poole, Reg. Wray, T. C. Bridges, Hedley Scott and many others, but it is interesting to note that of the first series of 764 issues S. Clarke Hook wrote 66, Jack North (J. N. Pentelow) 56, David Goodwin 64, Maxwell Scott and Henry St. John 33 each, Charles Hamilton and A. S. Hardy 28, Sidney Drew 25, Andrew Gray 24, Cecil Hayter 23, William Murray Graydon 20, H. T. Johnson 15 and E. S. Brooks and Maurice Everard 12 each. These figures are provisional and may well be altered as research goes on but nevertheless, as we hope to show in a future article, tastes change and in the second series the picture changes and new authors emerge and old ones advance to further triumphs.

* * * * *
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A Story
of Slade

ADVANTAGE VANDERLYN

By
Eric Fayne

"You are, I think, a master at Slade College?" said Miss Honeycomb.

It was a question more than a statement.

Mr. Ronnie Crayford smiled. He nodded agreeably.

"For my sins!" he admitted playfully.

The post office in Everslade was not busy on this autumn afternoon. It was seldom busy. Opinions were divided as to whether Everslade was a small town or a large village, but whether town or village it was not a busy place.

Miss Honeycomb, the postmistress, frowned upon Mr. Crayford, and that personable young man smiled back at her. He had bought a book of stamps, and he jingled his change into his pocket.

"Your call is most fortuitous," said Miss Honeycomb. "As soon as you entered the office I said to myself 'That young man is a master at Slade College.' I intended to ring up the Headmaster to make a report, but now I can leave the matter to you."

Mr. Crayford clicked his tongue.

"I hope you have no complaint to make concerning any Slade boy, madam," he remarked, with counterfeit solicitude.

Miss Honeycomb drew herself up to her full height, and gazed at him over her ample bosom.

"I do not complain, but I endeavour to do my duty." Miss Honeycomb brushed a lock of straggly grey hair back from her forehead. "When I see Slade boys - youths who have every advantage in life -

behaving like ruffians from the slums of London it is my duty to report the matter and see that they are corrected. I hope you agree with me, Mr - Mr --"

"Crayford! I am games master at Slade."

A customer entered the stuffy little post-office.

"Wait!" ordered Miss Honeycomb. "I will return to you, Mr. Crayford. My assistant has gone for his fifteen-minute tea-break and has already been absent nearly half an hour."

Miss Honeycomb rustled away to accept payment for a telephone account. Mr. Crayford turned and leaned against the counter. He stifled a yawn.

Miss Honeycomb's reports concerning Slade boys were many and varied. Regularly she telephoned the Headmaster with complaints. She was regarded as a permanent nuisance by the masters, and as something even less complimentary by Slade boys of all ages.

The receipt for the telephone account was issued, the customer departed, and Miss Honeycomb returned to Mr. Crayford.

"I will now tell you what happened, Mr. Crayling --"

"Crayford!"

Miss Honeycomb waved the correction on one side.

"I was returning from my lunch. I was about to step off the pavement into the road when three Slade boys swept up on their bicycles. One rang his bell most raucously."

Mr. Crayford clicked his tongue again.

"A warning of approach," he ventured.

Miss Honeycomb waved the warning of approach on one side.

"I was startled by the sudden ringing of the bell. It was the boy's intention to startle me. I leaped back and might have fallen."

Mr. Crayford looked suitably shocked.

"Boys are thoughtless," he murmured.

Miss Honeycomb waved the thoughtlessness of boys on one side.

"I may be only a weak woman, Mr. Crayling, but I possess presence of mind. I sprang forward and seized one of the boys as they were passing. His bicycle, of course, fell in the road - but I had the boy. Oh, yes, I had the boy!"

"Good lord!" ejaculated Mr. Crayford.

Miss Honeycomb's arms were folded beneath the ample bosom. She nodded her head with satisfaction.

"I reproved the boy for his criminal action and told him I should report him to his Headmaster. Two things distinguish Slade boys in Everslade, Mr. Crayling. Those hideous purple blazers and the boys' gross behaviour."

"Mauve and white blazers!" hinted Mr. Crayford.

Miss Honeycomb waved aside the mauve and white blazers.

"The boy insulted me, Mr. Crayling. He said 'Don't you ring your bell when you ride your broomstick?'"

Hastily Mr. Crayford changed a chuckle into a cough.

Another customer entered the post-office, this time a young lady carrying a parcel.

"Wait!" commanded Miss Honeycomb.

She moved along the counter to accept the parcel.

"Blast the woman!" muttered Mr. Crayford. He looked up impatiently at the clock on the wall.

The latest customer dealt with, Miss Honeycomb returned to the Slade games master.

"Now where was I, Mr. Crayling?"

Mr. Crayford looked depressed.

"The boy asked you whether you rang your bell when you rode your broomstick."

"Ah!" The postmistress gave him a sharp look. "He was a revolting, disgusting boy. By this time, his two companions had dismounted and joined him. I grasped the cap from the head of the boy I was holding to see if his name was written within. It was - but it was almost obliterated by a horrible mass of brilliantine. I demanded the names of all three. At first they refused, but they could see that I would not release the young reprobate until I knew. I am a determined woman, Mr. Crayling. Quite a small crowd had collected by this time, but that did not bother me. I had my duty to do. You have taken exactly half an hour, Mr. Twannie, to have a cup of tea. You are most inconsiderate."

A pale young man had entered the post-office. He scuttled under the counter flap, with a muttered word of apology.

Mr. Crayford was breathing rather hard. He said, restlessly:

"You learned the names of the boys, madam?"

"Yes, they saw I was determined, so the boy I had seized gave me the information. I wrote the names down immediately I reached the post-office." Miss Honeycomb opened a drawer and extracted a slip of paper. "The boy I held was named George Figgins. Another boy was named Fatty Wynn - presumably a nickname, though the boy was not plump. The third name I had forgotten, but no doubt you will be able to trace him through the other two."

Mechanically Mr. Crayford took the slip of paper which Miss Honeycomb passed across the counter. He read aloud:

"George Figgins; Fatty Wynn."

"I also obtained the name of their form-master," supplemented Miss Honeycomb. "He is a Mr. Gump."

Mr. Crayford's lips twitched. The boys' names meant nothing to him. He knew that there was no boy at Slade named either George Figgins or Fatty Wynn. However, the mention of a Mr. Gump proved that the three boys in question had a

sense of humour among them. True, there was no Mr. Gump at Slade, but there was a master who had been known as "The Gump" for longer than the oldest boy could remember. The whole thing tickled Mr. Crayford immensely.

"Most illuminating!" he observed, slipping the piece of paper into his wallet.

Miss Honeycomb's small, sharp eyes were fixed upon him.

"I trust that you will see that these boys are adequately punished, Mr. Crayling. The reason most men are obnoxious is that their failings were not corrected in youth."

"How true!" sighed Mr. Crayford. "I promise you that all three shall be spread-eagled at dawn and soundly flogged." He rested his elbows on the counter and spoke confidentially. "What should we do at Slade, Miss Honeycomb, were it not for public-spirited individuals like you to keep an eye on the school's morals?"

"I hope you mean that seriously, young man."

"Very seriously. You must find life rather dull when Slade is on holiday." Mr. Crayford shook his head in sadness at the thought.

"Not dull, but much more pleasant," snapped Miss Honeycomb. "When Slade is on vacation Everslade is a quieter town, a more respectable town, and a safer town for law-abiding citizens. However, this is the first report I have been compelled to make for some time."

"Slade only reassembled after the summer holiday a few days ago," murmured Mr. Crayford.

"Obviously!" The ample bosom heaved with emotion. "There is never any doubt when Slade reassembles. Last term, Mr. Crayling, I probably made at least a dozen reports to the school authorities about misdemeanours of Slade boys. I have not forgotten that evening in late July when I saw a Slade youth entering --" she lowered her voice "-- a den of vice."

Mr. Crayford's tongue clicked again in shocked sympathy.

"Awful!" he said.

"A senior boy who should have known better - entering a hotbed of immorality," said Miss Honeycomb grimly.

Mr. Crayford's eyebrows were raised in mild interest.

"The Headmaster was away from the school at the time, but Mr. Buddle dealt with the matter," added Miss Honeycomb.

"Mr. Buddle?" echoed Mr. Crayford.

"Quite an appalling experience for the poor man, really," conceded Miss Honeycomb. "He had to come into Everslade from the school quite late at night after I told him what I had seen. Of course, Mr. Buddle was grateful to me. He called on me the next day to tell me that the boy had been adequately punished. Expelled in disgrace, I should imagine."

There were several customers in the little post-office now, and the pale-faced Mr. Twannie had his hands full.

"I will leave you to deal with Figgins and Wynn, Mr. Crayling. I hope you will not err on the side of leniency," said Miss Honeycomb.

She rustled along the counter to assist the perspiring Mr. Twannie.

Mr. Crayford left the post-office. He walked a few yards along the street and entered Ye Olde Devonshire Tea Shoppe. That establishment, like the post-office, was not busy. Mr. Crayford passed through the tea-room, and emerged on to a verandah which overlooked the narrow river. Several tables were laid out neatly for tea, and Mr. Crayford sank down into a comfortable basket-chair.

A waitress floated up to him and Mr. Crayford eyed her appreciatively.

"One of your special Devonshire cream teas, Sugar Plum," he said.

The waitress giggled. She tripped away on high heels.

Mr. Crayford gazed from his verandah seat down into the gurgling river. It was a picturesque spot. Mr. Crayford however, was not enjoying the scenery.

"Now what was that old bag driving at?" he asked himself.

What had Miss Honeycomb said?

Some Slade senior had been seen, one night towards the end of last term, entering a den of vice in Everslade. Probably there was some exaggeration in that. Miss Honeycomb was given to exaggeration, as every Slade master knew. She would regard Everslade's little motion picture house as a den of vice.

All the same, there is no smoke without fire. There was a wrinkle in Mr. Crayford's brow.

Mr. Buddle had dealt with the matter, according to Miss Honeycomb. The old girl must have been talking through her hat, decided Mr. Crayford.

The cream tea arrived, and the games master exchanged a few pleasantries with the pretty waitress. Mr. Crayford was quite a handsome young man with a fine physique, and he was accustomed to making conquests among the fair sex. He enjoyed that accomplishment.

Mr. Crayford polished off his cream tea. Then he lit a cigarette, and allowed his mind to drift back once again to Miss Honeycomb and her intriguing comments. Once again, what had she said? That some time at the end of last term Mr. Buddle had gone from the school into Everslade late at night, and had caught some senior in a den of vice. Even discounting the den of vice, Mr. Crayford decided there was nothing in it. Such a thing could never have happened without the rest of the staff, including Mr. Crayford, being aware of it. Yet Miss Honeycomb was a shrewd lady. She had seemed certain of what she said. Mr. Crayford was puzzled.

He left his table and paid for his cream tea at the cash desk. He exchanged a few ingratiating remarks with the young lady at the receipt of custom. He noted that the pretty waitress was watching him. He winked at her and she giggled and lowered her eyes. Definitely another scalp to hang at his belt, should be feel so inclined.

Whistling softly to himself Mr. Crayford left Ye Olde Devonshire Tea Shoppe. Outside the post-office he paused and glanced up at the clock. It was nearly six. In a few minutes the office would

be closing.

Mr. Crayford popped inside. There were no customers, Mr. Twannie had gone. Miss Honeycomb, behind the counter, gave Mr. Crayford that especially severe look which she reserved for latecomers.

He spoke easily:

"So sorry to bother you again, Miss Honeycomb. I felt I had to apologize to you for the behaviour of those boys of ours. I know the lads. They will be severely dealt with."

"Thank you," said Miss Honeycomb.

"That senior boy you reported last term - what was his name, the young rascal?"

Miss Honeycomb regarded the games master curiously.

"I don't think I ever learned his name, Mr - er! Maybe Mr. Buddle mentioned it. If so, I've forgotten it. It's many weeks ago, of course. Mr. Buddle assured me that the boy had been adequately punished, and I was satisfied."

"Naturally!"

"At the time, Mr. - er -, I remember I had the impression that two Slade boys entered that sinful place in the hours of darkness. I realised afterwards that I was wrong. One of them was a man, probably some thug from Soho, anxious to lead astray the youth of the nation. Is there anything you require, Mr. - er -? It is past our closing time.

Mr. Crayford still had the puzzled wrinkle in his brow as he strolled towards the river side where he had parked his motor-cycle earlier in the afternoon. Reaching the bank of the river he threw himself down on the turf to think things out.

There was some small mystery here. Miss Honeycomb, some evening towards the end of last term, had seen a Slade boy - a senior, according to her - entering a "den of vice". Mr. Buddle had gone into Everslade quite late at night and had caught the boy. The next day Mr. Buddle reported to Miss Honeycomb that the boy had been adequately punished.

Mr. Crayford shook his head involuntarily. It could not have happened. Mr. Buddle was English master at Slade,

and he was also responsible for the Lower Fourth form. He had nothing at all to do with any seniors outside his English classes. If Mr. Buddle became aware of any senior breaking school regulations he would not deal with it himself. He would report the matter either to Mr. Fromo, the housemaster, or to Mr. Scarlet, the headmaster.

Mr. Crayford felt assured that nothing of the sort could have occurred without his being aware of it. It would have caused a sensation in the school. There had been no sensation of any sort at Slade last term.

Mr. Crayford lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply.

"The Headmaster was away from the school at the time, but Mr. Buddle dealt with the matter."

So Miss Honeycomb had said, and she obviously believed what she said. But it did not make sense to Mr. Crayford.

Probably no other master at Slade would have given a second thought to the matter. Anyone but Crayford would have regarded it as yet another bee in the bonnet of the Everslade postmistress, whose antipathy to Slade and its boys was well known.

But there was no love lost between Mr. Crayford and Mr. Buddle. The games master sneered at the middle-aged little English master, and Mr. Buddle was openly contemptuous of the games master. Normally, Mr. Buddle was a placid little man, but he had a bitter tongue at times. The two masters had clashed more than once, and more than once Mr. Crayford had been made to sing small. It had not endeared Mr. Buddle to Mr. Crayford.

Mr. Crayford finished his cigarette, and spun the stub into the swiftly moving current of the river. A glimmer came into his eyes as a thought entered his mind.

It was surely just a coincidence, but there had been an occasion in the last week of the previous term when the Headmaster had been away from Slade for the night. Mr. and Mrs. Scarlet had gone to Exeter for some reason or other, and the staff had been informed that their chief

would not be returning to Slade until the following day.

Mr. Crayford frowned with intense concentration. That must be the occasion to which Miss Honeycomb referred. But nothing of note had happened during the Headmaster's absence.

Crayford cast his mind back to that evening in the last week of term. It was difficult to place it. There was nothing which had registered in his mind.

He started suddenly. Something had registered after all. It came back to him in a flash. A morning when he had met a senior boy in Masters' Corridor - the Headmaster's son, Michael Scarlet. The boy had looked pale, distraught with worry. Normally young Scarlet looked so healthy and carefree.

When was it? Of course. It was on the morning of the day that the Headmaster was due to return to the school. Mr. Crayford remembered what he had said to the boy.

"What the dickens is up with you, young Pink? You look like the morning after the night before. Are you worrying at the absence of your mummy and daddy?"

Mr. Crayford rose to his feet. He stood for a moment or two longer on the river bank.

The boy had mumbled some inane reply, and had gone on up the corridor. Mr. Crayford had seen him enter Mr. Buddle's study. He had wondered idly what business the prefect had with the English master, but he had thought no more of it. Later, when he saw young Pink, the boy had appeared normally carefree once again.

"My God, the impeccable Pinky-Mi!" said Mr. Crayford aloud.

The handsome face of the young games master, alight with malice, did not look quite so attractive now.

Mr. Crayford disliked Mr. Buddle, he disliked young Pink, and he disliked the Headmaster. He wondered whether, just possibly, fate in the person of Miss Honeycomb might have presented him with all three on toast.

With a smile on his face Mr. Crayford

strode briskly to collect his motor cycle. He had an appointment to meet one of his many lady friends that evening in Brent, ten miles distant, but he abandoned the appointment without compunction. A handsome, dashing young man like Mr. Crayford could always find lady friends. But he might never again find the opportunity of killing three birds with one stone.

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Mr. Buddle stood by his study window and gazed out at the Close of Slade with the playing fields beyond. The sun had set, and dusk was falling. Away in a corner of the fields a few boys were punting a football, but it was a peaceful scene and one which Mr. Buddle loved.

Only a few days had elapsed since Slade reassembled for the Autumn term. Mr. Buddle had enjoyed his vacation. He had visited a few distant relatives, and he had travelled around the Lake District for two pleasant weeks. But he was glad to be back at Slade. He had no fixed residence of his own. To come back to the school was like coming home for Mr. Buddle.

He turned and looked down at the pile of exercise books on his table. He shook his head a little ruefully. Mr. Buddle seemed always to find himself with a huge stack of exercises for marking.

There was a tap on the door and it opened. Mr. Crayford entered.

"Can you spare me a moment, Mr. Buddle?" he enquired.

Mr. Buddle regarded the games master with mild surprise. Crayford's usual line of approach was one of patronage and mockery. This evening he sounded unusually subdued. Mr. Buddle was more than willing to meet him half way. Crayford was conceited, he was lazy with his work, he made favourites among the boys, he cheapened himself to seek popularity with the seniors. Mr. Buddle had no time for a young man of this type. But life was too short for constant bickering. Mr. Buddle had returned to Slade this term with the resolution to try and get along with Crayford, even though he could

never like him.

Mr. Buddle spoke courteously.

"By all means, Crayford. What is it?"

Mr. Crayford was holding a slip of paper between his fingers. He was serious. Watching Mr. Buddle, he said:

"I have been talking to Miss Honeycomb, the Everslade postmistress."

"Miss Honeycomb?" echoed Mr. Buddle.

He tautened a little. His mind went back automatically to that evening towards the end of last term when Miss Honeycomb had telephoned the school, and he had taken the call. An event from which he was divided by the long summer vacation. Anything which happens in a previous term at school becomes history; something with which one lives no longer. Mr. Buddle recalled the uneasiness he had experienced in the few days of term which had followed that telephone call; an uneasiness which faded from his mind immediately the term ended.

"A garrulous woman!" observed Mr. Buddle calmly.

"Also a very observant woman," said Mr. Crayford. "She made a complaint to me. Three Slade boys almost ran her down with their cycles. They insulted her by calling her a witch. They asked her whether she rang a bell when she rode her broomstick."

Was there just the slightest sign of relief in Mr. Buddle's expression? Crayford thought there was. The cat had lifted its paw and the mouse had run a few yards. But the mouse would find it could not escape.

"Miss Honeycomb was too quick for the young rascals. She grabbed one of them. They gave her their names - these names."

Crayford held out the slip of paper. Mr. Buddle took it, adjusted his glasses, and read out the names written on the slip.

"George Figgins! Fatty Wynn!" Mr. Buddle frowned. He paused. Then he said: "Oddly enough these names seem familiar, but I cannot place them. There are no boys at Slade named Figgins and Wynn. Why do you bring the report to me,

Crayford?"

Mr. Crayford smiled.

"The boys let out to Miss Honeycomb that their form master is known as the Gump. There is only one Gump at Slade."

The words were ingenuously spoken, but the malice was there, the intent to wound. Mr. Buddle's expression hardened. His resolution to get along with the games master evaporated on the instant.

"I see the point, Crayford. Miss Honeycomb is a poisonous woman. She delights to stir up trouble. I will enquire into the matter."

Crayford nodded. He turned away. Then, to Mr. Buddle's astonishment, the games master did not leave the study. He closed the door and stood with his back to it.

"Is there something else, Mr. Crayford?" demanded Mr. Buddle.

"Yes, Mr. Buddle, there is something else - something rather disturbing to me." Crayford was quiet and courteous, but he was watchful. "It seems likely that a member of the Slade staff has deceived the Chief. You will agree that anything of the sort is deplorable. You will agree that a conscientious master must do all in his power to remedy so serious a matter."

Mr. Buddle stood very still. Something told him that chickens were coming home to roost. That old affair from last term which he had believed dead was very much alive.

"Please be more explicit," he said, a trace of irony in his voice. "Name the conscientious master to whom you refer."

"Any conscientious master who has the welfare of Slade at heart, Mr. Buddle."

"I think," snapped Mr. Buddle, "that any conscientious master might do well to mind his own business."

"I rather thought you would say that." Crayford drew a cigarette packet from his pocket. He lit a cigarette, leaned back on the door, and blew out a cloud of smoke. Mr. Buddle waited, and Crayford broke the short silence.

"One evening at the end of last term

the Headmaster was away from the school. That evening Miss Honeycomb rang you up to tell you that Scarlet of the Sixth had been seen to enter some disreputable den in Everslade. You caught him there. Later you told Miss Honeycomb that Scarlet of the Sixth had been expelled in disgrace."

Mr. Buddle was taken aback. He had expected something. He had not expected this. He bristled. For a moment prudence deserted him.

"Utter nonsense! A tissue of lies! Miss Honeycomb made no reference at all to Scarlet of the Sixth. The Headmaster's son has never entered any disreputable den in his life. I did not catch him there. I did not tell Miss Honeycomb that Scarlet of the Sixth had been expelled from Slade."

It was near dissembling, and Mr. Buddle knew it. But he was sailing between Scylla and Charybdis, and he found it tricky navigation.

"Ah!" Mr. Crayford drew on his cigarette. He spoke with smoke curling away from his lips. "You suggest, Mr. Buddle, that Miss Honeycomb is a liar."

The mockery in the quiet voice of the games master was evident now.

"I understand your indignation, Mr. Buddle. You have relieved my mind very much. That woman's tongue must be curbed. If you can spare the time, we will go together now and confront Miss Honeycomb. She lives in a bungalow on the outskirts of Everslade. I have my motor cycle outside the staff gate. If you think you could ride a pillion seat without falling off, we can be with Miss Honeycomb within ten minutes."

Mr. Buddle was pale with chagrin. He drew a deep breath. He stared at the games master through the fading daylight in the study.

"Well, Mr. Buddle?" said the young man.

With something like a sigh, Mr. Buddle sat down. He tried to collect his scattered thoughts in order to say the right thing. He said, very slowly:

"I had better explain, Crayford."

"Yes, Mr. Buddle, you had better explain."

"Towards the end of last term, Scarlet of the Sixth attended a dance. In doing so, he broke a school rule. I became aware of the fact through Miss Honeycomb, and I dealt with the matter."

"A dance?" Crayford sounded incredulous. "From what the old bag said I thought he had gone on a booze session at the 'Plough and Sail'."

"He went to a place called, so far as I remember, the Palais de Danse," said Mr. Buddle.

"The Palais de Danse - that sleazy dump!" Crayford laughed. "Good lord, the saintly Pinky-Mi - pure in word, thought, and deed - creeping out after dark to shuffle at a den like that. How are the mighty fallen!"

Mr. Buddle rose, crossed the room, and switched on the light. He faced the games master.

"You find something laughable in that boy's passing folly, Crayford?"

"Laughable? Certainly not!" The handsome, smiling face belied the words. "I find it disgusting and horrifying. I find the boy's general hypocrisy utterly nauseating."

Mr. Buddle made no rejoinder.

"What did Mr. Fromo say to all this?" asked Crayford silkily.

"I did not report the matter to the Housemaster."

"I suppose not. It was too serious for the Housemaster to deal with. You took it to the Chief, of course. May I enquire what Mr. Scarlet said about it?"

"I did not report the matter to Mr. Scarlet."

Mr. Crayford looked down. He picked a spot of fluff from the left knee of his trousers and dropped it on the carpet. He said softly:

"You did not report a matter like that to the boy's father - the Head of Slade. Good God!"

Mr. Buddle turned away. He walked over to his mantelpiece. Slowly he turned again. There was silence in the room.

Mr. Buddle stood in thought. At last he said:

"The boy regretted his stupidity, Crayford. I felt assured that he would never repeat it. But I know - and you know - that had the matter been reported to his father, the boy's punishment would have been doubly severe simply because he is the son of the Headmaster. The Chief expects so much from the boy. I saved the Head a staggering blow to his pride, and the boy a punishment which would have been undeservedly severe."

Crayford's eyes had narrowed.

"You old humbug!" he said.

Mr. Buddle started.

"You lousy old humbug," said Mr. Crayford. "You told Miss Honeycomb that young Pink had been punished."

"Scarlet is a sensitive boy," said Mr. Buddle. "The hours of dread that he experienced, believing that his escapade would come to his father's notice, were more than adequate punishment."

"Pinky-Mi broke a school rule, sneaking out after dark to go to some low dive which is out of bounds for all Slade boys - and you let him get away with it," said Crayford. "It was doubly serious because he is a prefect. Do you agree with that?"

"I agree with that, certainly."

"A prefect should be like Caesar's wife, shouldn't he? Didn't Shakespeare say that Caesar's wife should be above suspicion?"

"So far as I am aware, he did not," murmured Mr. Buddle. "You may be confusing Shakespeare with Plutarch, Crayford. However, if you require a quotation from Shakespeare which is applicable to this case, he certainly did say 'Use every man after his desert, and who should escape whipping?'"

"Do you suppose that the Chief would approve your action in shielding his son from a just punishment?" demanded Crayford.

"No!" said Mr. Buddle.

"The Headmaster must be informed of what happened," said Mr. Crayford. "That is quite definite. My sense of duty requires it."

"Your sense of duty!" repeated Mr.

Buddle in a low voice. Absent-mindedly, he ran his fingers over the bust of Shakespeare which stood on his mantelpiece. "Whose head are you demanding on a charger, Crayford - mine, Mr. Scarlet's, or that of Scarlet of the Sixth?"

"Pinky-Mi is your pet," said Crayford scornfully. "You found him out in a serious fault and you turned a blind eye to it - you kept it quiet, even from his father."

"Especially from his father," corrected Mr. Buddle. "Is it any use my appealing to your better nature, Crayford? Voltaire said that the opportunity to do mischief is found a hundred times a day, and that of doing good comes but rarely. If you choose to remain silent now, you will spare pain to the boy's father and disproportionate suffering to the boy himself."

"And spare you your job which you deserve to lose," retorted Crayford. "I won't do it, Buddle. You ask me to condone corruptness in a prefect simply because he is the Headmaster's son. I won't do it."

Mr. Buddle flushed with anger.

"Do not dare to call Scarlet of the Sixth corrupt. He was stupid on one isolated occasion. We do not crucify a boy for a passing stupidity."

"How can you be so sure it was an isolated happening?"

"I happen to be a judge of character, Crayford. When you reach my age, you yourself may be able to understand and appreciate integrity and worth when you see it."

"Integrity and worth! You damned old hypocrite!" Crayford raised his voice. "You're too old for your job. You're soft and sentimental. You won't talk me away from my principles. Old Pink is going to know about the whole business. You're going to report Pinky-Mi to him, Buddle. You can make your own tale good - but the Old Man has got to know."

Mr. Buddle was pale now but dignified.

"I shall not report Scarlet to his father for a matter which I overlooked months ago."

Crayford glanced at his watch.

"It is now seven-thirty, Mr. Buddle. It is immaterial to me whether you report the matter to the Chief or whether I do - but the Head must be told."

"I shall not report the matter," said Mr. Buddle.

Crayford opened the study door.

"You have an hour in which to make up your mind, Mr. Buddle. I shall come here again at eight-thirty. If you like to make your report to Old Pink, you have the chance to whitewash your own story. If you have not made the report to Pink by eight-thirty, then I shall."

Mr. Buddle sat down at his table. He took up a pen and drew an exercise book towards him. He regarded the young man in the doorway.

"You are wasting your time, Crayford," he said. "You intend to do a mean action, and you would like to compel me to do it for you. It would look better, wouldn't it, when the rest of the staff hears of it, if you yourself did not figure too conspicuously in the matter."

Crayford shrugged his shoulders.

"You're barking up the wrong tree, Mr. Buddle," he said. "The rest of the staff won't sympathise with you when they know you tried to usurp the authority of the Headmaster - and the Sixth Form won't cheer you when they learn your sense of justice meant special licence for your favourite prefect."

Mr. Buddle did not speak. Despite the bitterness and malice evident in the young games master, there was more than an element of truth in what he said. No master, and few, if any, of the boys would have sympathy to spare for Mr. Buddle when the scandal broke. Mr. Buddle knew it.

He had known the risk he was running, that day late last term. He did not regret the leniency with which he had treated Pinky-Mi, but he had no defence now that he was to be called to account. Mr. Crayford, very surely, had Mr. Buddle on toast.

Mr. Crayford was speaking.

"The Head is going to know. Think it over, Buddle. I shall call back in an hour. I wonder - and the Head is going to wonder - just why you were so anxious to

show special favours to his son."

Mr. Buddle rose to his feet. He was trembling with anger and mortification now.

"You are a spiteful little creature, Crayford," he said. He raised his voice. "Leave my study."

The door closed. The games master was gone.

Mr. Buddle stood very still, staring straight ahead. There was a chill at his heart.

.

The Sixth Form Day Room was crowded. A meeting of the Slade Debating Society was in full swing. Antrobus, captain of Slade, standing at a desk on the small platform, was making a speech on "The Merits and De-merits of Co-Education." His speech was punctuated with alternating bursts of laughter and applause from his audience.

A junior entered the Day Room. He handed a note to the nearest senior, said a few words to him, and departed hastily. The note was passed along to Scarlet of the Sixth, who was sprawling inelegantly on a chair near the platform.

Michael Scarlet was the seventeen-year old son of the Headmaster of Slade. All Slade boys referred to their Headmaster as "Pink", "Pinky", or "Old Pink". It was inevitable that the Headmaster's son should be nicknamed "Pinky-Mi".

Pinky-Mi read the note which had been passed to him. He looked surprised. While Antrobus on the platform argued against co-education, Pinky-Mi rose to his feet and picked his way to the door between the chairs of the seniors.

Once in the corridor, he hurried to his own study. Every sixth-former at Slade had his own bed-sitting room, which served as a study. Pinky-Mi, as a prefect, had one of the largest of these rooms.

The door was partially open, the light was on, and Mr. Buddle was standing inside against the table.

"I had your note, sir," said Pinky-Mi. He wore a look of surprised enquiry. "You wanted to see me about something,

sir?"

Mr. Buddle nodded. He pushed the door closed, and faced the senior.

"I have rather bad news for you, Scarlet." Mr. Buddle's fingers were twitching, but otherwise he was composed. "Towards the end of last term I told you that, so far as I was concerned, the matter of your visit to an Everslade dance hall was at an end. We both knew, however, that there was always a possibility that the affair would crop up again."

As the master was speaking, the colour slowly drained from Pinky-Mi's face. He sagged against the table.

"The Head has found out --?"

"Not exactly, Scarlet. Miss Honeycomb has mentioned the matter to Mr. Crayford. He insists that the Headmaster be informed of what occurred. I am grieved about it, Scarlet, but it is now out of my hands. There is nothing I can do, but I felt you should be prepared."

"The Slug - of all people - he had to find out," muttered Pinky-Mi.

"You must not speak like that of a Slade master, Scarlet," said Mr. Buddle gently. "It is possible that any of the staff might have followed the same line as that adopted by Mr. Crayford. I just don't know."

Pinky-Mi shook his head. He said, in exasperation:

"No other man would have bothered a halfpenny cuss over something which happened last term, and which you dealt with."

As Mr. Buddle made no rejoinder, Pinky-Mi went on:

"Has - my father - been told yet, sir?"

"So far, no. Mr. Crayford wishes me to make the report. Failing that, he will take the matter himself to Mr. Scarlet. Under no circumstances will I reopen the case myself, Scarlet, but it is futile to hope that Mr. Crayford will remain silent. I will do my best on your behalf - but it will not, I fear, be much. I shall represent to the Head that it is unfair to you to call you to account over something concerning which I have already pardoned you.

What view the Head will take, it is impossible to say."

Pinky-Mi smiled mirthlessly. He had no doubt at all as to what view his father would take.

"You've been good to me, sir. I shan't forget just how good." He paused, and after a moment, he went on awkwardly: "What about you, sir? Will it mean trouble for you, sir?"

Mr. Buddle spoke with quiet dignity.

"Don't bother your head about me, Scarlet. The responsibility in the matter was mine. Whatever happens you must not blame yourself."

Pinky-Mi's face was deeply troubled. As Mr. Buddle turned away to the door, Pinky-Mi said huskily:

"What about Vanderlyn, sir?"

Mr. Buddle turned back.

"Vanderlyn! Yes, of course, he was concerned in the matter. I had forgotten him for the moment." Mr. Buddle rubbed his chin reflectively. "Mr. Crayford does not seem to know that Vanderlyn was involved - at least, he did not mention him. I do not know how the Headmaster will deal with the affair." Mr. Buddle's lips set obstinately for a moment. "I shall not refer to Vanderlyn of my own accord. All the same, Scarlet, I think you should acquaint Vanderlyn with what has happened. If you are called before the Headmaster, and Vanderlyn is not, he can decide for himself whether he comes forward voluntarily."

Pinky-Mi stood in silence as Mr. Buddle withdrew.

.

Mr. Crayford's bed-sitting room was a large, well-appointed apartment adjoining the gymnasium. Situated as it was, it was a convenient room for the games master who was also physical training instructor for the school. But, large and well-appointed though his room might be, it made Mr. Crayford feel that he was treated as an inferior member of the staff every time he considered his bed in the curtained alcove. Mr. Crayford often complained about his "bed-sitter". He was a young man who enjoyed having a grievance.

Mr. Fromo, the Housemaster, who was a married man, occupied a self-contained flat which, like that of the Headmaster, was built on to the main buildings of Slade. The rest of the resident teaching staff had studies, with bedrooms adjoining, on Masters' Corridor. Mr. Crayford felt that he deserved similar quarters.

Seated in a comfortable armchair before a glowing electric fire in the well-appointed "bed-sitter", Mr. Crayford laid aside the sensational novel which he had been reading. He glanced at the watch on his wrist and smiled. In fifteen minutes it would be time to approach Mr. Buddle to see whether that gentleman intended to report Pinky-Mi to the Headmaster or not.

Mr. Crayford felt in clover. It was on the cards that Mr. Buddle might get the sack from Slade, in which case it was just possible that Mr. Crayford might be able to leave his "bed-sitter" and move into the pleasant study with bedroom adjoining, on Masters' Corridor. It was a satisfactory thought for Mr. Crayford.

There was a tap on the door.

"Enter!" called out Mr. Crayford.

The boy who entered was a senior.

He was tall, with rugged features, a thin face, and a mop of tow-coloured hair. He wore the Slade blazer, unbuttoned, and the broad-ended senior necktie spread across a white shirt.

"Come in, Van!" said Mr. Crayford, pleasantly. "Now what can I do for you, old man?"

Mr. Crayford did not like Vanderlyn. The senior took little part in sport of any kind, and Mr. Crayford tended to despise such a fellow. Nevertheless, it was Mr. Crayford's policy to try to make himself popular with the older fellows. He tried to meet them on their own level - a big boy among big boys.

Vanderlyn slid his hands into the pockets of his grey slacks. A backward movement with his foot sent the door closed with a minor slam. Then he set his feet well apart, and stood watching Mr. Crayford.

The games master stared at the senior in surprise. There was something in the

boy's attitude which puzzled Mr. Crayford.

"What is it, Van?"

"Just a few words, sir! I'm sorry to take up your time, sir! I won't keep you long, sir!"

The tone of voice, the stress on the word, "sir", brought a gleam into Mr. Crayford's eyes. He spoke sharply.

"What do you want, Vanderlyn?"

"A talk, sir."

"A talk?" Mr. Crayford rose to his feet. He was more surprised than angry at the moment. "A talk about what?"

The rugged features of the senior folded into a wry smile.

"A talk about glasshouses."

"Glasshouses?"

"Glasshouses!" agreed Vanderlyn.

Crayford made an impatient gesture.

"Are you up the pole, Van? Don't try to be funny at my expense, there's a good chap!"

"I learn from the grapevine," said Vanderlyn, "that you have ordered old Buddle to report Pinky-Mi to the Head for hoofing it at the local hop garden."

Mr. Crayford was taken aback. He eyed the senior through half-closed lids.

"You've learned that, have you? So Buddle's been talking!"

"Is it true, Mr. Crayford, sir?"

The boy's tone was offensive, and Crayford frowned.

"It's true! Has that anything to do with you, Vanderlyn?"

"Oh, quite a bit!" Vanderlyn's long frame swayed backward and forward on his heels. "Pinky-Mi happens to be something of a pal of mine."

"A pal of yours, Vanderlyn? Don't be funny. Don't flatter yourself." Crayford dropped into his chair and stretched out his legs. "Pinky-Mi wouldn't touch you with a bargepole. At least he's a sportsman. He's got no time for rabbits like you."

The tall senior drew his hands from his pockets, moved forward, and sat on the edge of Mr. Crayford's table.

"So you've ordered the poor old Gump to report Pinky-Mi for attending the Palais de Danse last term?"

Crayford nodded.

"Yes, that's so. That dive is out of bounds for all Slade fellows. Prefects are expected to see the rules are kept, not break them themselves. Scarlet went and the Gump found out about it. For some reason or other the Gump did not report the matter to the Headmaster."

"And you insist that the matter is reported to the Head now?"

"I do!" said Mr. Crayford pleasantly.

"It is a master's duty to see that the rules are kept and that justice is done."

Vanderlyn puckered his lips in a whistle. After a moment or two, he said:

"You mean to get Pinky-Mi in a hell of a row - and get the poor old Gump turfed out of Slade?"

Mr. Crayford shrugged his shoulders.

"They should have thought of that earlier, Van." He picked up a pipe from the ashtray by his side, and commenced to stuff it with tobacco from a jar. "I hardly think, Van," he said, confidentially, "that you will shed any tears over Pinky-Mi - or over the Gump, either."

Vanderlyn took a comb from his breast pocket. He twisted it in his fingers. There was an odd light in his eyes.

"I told you I wanted to talk about glasshouses, Mr. Crayford, sir. People who live in such places should never throw stones."

Crayford lit his pipe, eyeing Vanderlyn through the puffs of smoke.

"You're thinking of that little affair last March. I did you a good turn then, Vanderlyn. I hope you were grateful."

"You did yourself a better one, Mr. Crayford, sir," said Vanderlyn softly.

Mr. Crayford left his armchair.

"What do you mean?"

Vanderlyn strolled across the room. Crayford watched the tall fellow, his smouldering anger growing in intensity. Vanderlyn gazed into the mirror over the mantelpiece, and drew the comb through his mop of tow-coloured hair.

"You see, Mr. Crayford, sir, I was at the Palais de Danse with Pinky-Mi on that eventful night at the end of last

term. Curse this hair of mine, it's always a tangled mass."

"What?"

The senior combed away industriously. He bounced up the quiff of hair over his forehead with the flat of his hand.

"The Gump never copped Pinky-Mi at that flea-pit, sir. He copped me. You never thought of such a thing, did you, though you might have done." Vanderlyn turned and faced Mr. Crayford. "Pinky-Mi, like the lofty-minded cuss he is, went and surrendered himself to the Gump afterwards."

"You!" Crayford's face was a study. "You can't have been there. That old hag never mentioned you, and Buddle never mentioned you. You young liar!"

The boy smiled. He slipped the comb back in his pocket.

"I tell you that I was at that flea-pit with Pinky-Mi. In fact, I took him there. Are you fool enough to believe that Pinky-Mi would go to a dive like that unless some evil genius with horns persuaded him? I was the evil genius with horns. Doesn't your common-sense tell you it's true? If the Head sends for Pinky-Mi, I shall go with him."

"More fool you!" snapped Crayford.

"I'm sorry if you were concerned in it, Van, but you knew the risk you were running. It can't be helped now. Buddle may have gone to old Pink by this time."

Vanderlyn's hands slid again into the pockets of his slacks. He walked slowly across to the door.

"Too bad for you if he has!" he said.

Crayford caught him roughly by the shoulder.

"What do you mean by that, you useless lout?" he demanded.

The faint smile on the boy's sallow face was deadly.

"Can't you guess, Slug? I shall tell old Pink of the time I went to the Palais last March. The time when you were there with the barmaid from the 'Plough and Sail'. Bubbles, didn't you call her? You were dancing with her, and petting her, and boozing with her at the Palais bar for forty-five minutes before you spotted me in the crowd. I wasn't afraid of you

then, and I'm not afraid of you now.

When at last you spotted me there, you nearly had pups, didn't you, sir? You hadn't noticed me before, because I had my best bib and tucker on. You took me on one side. We made an agreement. You said nothing about me, and I said nothing about you."

For a few moments Grayford stood in silence. He was white with an anger which he was striving to control. Then he said:

"I did you a good turn that night, Van. If I had reported you to old Pink--"

"If you had reported me to old Pink, I might have been turfed out of Slade, but you would have had too many questions to answer for your own comfort. Old Pink wouldn't have liked the idea of his games master going to a hop at the local Palais, accompanied by a barmaid. You didn't dare to risk it."

Mr. Crayford said, almost pleadingly:

"We made a bargain, Van. I kept my part of it. You promised me that you wouldn't go to the Palais again."

Vanderlyn shrugged his thin shoulders disdainfully.

"Not quite. I promised that you wouldn't see me at the Palais again. Well, you haven't seen me there. I took good care of that. You don't go to the Palais any more, do you, sir? You go further afield, with the aid of your stink-bike - Brent, Exeter, Plymouth."

Crayford's fists were clenched hard at his sides.

"If the Old Man has Pinky-Mi on the carpet - through you - I'm going to spill the beans," went on Vanderlyn. "I shouldn't mind leaving Slade, but I don't want to be booted out. The Gump didn't report Pinky-Mi and me in July because he is a good-hearted little beast. You didn't report me last March, because you had too much to hide. You might have got away with it then - but you wouldn't risk it. It's too late now, Mr. Crayford, for you to pose as a conscientious beak. If I get turfed out of Slade, you won't be far behind me."

Crayford forced a laugh.

"It will be your word against mine.

Whom do you think Old Pinky will believe? I shall deny the whole yarn. I shall declare I never saw you at the Palais de Danse last March."

"I'm sure you will." Vanderlyn opened the door. "But I'll prove what I say. There's plenty of people in Ever-slade who know we were both at the Palais on that night in March. They won't all lie to save your skin. My people, too - they'll soon raise Cain if I'm bunked on your account. Slade will be too hot to hold you any longer, Mr. Crayford, and the school will be a better place after you're gone."

"You young scoundrel, this is blackmail," muttered Mr. Crayford.

"Of course it's blackmail," Vanderlyn laughed softly. "I'm no good at games, Mr. Crayford, but I'm a first-class blackmailer."

The door slammed behind Vanderlyn, and Mr. Crayford stood, his face white with fury, rooted to the carpet of his well-appointed bed-sitter.

.

It was ten minutes later that Crayford looked in on Mr. Buddle. The English master was seated beside his fire. The exercise books on his table lay unmarked. He had no heart for marking exercises. He felt, in fact, that his marking days were over - at Slade, at least. Mr. Buddle's brow darkened when he saw Crayford.

The games master looked subdued. He closed the door, and stood in uncertainty.

"Well?" demanded Mr. Buddle. He did not rise.

"I hope I'm not disturbing you, Mr. Buddle." Crayford's tone was mild, his voice strangely unnatural. "It is about the matter we were discussing earlier this evening. Have you reported the affair to the Chief?"

"I have no intention of reporting the affair to the Chief."

"No, so you said earlier. I have been thinking very seriously, Mr. Buddle, and I am not easy in my mind." Crayford gnawed his lower lip for a moment. "Can you assure me that nothing of the sort

will ever happen again?"

Mr. Buddle rose to his feet. All the evening he had been tense with worry, and he felt he could stand no more.

"Mr. Crayford," he said, his voice vibrating a little, "I can assure you of nothing, and I refuse - I absolutely refuse - to discuss the matter further with you."

"I understand your feelings, Mr. Buddle." The tone was even milder, and Mr. Buddle's wonderment grew. Crayford twisted his foot slowly in the pile of the carpet. "I do not wish to be hard on Pinky-Mi, or to cause distress to his father. In addition, my high esteem for you, Mr. Buddle ---"

Mr. Buddle's eyes opened wide with amazement.

"Your what?"

Mr. Crayford moved across the room.

"May I sit down for a moment, Mr. Buddle? You will not deny me that courtesy, though we have not always seen eye to eye."

Mr. Buddle stood silent as Mr. Crayford dropped into a chair.

"I have decided," said Mr. Crayford, "to forget entirely what I was told by Miss Honeycomb. We will let sleeping dogs lie, Mr. Buddle."

Mr. Buddle was speechless for a few seconds. It was the last thing he had expected to hear. Relief and incredulity were inter-mixed in Mr. Buddle's breast.

"I do not understand this, Crayford. Why the sudden change of heart on your part?" An idea came into his mind. "If this is some cruel piece of treachery ---"

"You do me less than justice," said Crayford reproachfully.

Mr. Buddle's brows were wrinkled. There was something behind this, he was convinced. He had no illusions about Crayford. The change in the games master's attitude was almost uncanny.

Mr. Buddle said slowly:

"If you are sincere, Crayford ---"

A nerve was twitching at Crayford's temple. With an effort he kept his tongue under control.

"I have told you that I am prepared to forget the matter, Mr. Buddle." He

could not resist adding: "Your secret is safe with me."

Mr. Buddle's astonishment grew. Somehow, in some way which he could not fathom, the tables had been turned. It came to Mr. Buddle just then that, for some personal reason, Crayford did not wish to carry the matter in question to the Headmaster. It must be a personal reason, for Mr. Buddle was certain that Crayford never considered the feelings of anybody but himself.

Mr. Buddle drew a bow at a venture.

"I do not think, Crayford," he said with dignity, "that I care for the idea of sharing a secret with you. Let us go together to Mr. Scarlet."

He experienced an anxious moment while the games master glared at him. In that glare Mr. Buddle saw something of the truth. There was no change of heart in the games master; only a change of purpose to suit his own ends.

Crayford spoke slowly:

"I agree with you that we cannot crucify a boy for a passing piece of stupidity."

Mr. Buddle tested his good fortune still further.

"You mean that you are asking me to let the matter rest where it is?"

Crayford rose to his feet. His handsome face was white.

"I mean - that I am prepared to show you - clemency."

"I refuse to accept your clemency." Mr. Buddle was feeling on safer ground now. Just how he had become master of the situation he did not know, but he intended to make the most of it. "An hour ago I tried to justify my actions to you. I shall never again attempt to justify myself before either the Headmaster or you. I did what I believed was right on that occasion last term, and no schoolmaster can do more. For myself, I do not bother now whether the matter goes before the Headmaster. For Scarlet's sake, I welcome your change of view. Are you requesting me to let this matter of Scarlet's folly go no further?"

"Surely I have made that clear," said Mr. Crayford.

Mr. Buddle relaxed.

"Very well." Mr. Buddle crossed to the door. He turned. "I am happy at the result of this interview, but there is one point more. I give you warning, Mr. Crayford. Should this matter come to Mr. Scarlet's notice by any means in the future, I shall acquaint him fully with what has passed between us this evening."

He opened the door, and stood on one side. Mr. Crayford took a few steps. In the doorway he looked back at Mr. Buddle.

He said: "You can't just stick labels on people, Mr. Buddle. There's a tendency to believe that those who are labelled good are also stupid. You're quite clever in a sanctimonious kind of way. As for me, you've labelled me bad." Crayford shook his head. "Even the bad can do the right thing at times, Mr. Buddle."

With that enigmatic remark Mr. Crayford took his departure.

.

Mr. Buddle went to bed comparatively early that night. For some time after the departure of Mr. Crayford, Mr. Buddle had sat in his chair and pondered. Something had happened to bring about a change of heart in Crayford, and Mr. Buddle could not for the life of him think what it could be. But whatever it was, it had lifted a load of worry from Mr. Buddle's heart. So must a convicted man feel when he receives an unexpected, last-minute reprieve.

Before retiring, Mr. Buddle sorted out a Gem to read in bed. It was his normal form of relaxation these days.

Mr. Buddle recalled that night at the end of last term when, anxious and perplexed about the Pinky-Mi escapade, he had read a few chapters from a very old Talbot story. It had fitted in with his mood that night. Now Mr. Buddle was feeling on top of the world, and he delved among his little collection of Gems for something light and amusing.

Eventually he selected a story entitled "The St. Jim's Tea Shop". He

had read it before, but his favourite stories in the Gem always came to him with a charming freshness all their own.

So Mr. Buddle dived into bed, and started on "The St. Jim's Tea Shop." It was a jolly story, full of fun, with amusing boyish dialogue. The St. Jim's chums, anxious to raise the wind, decided to use their meagre remaining resources by opening a tea shop in a barn owned by a local farmer.

Mr. Buddle enjoyed the first three chapters immensely. He passed on to the fourth chapter, which opened as follows:

"Shush!" breathed Fatty Wynn.

Figgins and Kerr stared. The three New House chums were looking for trouble that afternoon.

Mr. Buddle lowered the Gem and raised his eyes to the ceiling. He pondered. Something had clicked into place. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, of the New House at St. Jim's! Mr. Buddle knew now why the names had sounded vaguely familiar when Mr. Crayford mentioned them early that evening.

It was hardly feasible to suppose that three fictitious characters had stepped from the pages of the Gem, wearing Slade caps and blazers, to ask Miss Honeycomb whether she rang a bell when she rode her broom.

But Mr. Buddle saw light. He thought he had a clue. With a grunt of satisfaction he resumed his reading of the rise and fall of "The St. Jim's Tea Shop".

.....

"Stand, Meredith!" commanded Mr.

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Buddle.

It was the following morning. Mr. Buddle's English session with the Lower Fourth form had just terminated, and a score or so of youths were awaiting dismissal. But instead of uttering the welcome word "Dismiss!", Mr. Buddle had called upon Meredith to rise.

To an onlooker it would have appeared impossible that Mr. Buddle had any cause to call to account that particular member of his form. Meredith had golden hair, and a bright, ingenious

face. He looked a good boy. Things are not always what they seem, and boys are not always what they look.

Meredith rose in his place. He wore a reproachful expression as a matter of course.

"Meredith," said Mr. Buddle severely, "it has come to my notice that yesterday a boy of my form was guilty of discourtesy to a lady in Everslade."

A worried frown puckered Meredith's bright brow.

"The lady in question, Meredith, was Miss Honeycomb, the postmistress. Did you have any conversation with Miss Honeycomb yesterday, Meredith?"

"Oh, sir."

"Answer me, Meredith."

Meredith looked anxiously round the room.

"I spoke to her, yes, sir. She didn't like it because I rang my bell to save her being run over, sir."

Mr. Buddle was stern.

"There were three boys present." Mr. Buddle's eyes roved over the class.

"When Miss Honeycomb demanded the names of the boys, she was informed that they were Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn."

"Oh, sir." Meredith looked elaborately relieved. "That's all right, sir. My name isn't Figgins, Kerr, or Fatty Wynn, sir."

"A short while ago, Meredith," said Mr. Buddle, "I had occasion to confiscate from you a periodical named the Gem. I happened to glance in that periodical, and my eyes alighted on those very names. I remember them distinctly."

Meredith's brow wrinkled as though in intense thought.

"What was the title of the story, sir?" he asked.

"The title of the story is immaterial, Meredith. You cannot expect your form-master to recall anything of the sort. Do not prevaricate! Were you the boy, Meredith, who gave those false names to Miss Honeycomb?"

Meredith sighed.

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry, sir. She's an awful woman, sir. I didn't know you

were intimate with Miss Honeycomb, sir."

"What!"

"It never occurred to me that you knew her, sir. I just acted on the spur of the moment."

Mr. Buddle glared.

"The two boys who were with Meredith at the time will rise."

Pilgrim and Garmansway rose in their places.

"I am shocked to learn that any Slade boy could be discourteous to a lady," said Mr. Buddle. "Why, Meredith, did you give Miss Honeycomb the names of fictitious characters from that trivial magazine?"

Meredith's lips trembled.

"Well, sir, you know what Shakespeare said —"

"What did Shakespeare say, Meredith, that has any remote connection with this matter?"

"He said 'The rose by any other name would smell as sweet', sir," explained Meredith.

There was the faintest ripple of laughter through the form.

Mr. Buddle removed his glasses and tapped lightly on his desk with the frames.

"The actual words of Shakespeare, Meredith, were 'What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet'".

"That's what I meant, sir," said Meredith hopefully. "It's one of my favourite quotations, sir."

Mr. Buddle looked towards the window. He thought of Miss Honeycomb and of the worry she had caused him that evening at the end of last term.

"I shall not chastise you, Meredith," said Mr. Buddle.

"Oh, thank you, sir."

Mr. Buddle looked up at the ceiling. He thought of the worry which Miss Honeycomb had caused him yesterday by gossiping to Mr. Crayford.

"I shall not give you detention, Meredith."

"Oh, thank you, sir."

Mr. Buddle regarded the golden-haired

youth for a few seconds. He thought of Meredith asking Miss Honeycomb whether she rang her bell when she rode her broomstick.

"You must, however, learn to uphold the good name of Slade at all times. You three boys will write out that speech from Shakespeare which I have just quoted. 'What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' That is your imposition. You will write it out - let me see - how many times?"

"Oh, sir," groaned Meredith.

"Once!" said Mr. Buddle. "You will hand your imposition to me by tea-time. Class, dismiss."

The class dismissed. The dismissal was dazed and breathlessly quiet. Pilgrim was looking surprised, but happy. Garmansway was looking relieved, but happy. Meredith was looking knowing - but happy.

Mr. Buddle was humming a little tune. He was, perhaps, the happiest of the lot.

* * * * *

Collector forming General Collection requires ONE specimen copy of Boy's Favourite, Graphic, Leisure, Leader, Standard, Wonder, Comic Library, Comic Journal. Boys of London & New York, British Boys, Bad Boys Paper, Ching Ching, Sons of Britannia, Sons of England, Standard Journal, Up-To-Date Boys, Blueskin, Penny Pickwick, Gentleman of England, Gentleman of Britain, Garland, Varieties, Snapshots, Scraps, Ally Sloper, Comrades, Young Briton, Young Englishmen, All Sports, Football Favourite, Football Weekly, School and Sport, Sport and Adventure, Vanguard (Thomsons), Surprise, Nugget Weekly, Aldines, Robin Hood, Claude Duval, Wild West, Half Holiday, Cheerful, Garfields, Diamond, Black Bess, Life & Adventure. Worlds Comic, Big Budget, Chuckles, Tiger Tims, Kinema Comic, Firefly, Funny Cuts, Bubbles, Funny Wonder, Jingles, Golden, My Favourite, Puck, Tip Top, Merry Midget, Merry & Bright, Sparks, Joker, Jolly. Also Newnes Deadwood Dicks and Boys Realm (small series).

A. WATKIN, 114 BRIGHT STREET, COBDEN, GREYMOUTH, NEW ZEALAND.

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Nelson Lee Library, 180 "Hero and Cad"; Boys Friend Library Early Series, 333 "Cavalier and Roundhead", 438 "Red Rose and White", 567 "Loyal to Napoleon"; Later Series, 428 "The Mystery of the Moor" (Ferrers Locke Story), 504 "In the Days of the Knights"; Annuals 1902 Boys of our Empire, 1924 The Champion Annual, 1925 The Champion Annual, 1926 The Champion Annual, 1939 Chums Annual.

SAM THURBON, 29, STRAWBERRY HILL ROAD, TWICKENHAM. Tel: POP. 5314.

WANTED: Bullseyes, loose or bound volumes. Also Thrillers, C. D. Annuals pre-1961.

BOX MRT: "COLLECTORS' DIGEST", EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON, SURREY.

WANTED: Small Series LEES 12, 15/16, 73, 81, 86, 89, 92/3, 98, 323, 325, 372, 398/405, 407, 420.

CHURCHILL, 72, SOUTHBROOK ROAD, COUNTESS-WEAR, EXETER.

WANTED: Sons of Britannia Vols. 5-6, Irish Emerald 1909, C.D. Annuals Nos. 1,2,3,4.

S. A. PACHON, 520 E. 5th St., BETHLEHEM, PA. U.S.A.



1.

AROUND

To the boys whose playground was often a square of dusty concrete outside a Council School in an industrial town, the Magnet brought dreams of Greyfriars in Kent.

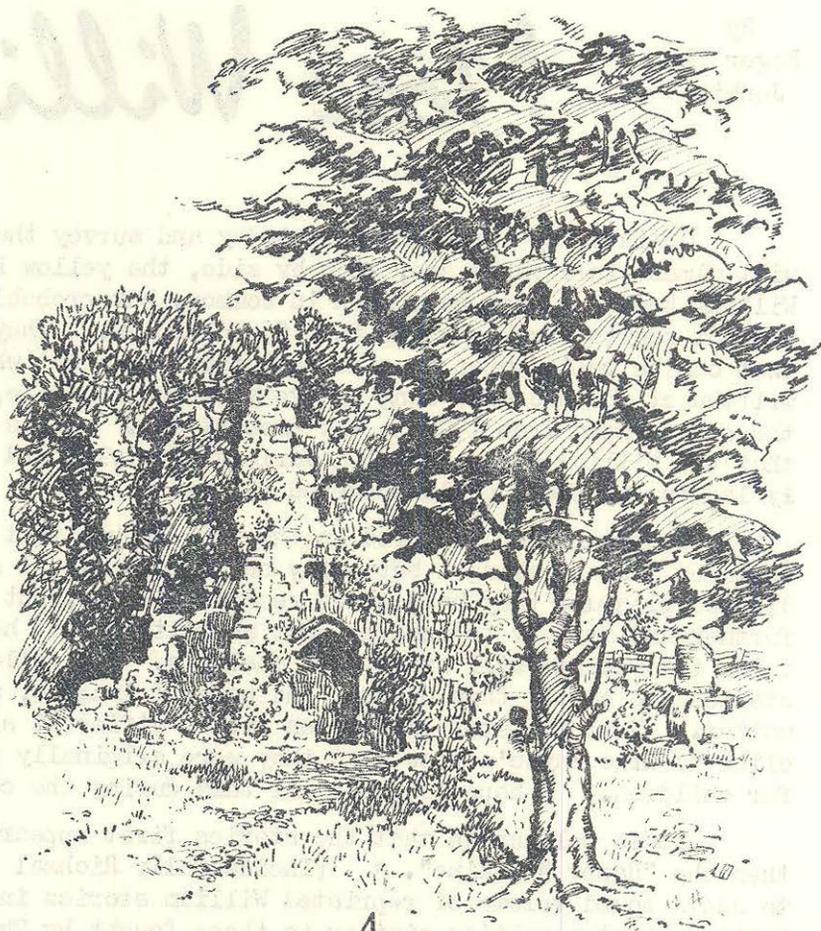
ALFRED W. HANSON has pictured his dreams for us all to see. 1. Friar-dale Village, 2. River Sark and boathouse. 3. The Playing Fields. 4. The Old Priory.



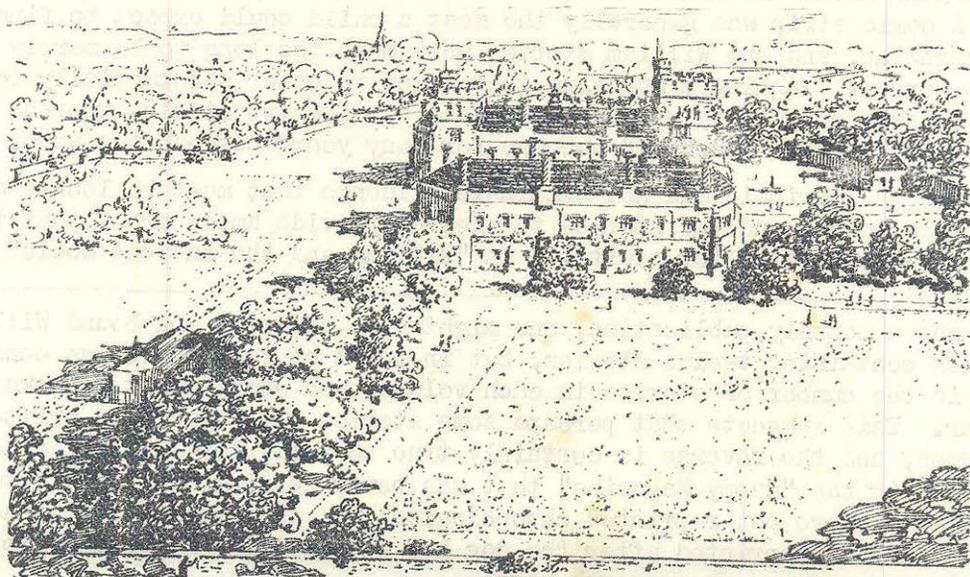
2.



GREYFRIARS



4.



3.

By
Roger M.
Jenkins

More William

By
Roger M.
Jenkins

Go into any large bookshop today and survey the children's section, and you will almost inevitably see, side by side, the yellow Bunter books and the red William books. They have much in common, but probably the most important factor is that adults regularly buy them for children. They are an established genre that can be relied upon to give satisfaction. But whereas the Bunter books were written at the end of a long and very productive life, the William books represent the entire span from 1922 to the present day. It is not surprising, therefore, that the William books reveal a variety of styles and types of story that is entirely lacking in their yellow-covered rivals.

Gerry Allison declared in the 1961 Annual that criticising the William books would be like breaking a butterfly on the wheel. I share his views on the undiluted pleasure they have given readers like us, but I should like to go one stage further and attempt to analyse just what it is that has given the pleasure, and I think the stories will stand some analysis. It follows from this that I think some stories are better than others, and here, I imagine, we come to the heart of the matter. Were the stories written with a different slant in later years? I incline to Eric Fayne's view that they were originally written for adults and later for children. I hope to prove all this during the course of this article.

It is well known that the stories first appeared in the "Home Magazine" and then the "Happy Magazine". * (Incidentally Richmal Crompton was quite surprised to see a bound volume of reprinted William stories in a shop one day, and she had battles about royalties similar to those fought by Charles Hamilton: it is pleasing to record that she won them, but of course in her case it was a far more serious matter, as the sales of the reprints far exceeded the sales of the stories in their original form.) The "Happy Magazine" was undoubtedly an adult publication, and I am very dubious about the claim that the William stories provided a children's corner. A comic strip was generally the most a child could expect to find in his mother's magazine, and the William stories were much too long to be merely a children's corner. Again, a magazine that tried to cater substantially for several different classes of readers was bound to fall between two stools, whereas the "Happy Magazine" was an undoubted success for many years between the wars.

But it is intrinsic and not extrinsic evidence that must be looked at to establish this point, and the stories themselves provide ample proof that the earlier ones were written for adults. In "William and the Ancient Souls"

* As this was a monthly publication, one might have expected one bound William book a year, each containing twelve stories, but in point of fact there was considerable variation in the number of stories in each volume, and sometimes two books appeared in one year. This suggests that perhaps some stories were specially written for the bound volumes, and the reverse is certainly true as well, for I recall reading a William story in the "Happy Magazine" that was never reprinted. It is also likely that the stories were not reprinted chronologically: the explanation of how William acquired Jumble was reprinted after the dog had featured in an earlier story. There is obviously scope for much research here.

(More William), he shouted out, 'All right, Mrs. Jarley's!' - a remark that was not likely to be understood by readers unacquainted with "The Old Curiosity Shop". In the same William book there was a girl with "Titian curls", and an elderly matron who feared that William was dressed up as a "pagan", whilst in 'Just William' Ethel was described by an admirer as "a real Botticelli". Above all, Mr. Brown's sardonic humour could have been appreciated by no child: when, for instance, William is unexpectedly absent, he comforts his anxious wife by saying, "Be thankful for small mercies." (Just William). Finally, long references to adult topics like politics could not have been inserted for children, as in "William Prime Minister" (William the Bad):-

Douglas stepped forward amid faint applause.

"Ladies an' Gentlemen," said Douglas, "I'm makin' this speech to ask you all to be Lib'rals same as what I am. Nearly all of you came to my birthday-party las' month an' if you don't vote Lib'rals I won't ask you again next year. My aunt's gotter parrot that talks, an' I'll let you come an' listen to it through the window when she's not there if you'll vote Lib'rals. I can't let you listen when she's there 'cause she doesn't like boys. I'll let you look at my rabbits too, an' I'll give you all a suck of rock if my aunt sends me a stick when she goes to Brighton same as she did last year."

He sat down breathless.

There were certainly the makings of a politician in Douglas. He didn't care what he promised.

Apart from these lesser indications, the structure of the plots was all wrong from the child's point of view. The customary story for children is one in which, after suitable adventures, the young hero proves himself to be more quick-witted than the grown-ups, and is covered with honour and glory at the end. The earlier William stories, on the other hand, usually end in defeat for the hero: we sympathise with him but recognise that he must pay the penalty for having broken the rules that adults lay down for the children in their power.

Again, adults are an essential part of every William story - they even feature in the feuds with Hubert Lane - and the more adults there are in the story, the more amusing it usually is. It is William's effect on adults, not his effect on other children, that is most hilarious. The basis of humour, we are told, lies in incongruity, and there is plenty of that in the William books. William's effect on adults is most shattering when they are artistic, nervous, irritable, or pretentious.

Of course, it may perhaps be argued that the Greyfriars stories are just as enjoyable to adults as the William books are, and that they too contain references that are beyond the understanding of their youthful readers. If this is true - and I agree that it is - then is not my whole argument destroyed? I should say no to this question. Charles Hamilton's exquisite little touches need not be understood in order to enjoy the story - they are added adornments - whereas Richmal Crompton's earlier stories were entirely geared to adult understanding, like the tale of the rival Bolshevik groups in "The Weak Spot" (William the Fourth). Furthermore, the boys in the Greyfriars stories were judged according to the schoolboy's own code of morals, and the readers of the Magnet were obviously expected to acquiesce in this judgement, whereas William's actions are always judged according to the unsympathetic adult standards. As a boy, I often used to think that some of the endings of the William stories were rather odd, like that of "William's Christmas Eve" (More William):-

"William, you don't like her better'n me, do you?"

William considered.

"No, I don't," he said at last.

A soft sigh of relief came through the darkness.

"I'm so glad! Go'-night, William."

"Go'-night," said William sleepily, drawing down the window as he spoke.

As an adult, I do not particularly object to this quasi-romantic ending to a story dealing with William's successful scheme to transfer his Christmas-party food to the



"YOU CAN LOOK AT THE ALBUM WHILE I AM GETTING READY." WILLIAM WAS TRAPPED, TRAPPED IN A HUGE AND HORRIBLE DRAWING-ROOM, BY A HUGE AND HORRIBLE WOMAN.

house of a poor family whose father is in prison, but as a child I used to think that the whole story veered about most unpredictably in all sorts of directions.

It is true that the very early books were to some extent experimental, and some stories, like "A Question of Grammar" (Just William) contain a little too much destruction: if they were all like this one, I should feel inclined to agree that they were written for children. But the delight of most stories is, as I have said, the horrified or amazed reaction of adults to William's outrageous misdeeds - William altering Mrs. Adolphus Crane's photographs (William the Fourth), William dressed as a dragon and successfully routing St. George in the Pennymans' masque (William the Bad), William selling autographed photos from Ethel's former admirers at a bazaar (William's Crowded Hours), William giving a moving waxwork show, with a lively imitation of General Moulton's walk, before an audience expecting a lecture on Egyptology (William the Conqueror), and William pretending to be one of twins in order to escape retribution for a while (William).

The later stories have lost these exquisite delights. In "William and the Brains Trust", for example, the title story is built round a single idea, that Professor Knowle and a man dressed up to give an imitation of him should each go to the other's destination: It is not funny at all in the telling. In the same book, "William and the Mock Invasion" features a General Moulton who seems like a pale echo of his former fiery self. "William's War-Time Fun Fair" has its moments, but even these are only a faint echo of many former glorious shows, whilst the end of "Aunt Florence, Toy Maker" was a theme utterly magnificent when first used in "The Show" (Just William). It is very significant that William doesn't get into any real trouble in this book, and on more than one occasion he is actually praised and fêted by adults. This is the new slant which undoubtedly renders the stories very attractive to children, but adults are likely to find them rather small beer after the triumphs of old.

Not unnaturally, I prefer the stories which I consider were aimed at the adult audience. The first three or four books seems somewhat tentative, a little experimental, but they contain wonderful patches. The sequence from No. 5 (Still William) to No. 13 (William's Crowded Hours) is pure unalloyed pleasure. (It is a strange

co-incident that they were published between 1925 and 1931, which also roughly constitutes the Golden Age of the Magnet.) The remainder of the pre-war books have their magic moments, too, but there are doubtful episodes, also, when the trend towards the juvenile audience is beginning. William loaded up with sweets by Mr. Moss at the end of the story about the "Nasties" (William the Detective) is obviously aimed at a juvenile audience, whereas William mis-managing Mr. Moss's shop (Just William) is clearly intended to amuse adults.

The earlier William books have another fascination - Thomas Henry's most appropriate illustrations. The outrageous dresses and hats, the horrified expressions of adults, and the disreputable-looking Outlaws look exactly as they ought to. The standard of the illustrations deteriorates later, just - as it so happens - when the trend of the stories begins to change. The Golden Age of the William stories was also the Golden Age of their illustrator.

David Harrison once said to me that the William books represented a social document of the life of the middle classes between the wars. It was a life of leisure, with cooks and housemaids galore, when bells were rung to summon the household to meals, when there was time for calling regularly on neighbours, time for attending lectures - time, in fact, for practically anything. Mr. Brown was indeed one of the few middle class men in the stories who had to go to work for a living. The fact that this social world no longer exists in no way detracts from the readability of the books; if anything, the stories are even more attractive because they have become dated.

No one seems to have realised that William himself was strangely out of place in this ample, comfortable background. An "enfant terrible" may be found in any type of family, but a boy of William's age who could not spell reasonably well and who so mispronounced his native language was more of a lovable urchin than the grammar school pupil he was supposed to be. But this discrepancy was not really very upsetting. The readers accepted William for what he was, without quibbling. The earlier stories carried with them a conviction that suspended nagging doubts and lingering misbeliefs. We are swept along, unprotesting, to those glorious contre-temps that distinguish every vintage William story. Who will ever forget the utterly wonderful occasion when Georgie Murdoch, the perfect little gentleman, appeared caked with mud before the aristocracy of the village and uttered the imperishable words, "O Damn and Blarst -" (William the Outlaw)?

Need I tell you that it was William who was to blame?

* * * * *

WANTED: B.F.L. or MARVELS with Mapleton Rovers (Dick Dare) Football yarns by Randolph Ryle (Pentelow).

HARRY BROSTER, PRIMROSE COTTAGE, STONE LANE, KINVER, STOURBRIDGE.

WANTED: Magnet 1351, early Magnets, Gems, Boys Friend (Rockwood), Newnes Dick Turpins, 2d. and 3d. Libraries.

S. B. WHITEHEAD, 12 WELLS ROAD, FAKENHAM, NORFOLK.

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS" to all fellow collectors from: S. B. WHITEHEAD.

Lee was also working in a detective role and finally unmasked the plotters and had them arrested. In the last book of the series he forced Trenton's hand and caught him in the act of trying to drug the Head. Trenton was then shown up in his true colours to the school and taken away by the police. Communists rule at St. Frank's had been short and sweet; it had made a change from the usual sort of rebellion.

In 1922, a crowd of juniors, disappointed at the last minute about going to Tregellis Castle went instead to Somerton Abbey. The Somerton ghost walked and was eventually laid. It turned out to be an escaped convict who was later told that he was innocent and had been wrongly convicted.

After Christmas the juniors were the guests of Reggie Pitt's father in London, Mr. Pitt took them out to see a pantomime. In the show a girl appeared and Archie Glenthorne was 'smitten'. Travelling up to London by train, Archie had accidentally overheard a conversation between two men, one of whom was boasting that he could make a fortune out of this very girl by becoming her manager. All he had to do to become her manager was to persuade her step-father into signing a contract. The terms of the contract would be so arranged that the girl would receive only a stated small sum regardless of what she was earning in fees. There followed a quick-moving series of events and eventually the girl was warned of the plot against her, and she was removed from the care of her step-father, and given a better contract and a better home. And no one was happier about this change of affairs than Archie Glenthorne.

In 1923, owing to a continual blizzard and the subsequent piling-up of snow, the boys and some Moor View girls were stranded at school. Dr. Stafford extended an invitation to the boys to spend Christmas as his guests at the school.

During the holiday, they discovered that the people of Bellton had fallen on hard times and could not afford to buy toys for their children for Christmas. So some of the boys dressed up - one as Santa Claus, and four as animals to draw his sleigh. On Christmas Eve, when the sleigh arrived in the village, the children were overjoyed, and so were their parents who guessed the identity of 'Santa Claus'. This first book of the Xmas series contained two plots, the one already mentioned and the other concerning Mrs. Hewitt's long-lost son, John. Mrs. Hewitt had not seen her son for ten years when, that Xmas, he returned. At once he was wrongfully given into custody on grounds of assault; wrongfully because, although he committed the assault, he did so under provocation. The St. Frank's boys bailed him out and John met his old employer, a Mr. Doyle, for whom he had once worked in Sydney, and who now offered him employment. Christmas Day ended with a house-warming party at Bellton Chase, the home of Mr. Doyle.

In the following issue Jack Grey told a ghost story late at night, which set everybody's nerves on edge. At the witching hour of midnight Handforth was grasped by bony fingers, and this caused him to faint; a most un-Handforth-like procedure.

Then some of the juniors found an old parchment, written in 1575, which told of the adventures of one 'Jacob of Belleton'. This Jacob had come to St. Frank's to pray over the tomb of his brother who was buried in the North Wing; according to Jacob the 'treasures of his earthly being' had been buried with him. Then a spectre had appeared which told Jacob to go and warning him that any attempt to disturb the bones of Brother Bartholomew, Jacob's brother - one of the St. Frank's monks, would cause the ghost to walk.

The juniors discovered the remains of Brother Bartholomew and returned to their

rooms, for all this had happened in the North Wing.

The next night the juniors were going to bed when a 'ghost' appeared on the stairs; it floated down the stairs and along the passage and then disappeared. Following this vision the juniors went to bed and when some of them were 're-visited' during the night, Nipper decided to organise a ghost-hunt. The search was successful and they found a man called Wilcox.

Wilcox said that he had been the Head's butler a few months back and had then found a secret passage. At night he had investigated and had found the parchment and had greedily interpreted the word 'treasures' to mean something of value. The next night he was just going to enter the secret panel again when the Head saw him, and dismissed him. He had returned and searched for the 'treasures', and had found to his greedy disgust that the word referred to the belongings of the old monk. In order to scare the juniors off he had fixed up the ghost but had not counted on their courage in disregarding this 'warning'.

Nipper wanted to hold the man until the police arrived, but, by then, he had escaped.

For Christmas 1924, the juniors were invited to Glenthorne Manor where they found the customary fake ghost and successfully solved the accompanying mystery. The scene then switched to London where, as the guests of Lord Dorrimore, they went to see 'The Babes in the Wood'. For the third part of the holiday they travelled to Grey Towers where, inspired by the show they had seen in London, the juniors decided to present their own pantomime version of the 'Babes in the Wood'. The cast included Handforth & Co., Reggie Pitt, Jack Grey, Archie, Fatty Little, Buster Boots, Willy Handforth, Clarence Fellowe, Irene Manners, Doris Berkeley, Marjorie Temple and 'a strolling variety troupe' of the Onions Brothers, Nick Trotwood, and Tessa Love.

The panto was a riot, although some parts the audience thought funny were only so by accidents on the part of the cast. Taking it all round though, the show was voted a rip-roaring success by everybody. At the end of the book Tommy Watson received a telegram telling him to return home immediately. This proved to be the start of the Moat Hollow series.

Christmas 1925, the last Xmas of the Old Series, started off with a practical joke by Willy Handforth. While staying in Derbyshire, Willy thought he would take revenge for a jape played on himself, by sending wires to the usual crowd of juniors and William Napoleon Browne, inviting them to come to Dorrimore Castle which Willy knew to be shut up for three weeks. The party arrived, found the place locked up and broke in. Inside the castle they found that there was apparently no-one at home. They spent Christmas Eve there and the next day at ten past nine a gong was sounded. Hurrying to the banqueting hall the boys and girls found breakfast ready for them. How the meal had got there nobody knew, or, at that moment, cared. The party then went out to the lake and the park and enjoyed some healthy winter sports. At lunchtime, they returned to the castle and, in the banqueting hall, they found a mysterious Christmas dinner prepared - once again, they could find no explanation, but that did not spoil their appetites. Handforth & Co. decided to keep watch after the juniors had left the hall and try to see what happened when the meal was cleared away. They saw men appear from out of a secret panel. On investigation they found Yates, Dorrie's butler, and several other members of his lordship's household. Yates explained the mystery of the appearing meals. Apparently a Mr. Henry Bruce and a Miss Muriel Halliday, a mistress (at Moor View) whom the (continued on page 107)..

Heart of Oak

By

W. H. Broster

"Trees, trees, you can't see the wood for trees." An old proverb, one of many all connected with trees. What would this world be without trees? Apart from their beauty and there are so many beautiful trees they provide so much for our comfort. As you read this article you are sitting by a blazing wood fire - the jolly old Yule log - in a comfortable wood chair. Near at hand a well-laden table. In the window, neath glittering decorations and carefully wrapped presents is the traditional Christmas Tree. "For the kids" you say but how much pleasure does it bring to you. The book on your knee, made from wood pulp. The pipe in your mouth - look at the fruit on that dish. Next to it another one of nuts. Different kinds of nuts but all from trees. Years ago a lot of that fruit and quite a few of the nuts were brought into this country in ships of wood. Then to your various homes by vehicles of wood. Trees are indispensible to all living things, two legged, four legged, whether they walk or whether they fly. From the beginning of time trees have played an all important part in our way of life. The apple with which Eve tempted Adam came from a tree (or did it?). Tools for use had to be made from wood and still are for all the progress in the application of steel. Our sport would be very restricted without wood. What would cricket be without willow - though the sad thought occurs to me that our so called Test cricketers might do better with plastics.

Trees bring to mind Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest. Outlaws in Lincoln Green with their bows of yew and quarter-staffs of ash. Knights with their lances. How the authors made use of these heroes and the forests and woodlands of Old England. Yes, how would authors get on without trees. An intriguing thought, look at your bookshelves. (Wood again, think of your precious books without shelves to put them on.) Shakespeare's "As You Like It" - the forest of Arden. Robinson Crusoe spent his first night on the desert isle in a tree with a club as his only protection. Remember what use he made of wood, he had very little else. Desert Isles - yes, how we all enjoyed "Swiss Family Robinson" and the house they built in a tree, a large fig tree. "Ned in the Block House", "Deerfoot in the Forest" by Edward S. Ellis - Red Indians and settlers, hunters in buckskin - birch bark canoes, wigwams and huts made primarily from wood. Hundreds of tales by countless authors all making great use of the age-old tree. Small wonder that we find writers of school yarns have followed suit.

My first copy of "Tom Brown's Schooldays" had a coloured illustration of Tom Brown and East imprisoned up a tree with a keeper and his dog mounting guard beneath. The theme of "Fifth Form at St. Dominics" centred round a fishing rod and in a lesser degree a cricket-bat which young Stephen bought from Cripps. How often has there been a handy branch near to the boundary wall to help the erring schoolboy to break bounds. Ivy on the walls near to the dormitory window. Elms behind which to have a surreptitious smoke. Yes, and the never failing hollow trunk - the obvious hiding place which no one even thought about - in the story, that is. Perhaps the one who is acclaimed as the best writer of school stories made most use of trees. Charles Hamilton or as he is better known - Frank Richards. His trees were unique. Any-one who has read his holiday yarns must have revelled in the description of the camps and bivouacs under the trees in perfect sylvan surroundings (and generally

perfect weather except the time when it had to rain, to suit the story.) Be it camp, hike, boat cruise or caravan tour you can have nothing better than Frank Richards' own interpretation of such joys. As you read you easily conjure up a wonderful picture of each camp. Doubtless the artist who illustrates the yarn does his bit but the author sets the scene. Maybe his descriptions of various cricket matches are open to criticism but who can find fault with the settings of those games. The shady trees which line the sun-lit ground, the pavilion - no, there is nothing wrong with that part of the story, whatever the game is like.

Many yarns of Frank Richards' come to mind when trees have been important. How many times has Bunter, lying hidden in the branches of a tree (now, that's a thought, could any tree hide Bunter's bulk?) overheard a certain conversation he should not or maybe seen something which he again should not have witnessed. There's the various trees behind which the current villain of the piece has lain in wait with his wooden cudgel ready to attack Mr. Quelch or Mr. Prout (sometimes it is the Head himself) and Vernon-Smith or Coker (or perhaps Wharton, it could have been Bob Cherry) arrives just in time to save them. Much use has Frank Richards made of trees but I think two special trees stand out above all others. Two wonderful trees, unique trees and both of them oak trees, dear old English oaks. The one on Popper's Island and the "Friars Oak" in Friardale Wood. Oaks live to an enormous age and with age they get to tremendous girth and have great spreading branches in proportion to their girth. The general idea is that the spread of their branches is identical with the growth of their roots. That more or less applies to all trees. A fact to be kept in mind as you read on.

Our native country is famous for its oaks, "hearts of oak are our ships" and a lot of its history and folk lore centres on oak trees. Boscobel oak hid King Charles II after the Battle of Worcester. In fact there are many places which owe their names to famous trees, oaks predominating. But the main feature of the oak is the enormous size. Such trees are these two trees of Frank Richards - unique above all others. The one on Popper's Island - near Courtfield in the County of Kent - the island in the River Sark which flows past Greyfriars School. So big was this oak that a thief of some kind hid for days in its branches with the majority of the Greyfriars Remove camping below. To my mind a marvellous feat considering all things - one of them that he was human.

Another later yarn revealed that the Popper's Island oak had a hollow trunk - I forget offhand who or what was hidden in this cavity. Later developments (another yarn this) brought to light a cave or underground room under the tree - you got to it by means of steps cut in the trunk or a rope ladder. It must have been a terrific size, this tree on Popper's Island. In the series of Popper Island Rebellion besides this sizeable oak tree the Remove had quite a few regulation size Bell tents and store tents. Taking all things into account, the size of tents, plus their ropes, the tree, the thirty odd Remove boys (and Bunter included), barb wire entanglements and what not, I always wonder how big Popper Island really is, how wide is the River Sark? Surely the applicable word here is "elastic" - in the case of island, tree and river.

Over to Friardale Wood - to the "Friars Oak". This has been the subject of some delightful and very plausible yarns by Frank Richards. But one in particular stands out in my mind. It was the story or series of stories when Ponsonby of Highcliffe discovered that this oak had a hollow trunk too and furthermore this was the entrance (and exit) to an underground passage which ended up - through a secret doorway - yes! in the Remove passage in Greyfriars School. That was a surprise. Needless to say, the delightful Pon made full use of his discovery, how he wrecked the

studies creating great confusion and internal strife at Greyfriars till one day Bunter (of course, it had to be the fat Owl) saw him disappear down the inside of the great oak tree in the wood. The story ends with Pon finding the Famous Five waiting for him when he arrives through the secret doorway into the Remove passage - and how Pon has to take a flogging from Mr. Quelch or else!!! An amusing yarn but as I read it all the while I was conjecturing on how Ponsonby did all his nefarious work in the time at his disposal. While the Remove were at lessons he had to get from Highcliffe School - the other side of the Sark and near to Courtfield - to Friardale Wood - as I make it easily four miles as the crow flies - to his dirty work and get back to Highcliffe. The timing as wonderful as the oak tree itself. But again very amusing - if you forgot facts. These yarns are just two which I cannot swallow.

As a direct contrast the story in Bunter Book No. 28 "Billy Bunter's Treasure Hunt" is a very reasonable one, in fact I think it about one of the best Frank Richards has written since the war. Anyway the most feasible. Briefly the story is this. Bunter discovers an old parchment giving the location of the long lost Greyfriars treasure hidden in the reign of King Henry VIII by one of the monks of the old monastery. Probably hard pressed for maintenance arrears the King was after the treasure. So Brother John (the monk) at the orders of Friar Anselmo hid the loot. The clue to the hiding place was this parchment - in Latin. Translated by the Famous Five, the treasure was said to be buried beneath a large oak tree. The puzzle was - which oak tree. One word in the script was undecipherable - a word of six letters. Anyway various oak trees in the vicinity of the school had narrow escapes - the one by Gosling's shed and the one in the Head's garden. Coker was in this as well as Bunter so there was plenty of fun going around. The six letter word "insula" was the stumbling block till one day Bob Cherry had to write the word two hundred times. That was it. "Insula," meaning island. So what island but Popper's and what oak tree but the one on the island in the Sark. Cutting the story short, they find the treasure chest but no treasure except but for one small gold coin which Bunter found and - then lost (he would). A good yarn though I wondered here why the Friars Oak was forgotten. Perhaps Joyce had cut it down (and so out of existence) or maybe it had been moved elsewhere. Landmarks did change their locality according to the plot of the story. Readers of Magnet stories will probably remember other yarns centring on trees but I think will admit that Popper Island oak and Friars oak are the most unique of them all.

* * * * *

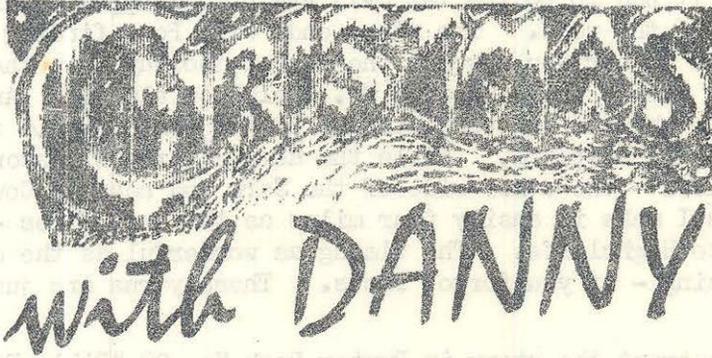
SOME CHRISTMAS LEES (continued from page 104)...

juniors had met a few days before, had been engaged to be married several years ago. Miss Halliday's parents had called the wedding off at the last minute and both parties were heart-broken. Every year since then Mr. Bruce had returned and had dined, alone, with his memories.

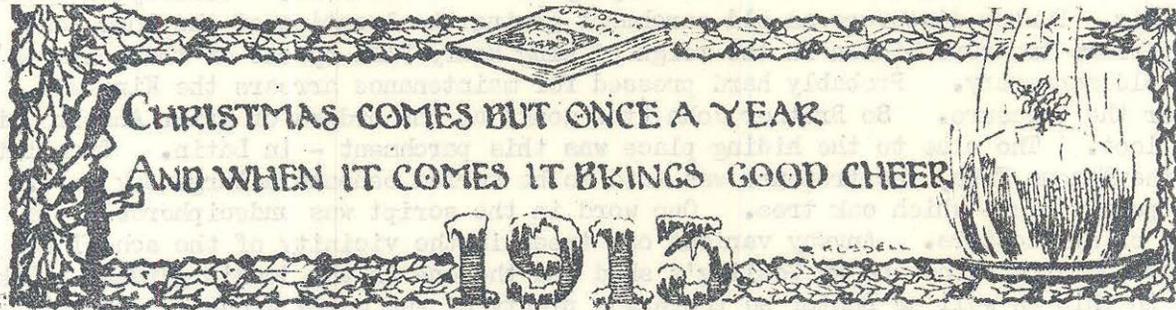
As usual Mr. Bruce turned up this Xmas to find the boys and girls there, Mr. Bruce thought Miss Halliday to be dead but, of course the girls knew otherwise. Some of them decided to invite Miss Halliday over to Dorrimore Castle for the holiday and to bring the pair together again.

Willy Handforth and William Napoleon Browne set off for London in order to fetch Miss Halliday. Willy tried to get Miss Halliday to go with Browne and himself but she politely refused to do so - for about the only time on record, Willy's tact had failed! Later that evening, however, Browne and Willy gave Miss Halliday a lift in Browne's car; once she was in the car, she was (continued on page 115)...

(Being
 excerpts
 from



DANNY'S
 DIARY
 for
 Xmas 1913)



Breaking-up at school took place on a Thursday morning, and it was the pleasantest day of the whole term. Even the masters seemed something like human beings. The school hall was decorated with holly and paper chains, and all the gas brackets were lit, so it all looked very artistic. We sang carols and people made speeches, and then they gave the prizes. I won a prize for General Endeavour.

It was a book called "Lorna Doone" by R. D. Blackmore, and it was marked 6/-. I would really have preferred to have the 6/-, and I was rather put off it because my form-master said it was the kind of book which does boys good. I don't often care for books which do boys good, but Mum was pleased that I won it.

The shops in the town have looked lovely this Christmas. At Crook's, the baker's, in the High Street, they have a huge model of the Houses of Parliament done in cake. It is covered with marzipan and icing, but it is not to be cut and sold till Christmas Eve. The price will be 1/- a pound.

Mr. Woolworth's new shop is blazing with colour, and it is full of nice gifts, all at 3d and 6d. I did some of my shopping there. The Penny Bazaar looks like a small fairyland. Two of the big stores have different Father Christmases, which I expect some small children find a bit puzzling.

This year we did not go away for Christmas, and I was rather glad, for I like Christmas at home, though a train journey is always exciting. Last year we all went to my grandmother's home in Essex, but this year it was the turn of my grandmother and Auntie Gwen to come to us. They didn't make up their mind till the last minute as my Gran is getting heavy with years, as they say in the Bible, but she decided to risk it. I knew she would. She always risks anything eventually.

The weather profits have promised a mild time, but I am hoping for the worst as I like the snow.

We decorated the house a few days before Christmas. The best paper chains - the penny and twopenny ones - went up in the drawing room, but Mum let me put up some of my home made paper chains in the dining room. We also put holly round the pictures on the walls, and we stood our Christmas cards on the piano and on the chiffonier and on the mantelpiece. I put a piece of mistletoe over Auntie Gwen's photograph which shows her smelling a rose and looking up to the sky, but Mum made me take it off as she says Auntie Gwen regards mistletoe with suspicion.

My brother Doug put some mistletoe on the light shade in the hall, and I thought this silly, as nobody sits in the hall to see it.

My grandmother and Auntie Gwen came on Wednesday, Christmas Eve. Dad and I met them in the early evening at Liverpool Street Station. We had to take another train from Charing Cross and then a tram to get us to our home. It was fearfully cold and very windy, and Gran kept talking about my poor bare knees. Of course I always have bare knees so I am used to the cold, but Gran is a thoughtful lady.

When we reached home the porch was lit up with little coloured glass lanterns, each one containing a nightlight. Doug has put them up specially for Christmas, and they look festive.

Mum had prepared a very nice supper, for she knew our guests would be hungry after their cold journey. During supper Mum suddenly remembered that she hadn't got any chestnuts. I think she uses them for stuffing of some sort, though I like to roast them on the bars of the fire. I said that I would go into the town and get some for her, but she was a bit dubious as it was getting late.

However, Doug was out, and Dad had to make a call at his club, so she let me go, giving me twopenny so that I could tram it in both directions. She warned me not to speak to anybody while I was out, and Gran said that I was a good, willing boy, and she had a little present for me when I got back.

So I went into the town again. It was well after half-past nine, and the streets were thick with shoppers. It was lovely to have a last look at the busy shops before Christmas, but I was sorry to think that the next time I saw them all the Christmas decorations would be taken down.

I went into the open-air market to buy the chestnuts. In front of the market a German band was playing carols, and it sounded very nice indeed. They were collecting money in tins.

In the market they were selling off huge turkeys at 5/- each and crowds of people were buying them. Everybody seemed so happy, and they kept saying "Merry Christmas" to one another.

Near the tram stop Mr. Papa (who runs an ice-cream barrow in the summer) was selling hot potatoes and hot roasted chestnuts from a special oven which he wheels about. It was all glowing hot, and I bought a halfpenny-worth of hot chestnuts and they warmed my fingers and were lovely to the taste.

It was quite late before I got home, for I dawdled round the shops before catching the tram back. The ladies serving in the Penny Bazaar looked very tired, but they were still kind and pleasant to everybody.

There was a huge crowd waiting for my tram, but everybody got on though dozens

had to stand. One man took up a great deal of room, for he had a great bunch of holly, and it was awkward to get too close to him. But it was fun.

SEASONABLE STORIES AND PICTURES FOR ALL.

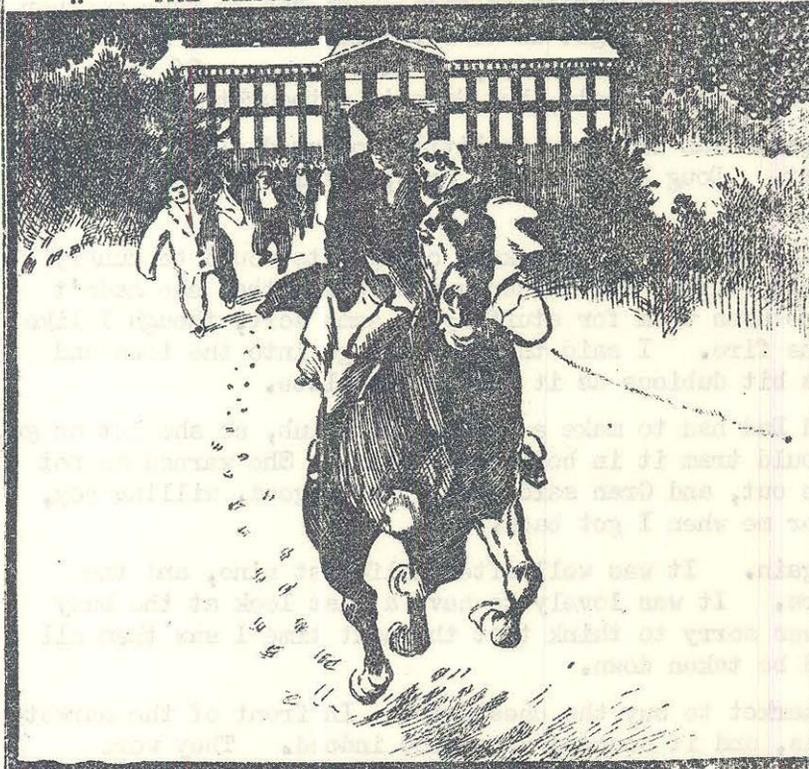
The Jester 2
MONSTER XMAS

No. 637.

SPECIAL NUMBER PRICE TWOPENCE

December 20, 1913.

THE RESCUE FROM THE MASKED BALL.



A SCENIC INCIDENT FROM THE GREAT NEW STORY APPEARING ON PAGE 111.

Mum said I must go straight to bed, but Gran remembered the little extra present she had promised me. It was the Christmas Double Number of the Jester, and she had seen it on the bookstall at Chelmsford, and had bought it for me.

Just before I went to bed, Doug came in. He looked a scream. It had evidently started to snow for his bowler hat was covered with white. I laughed out loud, for it looked just like a Christmas pudding. Doug is very self-conscious about his bowler hat, for it is the first one he has ever had. Mum gave it to him as a Christmas present.

Doug looked at me very disdainfully and said: "Mind you're a good boy this Christmas, Danny. Miss Bonestoril will be with us on Boxing Day."

Miss Bonestoril is Doug's friend, Freda. She is fearfully proud and pompous. I was rather upset about it.

I said: "I thought Christmas was a time when

we were supposed to enjoy ourselves."

Mum said: "Now, Danny, be a good lad. We're having Freda for dinner on Boxing Day."

I said: "I'm not going to be a cannibal for anybody."

I thought that rather good, and I heard Gran laughing as I went off to bed.

In my bed-room I hung up my pillow-case in readiness for the presents which Mum would bring in after I was asleep. Then I got into bed with my Christmas Double Number of the Jester.

The Jester is usually a penny paper, but the Double Number was tuppence. It

was a huge issue. On the front page was a full-page picture to illustrate one of the serials entitled "Springheel Jack." It was about a man who was gifted with wonderful leaping powers. In this instalment there was a fancy-dress ball, and Jack attended dressed as a highwayman. The story is by John Edward Fordwych, and it is illustrated by J. Louis Smyth who is a grand artist. Springheel Jack has a lady friend, and she is evidently a wonderful girl, for this is what the author said about her:

Dark, classic-featured and pale, she had seemed the model for the face of a Grecian goddess. And she possessed an additional attraction in the nature of her expression, which was certainly charming and captivating to a degree, due to the soulful, appealing, often faraway look in the depths of her large dark eyes.

Doreen of Dreams was the title which she had been christened long ago by friends. But in manner, in health, and in spirits she was just an ordinary girl. And her like in all respects is to be found in most girls of the British Isles and chiefly among those who work for a living.

All that sounded fearfully soppy to me. It didn't sound a bit like Doug's Freda.

There was the first instalment of a new serial called "Queen of Hearts", the story of Angela Royal, the champion of the poor and the oppressed. This looks very dramatic. The story I read on Christmas Eve, though, was "Hawkshaw's Christmas Case", a detective tale about a Christmas aeroplane crash. This was more in my line. Hawkshaw appears every week in the Jester.

There is a series of stories about Frank English, the East End Parson, and there is another series about a mysterious man called "The Red Domino". There is a serial called "Ex-Convict 60" about Hoppy Chivers, an ex-convict with a heart of gold. This looks rather an old-fashioned story, and it is illustrated by Arthur Clarke who used to draw for the Magnet. I shouldn't be surprised if it is an old story dug out for a second airing.

There were several complete stories, and one was called "Hunted Down" about an escaped convist. Another serial was "Five Years After", about an amazing rogue called Rufus Larson.

All the stories in the Jester seem to be about convicts with hearts of gold, wicked landlords, cruel mill-owners, and amazing crooks who do heroic deeds.

The funny pictures are good, and I like best P.C. Cuddlecook; Jessie Jolly, the General's daughter; and Peter Parsnips, the prize park-keeper.

After spending some time with my Jester, I turned out my light, and found it hard to get to sleep. But the next thing I knew it was Christmas morning, which was a Thursday though it didn't seem like any day in an ordinary week.

I had some lovely presents. Mum and Dad had given me a gramophone, which was too large to go in my pillow-case, so it stood on the table beside my bed. It was a fine instrument with a huge horn. There were some records, too, most of them comic ones. George Robey was singing "Archibald! Certainly not!" Billy Merson was singing "I Was Standing at the Corner of the Street". And George Graves was singing "A-be, my boy." There was also a ragtime record, with Gertie Gitana singing "Mr. Cupid, you're the cause of all the trouble".

I started playing a record, and then looked at my other presents. Gran had given me two suits of pyjamas, and I was delighted. I have always worn flannelette nightshirts till now, but I am going to like my pyjamas. Auntie Gwen gave me a pair of dark blue stockings with light blue turnover tops. I always know what I am going to get from Auntie Gwen.

Doug gave me two books. One was "The Coral Island" by R. M. Ballantyne, with a preface by Sir James Barrie. The other was "Buster Brown, the Fun Maker" by R. F. Outcault.

I was just looking at my books when Doug burst into my room, followed by Auntie Gwen. Doug just shut off my gramophone, glared at me, and went out. Auntie Gwen said she didn't want it to spoil my Christmas but she had lain awake all night, and I had woken her up just as she got to sleep. It didn't spoil my Christmas.

We went to church on Christmas morning, all except Mum who had to cook the Christmas dinner. Our maid, Jessie, has gone to her own home for Christmas. She lives at Bexleyheath.

But Gran, Dad, Auntie Gwen, Doug and I went to church, and it was a nice service of carols. I enjoyed it, and thought it well worth the penny I put in the plate.

It was snowing as we went home from church, but we had to walk as no trams were running on the line which goes fairly near to our home. I was a bit worried about Gran in the snow, but she was extensively covered so did not come to any harm.

We had a lovely dinner of turkey, with stuffing, and sprouts, and curly kale (I nearly wrote Curly Gibson), and baked potatoes. Dad carved the bird, and said it was the plumpest and most tender he had ever handled. But he always says that every year. The Christmas pudding, with Bird's custard and brandy, was like only Mum can make.

After dinner they had Camp Coffee. We always use Camp because they give away a flimsy serviette with each bottle. I had lemonade.

In the afternoon the family all sat round the fire and went to sleep, and I read some more of my Jester.

Tea was a lovely meal, which was rather a pity, for nobody felt hungry. However, we did our best, and Mum's cake was wonderful.

That evening I played my gramophone for a little while, and even Auntie Gwen was tapping her feet. We had some good games during the evening. We had two rounds of Happy Families, and then we played Proverbs followed by a very amusing game called Coffee Pot.

For supper we had cold turkey and ham, followed by hot mince pies. I felt kind of heavy as I walked upstairs to bed later on.

On Boxing Day, Doug went off to fetch Freda in the middle of the morning. We had to wait for them, though, and when she arrived she said she would have to go soon after dinner, as she was in great demand. Doug said, "Oh, Freda," but I thought it was very good news.

Over dinner I just put my foot in it. I am a dreadfully unlucky fellow. Freda kept on talking, and it was a job for me to get a word in. She told us all about the wonderful presents she had received for Christmas.

Then I put my foot in it.

I said: "How old are you, Freda?"

Freda gave a giggle and said: "Oh, you dreadful little boy! We don't ask people how old they are. It just isn't done."

Doug was very angry. He glared at me across the table.

He said: "Apologize to Miss Bonestoril at once, Danny."

I sat quite thunderstruck, and didn't know what to say, but Freda gave another ladylike giggle and said: "Don't scold the child, Douglas. I'm not ashamed of my age. It isn't till we get like your mother's age that we start feeling ashamed of ourselves."

It was a dreadful moment, really, though Freda giggled again. Gran went on eating her roast beef, and there was a funny little smile on her face.

Freda went on talking, and when we got to the Christmas pudding I slipped up again.

I said, meaning to be polite: "Freda, you often have a soulful, faraway look in the depths of your large dark eyes."

She smiled at me languidly and said: "Silly little boy. My eyes are sky blue."

I said: "They look pea green to me."

It just came out. I felt awful as soon as I had said it. There was a kind of dead silence, and then Freda got up and said she really must be going. She was very icy. She quite flounced out, and Doug charged after her. We heard the front door bang.

Dad said I had insulted Doug's guest, and I had better go to my room for the rest of the day. But Gran spoke up for me, and reminded them it was Christmas, so it all blew over.

When Doug came back, later on, he said: "Either that boy is sent away to boarding school - or I leave home."

But he had cheered up by tea-time, and we had a grand tea. There was Mum's big iced cake, and a lovely chocolate Christmas log, and lemon cheese tarts, and bonbons with hats in.

That evening we played games again. We started off with my game from the Christmas number of the Gem - "The Race to the Tuckshop". Then we played Lotto, with Doug as the caller-outer. We had oranges, apples, figs, grapes, musketels and almonds, and mixed nuts. I sampled the lot, though they all kept saying "Don't over-do it, Danny", and "You'll be ill, Danny."

Doug said "That boy has the appetite of a boa-constrictor", and I said "You're not doing so badly yourself," and Gran said "Part of the fun of Christmas is over-eating. Leave the boy alone."

Then we had a sing-song with Doug at the piano, and Dad sang "Roamin' in the Gloamin'", and Auntie Gwen sang about being only a bird in a gilded cage. Dad sang "Sweet Belle Mahone". He hasn't got much of a voice, but he filled the room with sound.

Then we played "Mrs. McGinty's Dead" which is a very funny game, and we followed it with a card game called "Counties of England". Then I said: "What about supper?"

For some reason they all looked at me in amazement, and Doug said "That boy must have worms." Auntie Gwen told Doug not to be coarse in her presence, but Gran said she was surprised at my eating so little, for when she was my age she ate twice as much.

We had supper by the light of big red candles, and it consisted of cold beef and ham, with home-made pickles, followed by hot mince pies. Dad had a glass of ale, but the rest had Epp's cocoa.

Then Mum said "Bed, Danny!" but I said: "It's only eleven o'clock - and it's Christmas."

And Gran said: "Go upstairs, Danny. Put on your new jammers and then come down and I'll tell you what Christmas was like when I was a child."

So I went upstairs and got into my new pyjamas, and then I went down and sat on a cushion in front of the fire, while the rest of them sat round in the chairs. The light was turned out, and as we sat in the glow of the fire Grand told us about Christmas long ago when Queen Victoria was on the throne. Gran used to love skating on a lake, and they had big parties in an old farm house with a big, wide fireplace where they had huge log fires. Before Christmas they used to go out and gather big logs and masses of holly. There was supposed to be a ghost in the farm house at Christmas time, and it was very creepy. It reminded me rather of Tom Merry & Co. at Eastwood House in "The Mystery of the Painted Room", which was this year's Christmas story in the Gem. I reckon that Gran exaggerated a bit, but it was soothing to listen to her voice as she told us about it.

Then I really had to go to bed, and Gran kissed me and asked me how I felt. I said I felt fine, but a bit rumbly.

Auntie Gwen was shocked at that, and said that young folk use disgusting expressions nowadays, but Gran said: "I think Danny sums it up very well, Gwen. I feel rumbly, too."

The next day, Saturday, I had a special treat. Mum took Gran and Auntie Gwen and me to a place called New Cross. It was cold, but not too bad, so Gran risked it. She is a tough lady.

We went by train to New Cross, which is a very busy town with nice shops and masses of people buying things. I was particularly interested in the very large trams which all have covered tops. We walked to the Broadway Theatre, where Mum had booked seats. We saw "Robinson Crusoe", and the Principal Boy was a girl called Esta Stella. My mother had seen Esta Stella before, and had wanted to see her again. She is a lovely girl, though a bit too ladylike to be a real Robinson Crusoe. But it was a ripping pantomime.

On Monday Gran and Auntie Gwen went back to Essex. Before we left the house to go with them to Liverpool Street station Gran gave me five shillings and Auntie Gwen gave me her umbrella to carry. When we finally said good-bye, Gran said she hoped we would all go to see her soon at her home at Layer Marney.

On New Year's Eve, Wednesday, Dad had booked seats for the whole family, Jessie as well, at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London. We saw "Puss in Boots", and the leading star was Violet Lorraine. I fell in love with her. It was a glorious show, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

It was getting on for midnight when we got back to the old home town, and there was a huge crowd of people at the Clock Tower. A German band was playing "Rule Britannia" and "Sons of the Sea", and everybody was singing.

As the clock struck twelve the church bells rang out loudly, and we could hear the steamers sounding their sirens on the river. People joined hands and danced round and round the Clock Tower, and the band played Auld Lang Syne. And some people threw streamers of paper, and let off crackers, and called out "Happy New Year".

It was starting to snow so we hurried homewards, laughing and happy. Nearly all the houses were brightly lit, and many parties were going on.

When we got indoors Mum kissed me good-night, and said "Happy New Year, Danny. It's 1914. Let us hope it will be a wonderful year for all of us, and that the best is yet to come."

1914. I wonder what it is going to bring in the Gem and the Magnet. I expect it will be grand. I have a feeling in my bones that it will be.

"Happy New Year, Mum and Dad and Doug. It's 1914. Happy New Year. Good night, everyone."

* * * * *

SOME CHRISTMAS LEES (continued from page 107)...

kidnapped and forced to agree to a plan whereby she caught a train to Buxton for Dorrimore Castle. On the way to Buxton, they met Lord Dorrimore, explained the situation and his lordship readily entered into the spirit of the plot.

On reaching Dorrimore Castle, Willy and Browne were forgiven by Miss Halliday, when she met Henry Bruce.

And so the curtain fell on the Christmas tales in the Old Series of the Nelson Lee.

And now, as I settle down to read a Christmas Lee, I hope that everybody will enjoy a Merry Christmas.

* * * * *

WANTED: Good loose copies or bound volumes containing any of the following:

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GEMS - Many issues between 400 and 500. Many issues between 800 and 879. Also Nos. 925, 935, 953, 954, 956, 975, 980, 984, 985, 989, 990, 992, 993, 998, 1129, 1150.

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By
Tom Hopperton

Drew's Big Draw

By
Tom Hopperton

Not many schools can boast of having been the sole support of a boys' weekly. Of those that can, Greyfriars, St. Jim's and St. Frank's have received constant attention. Calcroft, while admittedly not of the same stature, was popular enough to keep the MARVEL in direct competition with its more famous rivals, and it merits a larger share in our memories and affections than it appears to hold.

Sidney Drew's creation was in some respects unique. Certainly, only with Calcroft have I finished stories and then fallen to brooding over what the deuce they were really about.

This is not such a demerit as it may sound. Drew's school-story system can be reduced to three words - slapstick and slapdash! What there was of structure was so interlarded with and sometimes overlaid by gags, japes, stunts and wheezes that we can see at once one reason for Calcroft's comparative neglect.

Anyone now sampling Calcroft for the first time is almost sure to do so fresh from a monodiet of the Hamilton schools, with their careful characterisation and tidy plotting. The appetite having grown by what it fed upon, he is apt to grow restive under Drew's more free-and-easy treatment and abandon the effort. This is a pity, because once one gets the hang of the large and not too-well-distinguished cast Calcroft has an erratic charm all its own. It should be remembered, too, that it is unfair to compare the school with Greyfriars in the 'thirties: Calcroft flourished in 1917-19.

The nominal centre of the stories is the rivalry between the Fighting Four, Fane, Bindley, Manners and Pye, and the Terrible Three, Haik, Sargent and Reffel. It seems from this that Sidney Drew could take a hint, and that Frank Richards need feel no sense of obligation with his Calcroft school. Once in every four or five stories it leaked out that Fane's first name was Lionel. The parents of the others had inexcusably omitted to have them presented at the font, which must have been awkward when they wanted to summon their offspring, and certainly did nothing towards fastening the said offspring in the mind of the reader.

After such carelessness with the names, it comes as no surprise to find a paucity of personal detail about the characters. All I have ever been able to discover is that Fane was blond, Pye could sing, Reffel was a clever artist, and Bindley's trousers had the dual distinction of knees that "bagged like sausages" and fringes round the bottoms. The others remain a good deal more impenetrable than one of Frank Richards' mysteries. An "ordinary" character obviously needs careful delineation in details if it is not to remain a mere lay-figure, and constant repetition of those details to impress them on the reader. That is how four of the Famous Five were built up, but Drew, in his pursuit of situation comedy, either could not or would not bother with such minutiae.

Against this, once he got his teeth into a freak he lavished both names and attention on him. Even E.P. Lopes, who was only dragged into an occasional story so that his mania for riddles could spark off some gag or other, even Lopes was allowed "huge teeth and a perpetual grin like a box of dominoes," and we have a much clearer idea of the appearance of this casual oddity than we have of that of the heroes.

The favourite among the freaks was Nathaniel Wilberforce Welby Stott, a good-natured Skimpolish junior, tall, thin and begoggled, with an elevated turn of speech, who was only distracted by astronomy and bug-hunting from his beloved gardening. This was highly topical at the time. "Dig For Victory!" was in full swing and, as countless weary allotment holders eased their aching backs into their armchairs of an evening, their offspring would take up the MARVEL with a first-hand interest in Wilberforce's horticultural exploits. His eccentricity extended to his dress, with his before-the-times drainpipe trousers at half-mast and his huge hob-nailed boots, while any nip in the air found his intellectual skull jammed into a cap with ear-flaps - a breach of rule which would have drawn down the Olympian lightnings at any school but Calcroft.

Drew liked him so much that he later introduced his cousin and exact double, Waverley Ambrose Wilton Stott, who did his bug-hunting in water. This limnologist had not - alas! - the limpidity of soul that distinguished Wilberforce. The subject of unrepaid loans was only one of those on which Waverley could be both devious and crafty.

This feeling that if one freak was funny two must be simply unroarious extended to the fat boys, who, if not doubles, were sufficiently alike to be mistaken by the unwary. Blidger did little except eat and indulge his unpleasant habit of snorting. He was a pure bag of lard, but Bodder had muscle under his blubber and was a redoubtable fighting man with a devastating punch - which was discovered in the most disconcerting way by aggressors who unwittingly assailed him in mistake for his craven counterpart.

I am glad to report for the honour of Old England that in any pursuit of the nimble dollar Marmaduke Beilby would have run Fisher T. Fish to a standstill. Fishy had a few scruples, even if they had been knocked into his transatlantic conscience: Beilby had none. He bought cheap and sold dear, and if what he considered to be legitimate business was lagging, he was not above "knocking off and flogging" the odd tea-service or other transportable chattel.

The Fighting Four might just as well have been the Fighting Five, as their constant companion was Moshara Ashayo Onasaki, a Japanese and by far the most pugnacious junior of the lot. For some reason which might have been given at one time but was not repeated, he was nicknamed Chabbs. He had a special down on Beilby, who was continually flying from contemplated "ear-biffery and neck-coshery." Onasaki's Japanese was just about as convincing as Gan Waga's Eskimoese, and he was in the habit of writing notes of protest to his Housemaster which he subscribed: "I remain, moast Illustrious Pikroft, M.A., Your affeckchunut and respectful puple." The entrance examination must have been as easy-going as most other things at Calcroft.

Mrs. Keble's cat, like Mrs. Harris, led a shadowy and second-hand existence, useful only as a Bunterish excuse for missing pies. But Calcroft rejoiced - if that be the appropriate word! - in a truly phenomenal feline, a housekeeper's cat called Cornelius, a yellow villain of low morals and no principle, a high voltage vocalist of unexampled lung-power, an Ishmael with every man's hand (and foot) against him. He could smell meat or fish clear across the school, while the scent of a kipper brought his diabolism to its finest flower. Eating all his loot was impossible, and he particularly endeared himself to Mr. Pycroft by hiding such surplus as partially consumed raw rabbits in the Housemaster's bed. Cornelius played a much larger part in the stories than did Doctor Halcart, the Head, and if ever a moggy earned its keep he did.

Most of the Houses into which Calcroft was divided remained in the background. The more prominent boys belonged to that of Mr. Pycroft, the Senior Housemaster and Master of the Fourth Form. He was a much more human figure than Quelch and, even though Cornelius kept him on the verge of a nervous breakdown, a human one. Bending over for sixes did not figure much at Calcroft. The Head disliked caning and Pycroft, who was only dangerous when he smiled at his victim, favoured bizarre punishments which amused everyone except the recipient. He broke down occasionally, as when he told Beilby that he couldn't make him disgorge a Bradbury (Why does no-one ever talk about O'Briens?) in compensation for some damage, and then proceeded to wallop him until he "volunteered." More typical was the time Haik and Co. got wind of an impending study inspection and most artistically (Not too little! Not too much! as the shaving soap adverts put it) dirtied and untidied the already scruffy study of the Fighting Four. Reffel was artistic in the more usual sense, and he shed no tears when Pycroft ordered him to draw a placard, headed "The Pigsty," and ornamented with sketches of the Fighting Four and Chabbs as pigs, the punishment being that this was attached to the study door for an hour. It is difficult to judge his attainments as a schoolmaster. Sophocles, I fear, was not for Pycroft. He flicked off an occasional Latin tag - generally well-adorned with whiskers - but we know more of his golfing prowess than of his classical standing. In one respect he was a dismal failure. He frequently deplored the appalling slang used by his charges, but his disapprobation had no discernible effect. Only the Stotts spoke normal English, and an expensive Public School education was obviously wasted on the rest of the crew.

Town and gown mixed quite freely at Calcroft, where there was none of the staff seclusion which leads one to suppose that the Greyfriars Cloisters are not the only monastic institution to endure. It is difficult to conceive of Quelch or Manders or even Railton being a Justice of the Peace, but Pycroft was active in that office, so increasing the contacts with the town and bringing in humorous reinforcements of a type which could not possibly have been housed within the walls.

Calcroft Town, by the way, was on the River Calder, but don't jump to the conclusion that you know which county it must have been in. Calcroft was a seaport. It must have been a fearsome place in which to live, containing as it did more eccentrics to the square yard than any other recorded city. Two of Pycroft's fellow-magistrates were Mr. Josiah Bloomby, the fat Mayor, who was the school's fishmonger, and Alderman Whiffle, its skinny grocer. These two had a phobia about each other and seized on any audience from the Town Council to some casual cluster of Calcroft juniors to indulge a never-ending stream of lurid vituperation. Like this:

"I have news for you. The snake in the grass has at length been scotched. The writhing viper has been trampled on. Need I tell you his name? I mean Bloomby, the purveyor of stale haddocks and ancient shrimps! Ha! Ha! On Monday I shall crush him! Ker-rush him under my heel like the worm he is!" This arises out of Bloomby's servant having accidentally telephoned the fire brigade instead of the police during a typical Calcroftian fracas, an action that Whiffler describes as: "A crime, sir; a diabolical crime that might have jeopardised the lives of many of our citizens. A detestable crime, worth of such a capering whelk, sir! Had there been a fire at the other end of the town, human beings might have been roasted to death, and what would such a callous monster have cared?"

One citizen who should have appeared frequently before the beaks but never did, mainly because the Fighting Four kept diverting the "myrmidons of the law," was

ginger-headed Jeremiah Diles, professional rat-catcher to the nobility and dealer in canaries, goldfish, worms and such small deer. "A rascal but a merry one," Diles was also a poacher of amazing skill, which kept him in continual conflict with the owner of Calcroft Hall, Admiral Screwhammer, and the Admiral's tarry henchmen, Biffer and Cutter.

This trio read like a distillation for juvenile consumption of Smollett's Commander Hawser Trunnion and his ancient mariners, Hatchway and Pipes. The Admiral addressed his long-suffering servants along the general lines of: "Thunder and guns, you weevils! You're sacked! I'll give you twelve months and fifty thousand million lashes! You pirates, I'll keelhaul you! (In 1917, mark you!) You poaching villains, I'll murder you both!" before rushing at them with his gold-topped walking stick. This was supposed to have been going on for thirty years, and most people would have found it distinctly monotonous, but the salty pair bore with an easy indifference to both the threats and the correct use of the tenses in English these "heast winds, tornaders, 'urricanes and blizzards which bring tears to poor Jack." The Admiral was another J.P. and, if he ran true to form, no doubt dismayed Saturday's drunks each Monday by awarding them fourteen years hard labour.

There is no need to extend the list which is already long enough to show the great scope offered to both author and artist. The Editor was obviously happy with "Val" as this last, but one of the most contentious points about the MARVEL must be whether Reading's covers frightened off more customers than they attracted. The inside illustrations were ordinary enough, but once turned loose in the wider pastures of the cover Val developed a supreme contempt for the classical anatomical proportions, a trend which was magnified by that curious garment the Eton jacket. There was a general effect of long, lean, stork-like legs and narrow hips which flared out through a short body into normal shoulders. The Fighting Four were all in their late twenties, according to Val, and hard-bitten specimens at that. Whether or not Drew's taste for the grotesque had infected him, he reduced poor Wilberforce Stott to a twenty inch chest and nine inch thighs, besides giving him all the vacuity of a village idiot. Beilby looked like one of Cruikshank's studies in misery and crime, while the fat boys were repulsive red-nosed specimens of bloated vulgarity. Oddly enough, the drawings come in time to exert a grisly fascination even on the reluctant and - who knows? - perhaps the Editor was not the only one to become fond of them.

Nobility of soul was not a commodity hawked about much at Calcroft and if Tom Merry had wandered in and snapped, "You unmitigated cur!" I fear he would have raised not sympathy but eyebrows. There were none of the usual shady blackguards there, but an unrestrained atmosphere prevailed where other people's goods were appropriated with a more than Bunterish abandon. Even Beilby's larcenies roused little comment, except from the victims and his self-appointed castigator, Chabbs. Blurting out incriminating facts to masters was far from exceptional and not always inadvertent, and in the daily turmoil not all the other niceties were observed. The previously mentioned trick of "mucking-up" a rival's study to involve him with a master would at Greyfriars have been Skinner's prerogative and ruthlessly denounced: at Calcroft it was all in the day's work. Drew did pay lip-service to such school-boy conventions as the ban on sneaking, but it is obvious that his heart was not in his mouth. It was said of one noble lord that he would have his jest though he lost his friend, and Sidney was his spiritual descendant, begrudging the limitations that good form imposed on his boisterous japers. And they showed their heartiness in a rather strange way. Greyfriars always laughed in threes, "Ha! Ha! Ha!" Calcroft laughed in fours, "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" and for a real rib-tickler in fives and

even sixes.

The MARVEL at this time shared the general fate of being cut down by the paper shortage and even when promoted to cover-to-cover status, after a probationary period of double-harness with Arthur S. Hardy's Tom Sayers, Drew had only to fill sixteen pages. He had a remarkable facility in contriving farcical interludes - what a script-writer he would have made for Ben Turpin or the Keystone Cops! - but churning out 52 stories a year must have been a strain even on his inventiveness. The diversity of his freakish cast certainly helped him: he kept them in constant circulation, and as each one came to the centre of the stage an almost ready-made situation began to develop. It is often quite fascinating to see how skilfully he meshed these apparently disconnected items. They were not shovelled pellmell at the reader for there is always ample pre-corroboration and logical marshalling of the most unlikely incidents.

Nevertheless, the only real short-cut to comparative ease lay in the development of the series. The MARVEL is not the easiest of papers to lay hands on and my reading has been necessarily haphazard, but it seems clear enough that Drew did not take the short cut and that the most that can be found is an occasional tenuous linkage where one yarn suggested another. The MARVEL's reputation had been founded on Jack, Sam and Pete and whether the Editor was reluctant to chance the stronger drama inevitable under the series, or whether Drew just followed his (and the paper's) natural bent for inconsequential slapstick is now immaterial. Certainly, almost every week found the germs of plots that would have lasted E. S. Brooks or Frank Richards for months falling thick as..... I know what you think I'm going to say, but I'm not!

Kidnappers grew like blackberries round these fictional schools, and naturally gave strong plots. One of the genre who was unwary enough to wander into Greyfriars or St. Frank's was chewed until the last drop of juice was extracted. Drew was not so provident and, considering his deftness in blending his comical ingredients, one must wonder why he was content to make so little of sterner stuff.

There is a nine-page tale in No. 782 (18-1-1918), "A Calcroft Conspiracy," where one Sandways turns up in Calcroft Town from Acreswell Gaol and soliloquises thus about the widowed Countess of Braysworth: "I'll put the lash on you, my proud lady. I'll make you cry until your eyes are bloodshot and you have no tears left: I'll pay you for turning me out without a character and without a shilling in my pocket." His scheme for desiccating the Countess is to kidnap young Bimble - alias the Earl of Braysworth - from Calcroft and have him shanghaied by a Dutch skipper. I was most pleased to find Mynheer Van Huyper so hale and hearty, because he was a thundering good age: he was the werry identical article wot used to work for Jonathan Wild! The first half of the story builds up the kidnapping preparations, before we switch abruptly to more than two pages about Cornelius upsetting a pan of tar Wilberforce is melting on the Rag fire. Essentials and embroidery then march hand in hand until we reach the denouement in the final column. Sandways by mistake pounces on Bodder as he returns to the school in the dark, the muscular porker fells him with a fearful punch on the nose, and hand in hand they strode into the setting su.....No! That's wrong! Bodder bolts for safety and Sandways well, next morning the police found that "He had slunk out of Calcroft Town like the whipped cur he was." The End!

So there you have it. If you are looking for stark reality, Sidney Drew is not your man. If you have a taste for subtlety, he will blunt your palate. If you want photographic characterisation and intense dramatisation, Calcroft is not your school. But the MARVEL never got your 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d by false pretences. Plain on the cover for all to see was the description of the goods on offer: (continued on page 128)...

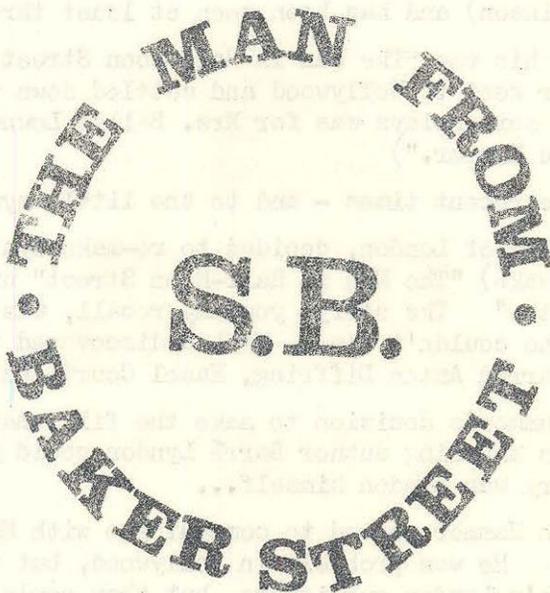
THE
TWELFTH
ANNUAL
FEATURE

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Compiled and
contributed by

MEMBERS OF
THE SEXTON BLAKE
CIRCLE

*
**



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"THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE AUTHOR"

By Brian Doyle

This is the mysterious story of a mystery. About an author of mystery stories. About, in fact ALFRED EDGAR, a name well-known to Sexton Blake fans.

First a word about Mr. Edgar and his work.

He originally worked as a clerk in an engineers' office at Queen Anne's Gate, near St. James's Park, London. Later, he decided to try his hand at freelance writing and wrote his first story for the "Union Jack" in 1921 (No. 925 "The Saracen's Ring"). He wrote several other Blake stories for "UJ" and "SBL", including one of the latter under the editorial name of 'Hylton Gregory', which was used by two or three other authors too. He was chief-sub-editor (with John W. Wheway) under F. Addington Symonds on "The Champion" in the early-1920's, and also wrote stories about Panther Grayle, detective, under another editorial name, that of 'Howard Steele' (which was also used by Symonds and Arthur Brooks, among others). In the early-1930's he became principal author on "Bullseye" and wrote many stories and serials for the paper, at one time turning out three different stories each week. He created the original "House of Thrills" serial, which was later revived in "Film Fun", as were other "Bullseye" serials. Among his others were "The Phantom of Cursitor Fields" and "Octavius Kay."

Edgar also probably created the popular detective, Jack Keen, whose adventures ran in "Film Fun" and "Kinema Comic". He was Editor of the "Nelson Lee Library" between 1928-30. Also wrote several hard-cover boys' adventure stories, including some with a background of motor-racing.

In the 1930's, he made a very successful name as a playwright. Under the name 'BARRÉ LYNDON' he wrote the long-running play "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse," which was produced at the Haymarket Theatre in London, transferred after many months to the Savoy, later ran on Broadway in New York, was made into a Hollywood film

(starring Edward G. Robinson) and has been seen at least three times on British TV.

Another success of his was "The Man in Half-Moon Street," also filmed in Hollywood. Edgar later went to Hollywood and settled down there to write scripts full-time. One of his screenplays was for Mrs. Belloc Lowndes' "The Lodger" (based on the story of "Jack the Ripper.")

Now to come to more recent times - and to the little mystery.

In 1959, Hammer Films of London, decided to re-make Lyndon's (we'll call him that for convenience's sake) "The Man in Half-Moon Street" under the new title "The Man Who Could Cheat Death." The story, you may recall, was about a man who was a multiple murderer and who couldn't die. He had discovered the secret of perpetual life. The new film starred Anton Diffring, Hazel Court and Christopher Lee.

It was following Hammer's decision to make the film that the mystery began. A mystery as baffling as anything author Barré Lyndon could have thought up. And the centre of the mystery was Lyndon himself...

It all started when Hammer wanted to communicate with Mr. Lyndon, but didn't know where to find him. He was probably in Hollywood, but they had no address. They checked with Lyndon's London publishers, but they could give no information. They hadn't heard from the author for a long time. They promised, however, to make enquiries.

Next day, a representative of the firm told Hammer that, according to their records, Lyndon had been killed some months previously in a car crash in California. Were they sure? Well, their records could hardly be wrong in such a matter. Still, if Hammer wanted further verification they could contact Lyndon's literary agents...

The news rocked the literary agents back on their heels. True, it was some time since they had last heard from Lyndon, but surely, they said, they would have known if anything serious had happened to him! They would get in touch with the publishers at once. There must be some misunderstanding. But the publishers merely confirmed the information they had already given Hammer.

By this time the literary agents were thoroughly alarmed. That a client, a famous author, could have passed on to 'that other bourne' without their knowledge was simply unbelievable. It was a mystery that had them baffled.

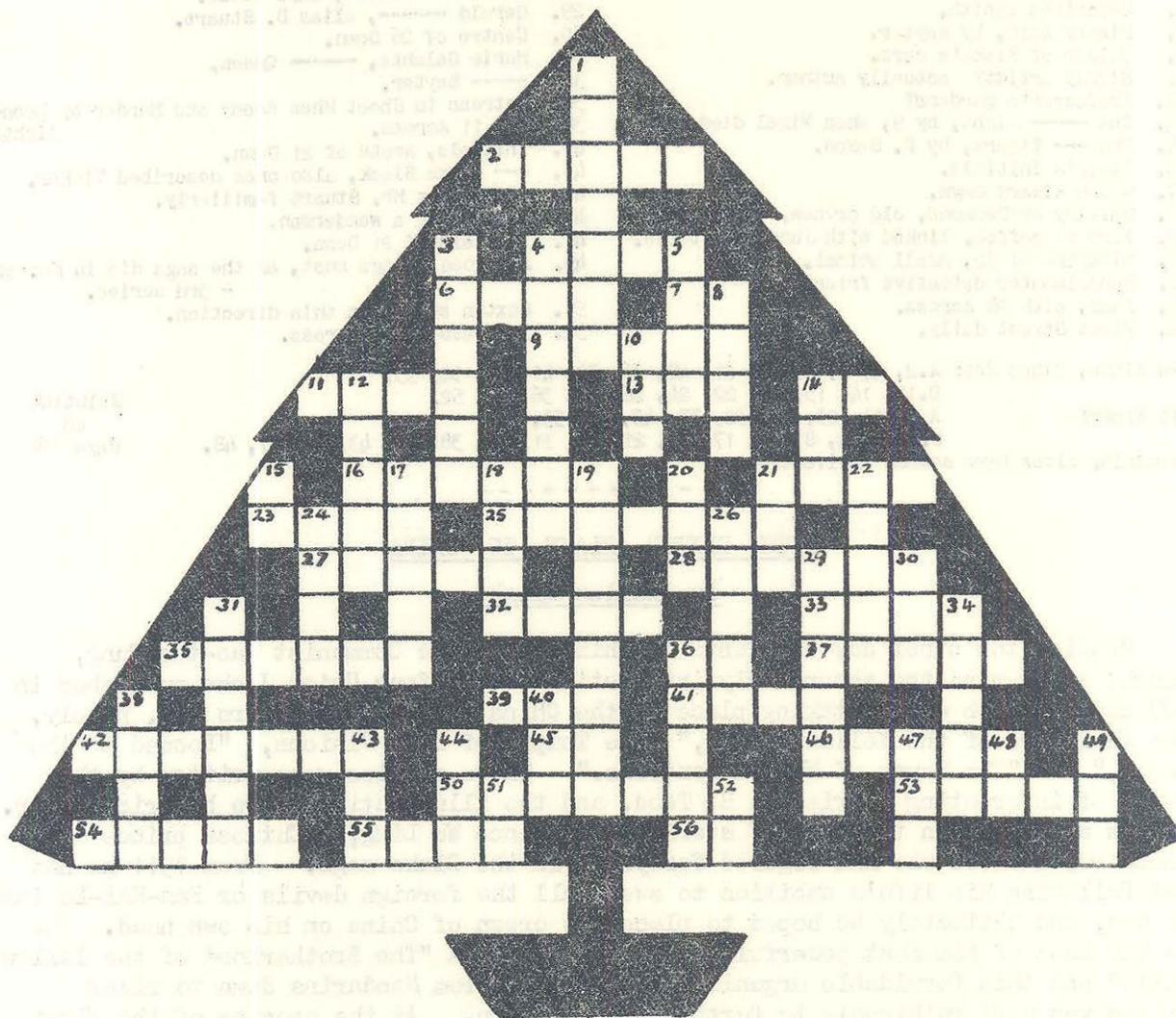
At this, Hammer, who had by now finished "The Man Who Could Cheat Death" and were making the Sherlock Holmes film, "The Hound of the Baskervilles," suggested that maybe they should call in the professional services of the Baker Street sage.

The literary agents found the suggestion quaint, laughed politely, but said they would prefer to conduct their own investigations through their Hollywood representatives.

(In case any reader, at this point, is saying to himself: "But surely they would have had to contact the author before making the film, in order to sort out rights, payments, etc.," it should perhaps be mentioned that Hammer made the film for Paramount in America, who already owned sole film rights. The company wished to contact the author purely on a personal matter connected with publicity.)

Time passed. Then one morning, the literary agents flashed a signal to Hammer that Lyndon had been found. Yes, he was still in Hollywood. And very much alive. Moreover, he had sent a message to say his London friends could safely discard their mourning. Like the man in Half-Moon Street, he was indestructible, he quipped.

(continued on page 128).....



SEXTON BLAKE'S CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

Compiled by Rex Dolphin

ACROSS

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2. Writes Around & About | 32. Dolland, small dagger. |
| 4. Blake's breathless brunette. | 33. Blake artist Parker. |
| 6. Kestrel. | 35. Chief Detective Inspector. |
| 7. Initials, Blake author/crossword compiler. | 36. I'm actually in 26 and 30 Down. |
| 9. Leading author, famous street. | 37. Blake's old enemy, a poet? |
| 11. Twice this & 38 = bird of paradise. | 39. Addressing 18 Down familiarly. |
| 13. The Evil ---, by Martin Thomas. | 41. Follows Mac for Arthur. |
| 14. The man's initials. | 42. She "does" for Blake. |
| 16. Shared by Coutts & Plummer. | 45. Now more usually M.I. 5. |
| 21. The --- Tiger, also --- story. | 46. --- Harrison. |
| 23. Mr. Purvale's initials, scrambled. | 50. Mark ----- |
| 25. Craille or Cavendish, new or old. | 53. ----- Blair. |
| 27. Jap servant of 3 Down. | 54. Peter ----- |
| 28. Jack, with 22 Down. | 55. Blonde secretary from Copenhagen? |
| | 56. Wo is he, by Reid Whitley. |

DOWN

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Tinker's girl-friend, heaven? | 26. Blake's business, says title. |
| 3. Describes Zenith. | 29. Gerald -----, alias D. Stuart. |
| 4. Mighty Zulu, by Hayter. | 30. Centre of 26 Down. |
| 5. Colour of Blake's cars. | 31. Marie Galante, ----- Queen. |
| 8. Sidney artist? actually author. | 34. ----- Hayter. |
| 10. Professor's gardens? | 36. Actress in Shoot When Ready and Murder by Moon- |
| 12. The ----- Night, by 9, when Nigel died. | 38. See 11 Across. light. |
| 14. The --- Tigers, by P. Saxon. | 40. Initials, wrote of 21 Down. |
| 15. Stagg's initials. | 43. --- broke Black, also once described Tinker. |
| 17. Welsh wizard Gwyn. | 44. Addressing Mr. Stuart familiarly. |
| 18. Whitley or Desmond, old or new. | 47. Add do for a wonderman. |
| 19. Form of coffee, linked with Jungle in title. | 48. Initials of 21 Down. |
| 20. Nickname of 32, small animal. | 49. All good things must, as the saga did in No. 526 |
| 21. Schoolmaster detective friend. | - 3rd series. |
| 22. Jack, with 28 Across. | 51. Sexton starts in this direction. |
| 24. Fleet Street daily. | 52. Initials of 46 Across. |

New Blake, Clues Nos: A.2, 4, 7, 9, 13, 21, 28, 36, 39, 41, 46, 54, 55.

D.12, 14, 15, 19, 22, 24, 26, 30, 36, 49, 52.

Old Blake:

A.6, 11, 23, 27, 32, 37, 45, 50, 53, 56.

D.1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 17, 20, 21, 29, 31, 34, 38, 40, 43, 44, 47, 48.

Remaining clues have common application.

Solution
on
Page 146

WITH SEXTON BLAKE IN CHINA

By Charles Wright

Reading the other day of events in China under the Communist Mao-tse-Tung, brought to my mind the absorbingly interesting set of four Union Jacks published in 1927 dealing with events taking place in the China of nearly 40 years ago, namely, "The Adventure of the Yellow Beetle," "The Temple of Many Visions," "Doomed to the Dragon," and "The House of Wooden Lanterns." These stories were written by that master of interesting stories G. H. Teed, and the illustrations were by Eric Parker. Blake's adversary in this set of stories was Prince Wu Ling, a Chinese prince of Manchu royal blood who had figured for years in the Blake saga. From 1911 he had been following his life's ambition to sweep all the foreign devils or Fan-Kai-Lo into the sea, and ultimately be hoped to place the crown of China on his own head. He was the head of the most powerful "Tong" in all China "The Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle" and this formidable organisation composed from Mandarins down to river coolies was used ruthlessly to further his ambition. At the opening of the first story, the rebel Cantonese army backed up by the Bolsheviks were according to Wu Ling, in supreme power from Canton in the far south to the distant borders of Shensi. They were astride the Yangtse river and their line stretched unbroken from Wenchow to the Great Wall beyond Shensi, and already Hangkow, one of the strongholds had fallen.

Wu Ling is presiding over the inner council of the Tong and issuing instructions for the next step in the campaign and at this point Sexton Blake enters the picture. Having just completed a case in China he and Tinker are preparing to return to England when he is approached by Sir Gordon Saddler, known throughout China as Hsui-fsi although not more than half a dozen people knew that he was an Englishman. In his youth he had brought down the wrath of the old Empress on his head for running off with a young Chinese princess. His marriage only lasted a year, as she died with her baby and Sir Gordon took a Chinese name and decided to stay and work behind the scenes for the good of his country. Now at the age of over 80 he had become so orientalised that he looked and walked like a Chinaman and was accepted as such. He even indulged in the opium habit, but he had been and still was of invaluable assistance to his country. He persuaded Sexton Blake to assist his country by

taking up arms against his old enemy Prince Wu Ling.

Now Wu Ling had issued instructions to the inner council to start a whispering campaign through all the branches of the Tong which in a week or so would spread throughout China that on 23rd May, 1927 the moon would eat the sun according to an old prophecy of the ancient astronomers. According to the age old legend, the moon waged eternal war with the sun. The sun was supposed to be the symbol of the Foreign Devils and the moon was the sacred moon of China, and 400 years ago there had been a partial eclipse of the sun and the priests gave it out that the moon was slowly winning the age-old battle and foretold that in 400 years time on the date stated there would be a total eclipse. In other words, the moon would eat the sun and forty million fanatics would be in a ferment and would irresistibly sweep all foreigners into the sea. Wu Ling had decided to utilise this event for his own ends. Sir Gordon Saddler, however, had heard a whisper many years ago that the ancient Chinese astronomers were exactly a year out in their calculations and had recently contacted Western astronomers who confirmed this. There was only one way to make absolutely sure and that was to consult the ancient tome in which the calculations were, but that volume reposed in the Temple of Many Visions and to do this was the formidable task set for Blake and Tinker. Blake's first objective was to reach Hangkow via the River Yangtse past the Nationalist army and also Wu Ling's myriads of spies. Wu Ling had already been informed by a girl spy that Sexton Blake had been in deep consultation with Sir Gordon in the Willow Pattern tea house, and as he hadn't known that Blake was in China, he decided to capture him and Tinker if possible, as he guessed that they would interfere with his plans. Blake and Sir Gordon knew that if the Chinese calculations were correct everything was lost, but if, on the other hand, the prophecy was wrong and the eclipse did not take place, millions would be disappointed and Wu Ling would lose face and a lot of his influence.

Blake's first objective towards the Temple of Many Visions was to reach Hangkow by river, and to do this he had to obtain the help of a notorious river pirate, one Kan Tse Wen known as the terror of the Yangtse. He was a known enemy of Wu Ling and what was as important he was a member of the Four Lakes Tong of which society Sexton Blake was a blood brother. After some trouble Blake and Tinker succeeded in getting an interview with Kan Tse Wen who agreed to help Blake as far as he could. They had many hair-raising adventures, including a narrow escape from death from a deadly yellow beetle which was one of Wu Ling's pleasant ways of disposing of enemies. Eventually, Wu Ling managed to capture Tinker and he was only rescued by Blake, with Kan Tse Wen's help. Boarding Wu Ling's yacht, Blake penetrated to the inner compartments, and threatened the lives of Wu Ling's wife and son by means of a yellow beetle. Wu Ling knew that if they had been in London, Blake would never carry out such a threat, but here in strife-torn China with so much at stake, Blake's look told him he wasn't bluffing so he released Tinker, and Blake also compelled Wu Ling to write a safe conduct as far as Hangkow, which enabled them to continue the rest of their way up the Yangtse in comparative safety.

"The Temple of Many Visions" opened with the most formidable part of Blake's task ahead. How to get to the Temple which was on an island? How to find the precious volume if they did? These thoughts were racing through Blake's mind as he and Tinker, disguised as pilgrims, sat outside a cave in a dreary waste, eating rice cake! For three nights they had inhabited the cave. Blake knew - none better - that if the ancient Chinese astronomers were right nothing could stop the vast wave of millions of superstitious Chinese from driving all foreignness from China, but if they were wrong and Blake could get the news through to Sir Gordon Saddler before the day prophesied, then Wu Ling's plans could be put at nought.

Later on the third day, they saw three Buddhist Monks picking their way over the stones, and then Blake noticed certain things about them which convinced him that they were not genuine monks, and he surmised that three men in disguise in this wilderness spelt only one thing, that they were emissaries of Prince Wu Ling, who had heard by now of the supposed miscalculation and was after confirmation the same as Sexton Blake. Blake told Tinker to hide behind a rock and then he laid down and started groaning, and as the three men came near to see what was the matter they were speedily knocked out cold by Blake and Tinker. In a body-belt on one of them Blake found on rice paper implicit instructions for getting to the Temple and also a long letter from Prince Wu Ling to the venerable prior, and last but not least two magnificent rose-diamonds as a present for the Temple. The two detectives imprisoned the pseudo monks in the cave leaving them enough water and rice cake for four or five days and then the pair set off. They arrived eventually in sight of the island and were rowed across to it by a blind and dumb Chinaman who was apparently looked after by the monks. They were allowed to land and entered the Temple. After being given some food they were locked in a cell, but not before Blake had dropped the diamonds into the alms box. An ascetic monk took their letter but it was not until the middle of the next day that Blake was taken to an apartment that made him gasp. The stone walls were entirely covered with plates of gold and the floor was covered with rugs that would have brought fabulous prices in London. A long line of braziers hung from the roof and at one end was a raised dais and a throne-like chair carved in jade on which sat a venerable figure, reputed to be in the region of a hundred and forty years of age. After asking Sexton Blake many questions and mentioning that they had found the magnificent gift of the diamonds in the alms box, the venerable prior astounded Blake by saying in English, "Thou hast deceived me. Thou art no monk but a man from the West. Return to thy cell while thy fate shall be decided." So back into the cell with Tinker went Blake. The next day they were released from their cell and handed over to the sub-prior. "Sit down Mr. Sexton Blake, and you, too, young man" he said. He then proceeded to tell them of their activities over the last week or so, including their imprisoning of the pseudo monks in the cave, which information astounded and dumbfounded Blake. They were told that if the prior decided against them they would have to stay in the Temple of Many Visions, but if his decision was favourable, they would be given the answer they sought and sent on their way. He then proceeded to show them many marvels contained in the Temple including a large green jade table, which showed pictures of the teeming life on the Yangtse river. They saw Sir Gordon Saddler in the Willow Pattern tea house and as Blake said to Tinker afterwards, "He could probably have shown us London and Paris as well. What we have seen is probably a form of television at its highest peak." (Not a bad forecast for 1927!) They were then locked up again until dawn of the next day, when they were released and escorted to the strip of beach where the boat was waiting. Blake was handed a piece of paper and told never to return again, nor to release the prisoners in the cave, as the monks would attend to it. When they reached the mainland Blake read the piece of paper and turned to Tinker and said: "We have won this trick. It says here 'The total eclipse of the sun will not take place for another year.' The old Chinese calculation contains an error." After more adventures, they succeeded in getting the news through to Sir Gordon in Shanghai and on the day of the supposed eclipse, millions of celestials gazed in dumb chagrin at the heavens from which the moon had disappeared and a blazing sun shone. Meanwhile far up the Yangtse-Kiang river Prince Wu Ling swore vengeance on Sexton Blake.

The third of the series "Doomed to the Dragon" concerned a minor earthquake that had taken place at Shensi and the Bishop had informed Wu Ling that underground boiling springs had been disturbed among the marshes and a hot lake had formed and a

monster had been thrown up which was akin to the fabled dragon of China. It had been prophesied centuries before by the Great Buddha that this would eventually happen and Wu Ling knew that if this news was true it would mean a colossal upsurge of religious fervour, which he could turn to his own ends. So he immediately decided to go to Samsi himself, although the Che-Pen had assured him that he had actually seen this monster with his own eyes. Sexton Blake and Sir Gordon Saddler had also heard of the monster which they agreed was probably some sort of dinosaur thrown up from the bowels of the earth during the late earthquake and Sir Gordon told Blake that it must somehow be killed as Wu Ling could turn China upside down with such a powerful weapon. Sexton Blake was not very enthusiastic about it, thinking that it was high time to return to England.

They returned to their hotel and while Blake was busy with his correspondence, Tinker decided to have a stroll round and seeing the Kowloon ferry about to start he jumped aboard and arriving at the other side he strolled through street after street. Suddenly a young Eurasian girl ran out of one of the houses in great distress and asked Tinker to help her as she thought her father was very ill. Tinker entered the house and was knocked on the head, bound and gagged, and was taken to a sampan and dumped on board. The vessel immediately made for Samsi. Tinker had been recognised by one of Wu Ling's spies who knew that he was in for a large reward if he could deliver either Blake or Tinker to Wu Ling. After lots of adventures, one where Tinker escaped but was recaptured, he was eventually delivered to Wu Ling who told him that he would be doomed to the dragon and that he would prove a tasty morsel. Blake meanwhile, has found that Tinker had disappeared, but could find no clue until he found a riverside worker who had seen a white man bound and dumped into a sampan. Enlisting the aid of a friend of Sir Gordon's, a Dr. Sen-Wee-Foo who lent him one of his trusted servants who knew the island well, they set off for Samsi as Blake guessed that that was where Tinker had been taken. They eventually arrived and penetrating to the interior of the island they saw Tinker lashed to a stake on a tiny atoll that had been thrown up, and rising from the boiling water in the lake a ferocious monster who certainly bore some resemblance to a dragon. Sexton Blake shot it through the eye and killed it and rescued Tinker, and seeing Prince Wu Ling he raised his rifle and shot him in the chest, but the heavy metal insignia of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle which he wore on his breast saved his life.

The last story in the series, "The House of Wooden Lanterns" concerned Sir Gordon Saddler and Sexton Blake against Wu Ling and Borovkin, a Russian agent, whose aim was to Bolshevise China, and Wu Ling helped him because he thought that when all was over he could ditch Borovkin and assume total power. Borovkin was also chief of the Kuomington which was also affiliated to the Yellow Beetle Tong the most powerful Tong in all China. The secret meetings of the inner council were held in The House of Wooden Lanterns. It had a most unsavoury reputation even among the evil inhabitants of the quarter of Canton in which it was situated. It was run by a strong arm man known as the Yellow Cat. Blake once again enlisted the aid of the river pirate Kan-Tse-Wen, the Terror of the Yangtse, and perfectly disguised as his brother he took over The House of Wooden Lanterns from the Yellow Cat who had been persuaded to sell out. Blake took the name of Kan-Ti-Wu, and let it become known that he was brother to the dreaded Terror of the Yangtse. He was thus able to listen to the inner councils of Wu Ling by the aid of microphones and passed the information on to Sir Gordon Saddler. Meanwhile General Chen was all ready for a great drive on Shanghai and was only waiting for orders from Wu Ling or Borovkin. All the foreign powers were trying to get treaties signed, but were being side-stepped

by various excuses in the hope that Wu Ling and Borovkin would be successful in their schemes for driving out the foreign devils. Wu Ling became suspicious at the betrayal of his schemes being hatched in the House of Wooden Lanterns and found out that Sexton Blake was responsible, and after lots of intrigue and adventure Blake and Tinker finally succeeded in making prisoners of Wu Ling and Borovkin and eventually forced them to sign orders for the refutation of all their schemes. Orders were also given to General Chen to call off the drive on Shanghai, much to his astonishment and disgust, as he had visions of enormous booty. In the face of this collapse the government was practically forced to sign the foreign treaties and Blake made sure that Borovkin and Wu Ling did not slip away until he was satisfied that what they had signed must endure. Blake and Tinker had served their country faithfully.

I wonder what Sir Gordon, Prince Wu Ling, and Sexton Blake would think of the China of 1963!

* * * * *

DREW'S BIG DRAW (continued from page 120)...

"A Rollicking Yarn of the Fighting Four!" Rollicking, roistering and rumbustious they still remain. Sidney Drew's laudable intention was to tickle your funny-bone, and, though forty years have gone by, he can probably still do just that.

* * * * *

"THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE AUTHOR" (continued from page 122)...

So now it was the turn of Lyndon's publishers to be baffled. How did they come to record him as deceased? Where did their information come from? And who got hold of the story of the car crash in which the author was supposed to have perished?

Maybe Sherlock Holmes should have been called in...

"Very mysterious, my dear Watson. I think this is certainly a three-pipe case. You must write it up in your Journal as 'The Case of the Indestructible Author.'

"Now pass me my tobacco, my dear chap. You'll find it in the Persian Slipper..."

(Footnote: As far as I can discover, Barré Lyndon - or Alfred Edgar, if you prefer it - is still very much alive and kicking in Hollywood, writing scripts chiefly for TV these days. It is thought that he was responsible for a recent episode in "The Defenders" series on BBC TV. I'm currently trying to contact him myself and, if he comes up with any interesting data on his old Blake days in London, I'll certainly let readers know.)

* * * * *

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Nelson Lees, Gems, Magnets, S.O.Ls., Modern Boys, C. Digests, very early Hobbies, Boys Annual 1925-30.

WANTED: Old Series Lees, 105, 130, 137, 138, 140, 142, 144, 237, 357 - 388 - 520.

McPHERSON, 1 ST. JOHN STREET, WELLS, SOMERSET.



Jack Blake of St. JIM'S

By CHARLES HAMILTON.

It is 57 years ago since Charles Hamilton created the first of the three schools which were to make him world-famous. It was 57 years ago, on November 10th, 1906, that his very first St. Jim's story appeared. It was entitled "JACK BLAKE OF ST. JIM'S."

It was a very different St. Jim's from the school which you and I joined years later. Tom Merry was not there, Arthur Augustus was not there, Mr. Railton was not there. Jack Blake was the hero of the stories, and Charles Hamilton was to write twelve of them. The St. Jim's stories of Jack Blake appeared in PLUCK, initially at intervals of a fortnight, and later at intervals of three weeks.

But before the end of March 1907 Tom Merry had put in an appearance at a school called Clavering in a paper called the Gem. A few months later, St. Jim's was to absorb Clavering, and Tom Merry was to become the hero of St. Jim's for all time.

By October 1912, a paper called The Penny Popular was reprinting the early Tom Merry stories from the paper called the Gem. In early 1913, one or two of the St. Jim's stories from PLUCK were included in the St. Jim's series in the paper called The Penny Popular. It seemed an odd thing for the editor to do when he had so many St. Jim's stories, with Tom Merry, on tap for reprinting from the Gem. Just why it was done, we do not know. We never shall know.

During the blue cover years of the paper called the Gem, most of the other St. Jim's stories in PLUCK were reprinted, but these were actually re-written, introducing Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. Once again, just why it was done, we do not know, and we never shall know. It seems probable that they were really stop-gaps. Did Charles Hamilton re-write these stories himself? Quite likely. Is it more likely that they were re-written by Charles Hamilton's brother-in-law, Mr. Harrison, who, according to report, did work to help his wife's brother? Maybe it is.

But to return to JACK BLAKE OF ST. JIM'S. This very first story of St. Jim's is very rare - far more rare than "Tom Merry's Schooldays," the first Tom Merry story in the paper called the Gem - far more rare than "The Making of Harry Wharton," the first story in a paper called the Magnet.

To the best of my knowledge, JACK BLAKE OF ST. JIM'S was never reprinted. It is certain that very few readers of Collectors' Digest have ever read that first

story of St. Jim's which appeared in PLUCK, over 57 years ago.

It is a modest little story. Certainly the writer had no idea that his new creation, St. Jim's, would become one of the best-loved schools in fiction. He had created other schools in his writing life-time up till now, and none of them had lasted very long. If anyone had suggested to him that he would still be writing of St. Jim's after two world wars, after thrones had toppled, after everything had changed, he would have smiled gently and thought the idea fantastic.

The story of Jack Blake's arrival seems hackneyed to-day. Plenty of new boys in fiction were to arrive at schools in similar circumstances. Yet, even in this early story, the readability is there - the gift which was to make Charles Hamilton into the world's greatest writer of school stories. There is, perhaps, no sign of genius in this pleasant little pot-boiler - but somewhere there must be the promise of what was to come. Like Aladdin's shabby old lamp, it contains magic. Just a polish - and then ---

So, because we think it likely that you have never read - never even seen - the first of Charles Hamilton's St. Jim's stories, we are reproducing for you the opening chapters of the story, just as they appeared in PLUCK in 1906.

JACK BLAKE OF ST. JIM'S was illustrated by Leonard Shields, who, years later, was to become famous for his work in the paper called the Magnet.

CHAPTER ONE

Jack Blake stopped at the big, bronze gates, and looked within.

"This must be the place," he said to himself.

It seemed superfluous to ring, as the gates stood half open. He stood looking in at the grey mass of the school buildings, the old elms, and the wide quadrangle, in which a dozen boys were punting about a football.

A fine lad he looked as he stood there. Well-made, rather tall for his age - which was between fourteen and fifteen - clean-limbed, and clear-eyed; a face, if not exactly handsome, pleasant and frank, and good to look upon.

He did not stand there for many seconds unnoticed. Three boys of about his own age were looking on at the punt-about, and, for some reason of their own, hooting at the young gentlemen engaged with the football; but as soon as they spotted the stranger at the gate they transferred their attentions to him.

"Hallo!" said one of them, a fair-complexioned youth, half a head taller than Blake, and somewhat lanky in form. "Who are you, young shaver?"

This was rather cool, as the speaker

was certainly not more than a month or two older than the person addressed.

"My name's Blake - Jack Blake."

"How interesting!" said the tall youth, looking at his companions. "His name's Blake - Jack Blake!"

"I've got it, Figgins!" said one of them, a short, thick-set boy with a fat face. "Blake - Jack Blake."

"Charming name!" chimed in the third, a freckled youth, with red hair. "How are you, Mr. Blake - Jack Blake?"

The new boy reddened.

"Will you tell me if this is St. James's College?" he asked.

The three youths gasped.

"Is it what?"

"St. James's College. You see, " explained Blake, "it was a fine afternoon, so I walked from the station ---"

"Exactly! And you are looking for St. James's College?"

"Yes."

"Keep straight on up the road," said Figgins. "Turn to the right when you reach the cross-roads, and then bear to the left, cross the stile, and you're there."

Blake was no fool, and he had more

than a suspicion that the lanky youth was "rotting."

"I had an idea that this was St. James's College," he said.

"Quite a mistake," said the fat boy. "This is St. Jim's, and we've never heard of St. James's College, have we, Figgins?"

"Certainly not!" replied Figgins. "The young shaver's come to the wrong shop."

"Well," said Blake coolly, "I shouldn't be surprised to find that I've run into a lunatic asylum by mistake. It looks like it."

Figgins gave a sickly smile.

"None of your cheek, Blake - Jack Blake!" he said, wagging a long, thin forefinger at the new boy. "Stand where you are till we're satisfied about you. He looks an awful bounder, doesn't he, Wynn?"

"He does," said the fat boy. "Shocking, ain't he, Kerr?"

"A regular tramp!" said the freckled youth, nodding his head solemnly.

"Oh, rats!" said Blake. "Let me pass, will you?"

"No hurry, young shaver! Are you going to be one of us, or are you going to join the rotters?"

Blake looked puzzled.

"I don't quite catch on."

"I mean, are you coming into the New House - that's our show, and the decent one - or are you going to join the measly tramps in the School House?"

"Oh, I see. I'm going into the School House."

The expressions of the three boys became alarming at once.

"He's a cad!" exclaimed Figgins. "I guessed he was by the look of him."

"Who are you calling a cad?" demanded Blake.

"They're all cads in the School House. If it wasn't for the New House the old school would be going to the dogs," said Figgins. "I ought to know, as I'm captain of the juniors in our house. We keep the place from going mouldy."

"Do you?" said Blake thoughtfully.

"A pity you can't keep your collar clean at the same time, and get some of the ink off your fingers."

Figgins turned red. He was not particularly careful of his personal appearance, but any illusion to that fact touched him on the raw.

"This is a cheeky kid!" he said.

"He'll be as bad as any in the School House if we don't put him in his place at once. We don't want any of his class here, anyway. Shove him out!"

The three juniors of the New House threw themselves upon Jack Blake, and he was sent staggering into the road. The great gate closed with a clang. The sudden attack had taken Blake by surprise, or he would not have been disposed of so easily, even by three assailants. He recovered himself in a moment, and ran at the gate and caught at the bars.

The three juniors kept it shut, and grinned at him from the inside.

"I say, open the gate, you cads!" said Blake hotly. "I'm coming in."

"You don't look like it!" jeered Figgins.

"Open the gate, you idiot."

"Don't you wish we would? Here, Fatty, put your weight against it, and then an elephant couldn't get in."

The altercation at the gate had attracted the attention of the footballers in the quadrangle. Several of them were staring towards the spot, and immediately it occurred to Blake that they were boys of his own house - that is, the house he was going into.

"Help, here!" he shouted. "I'm a School House chap, and these cads are trying to keep me out."

The call had an electrical effect. In a moment the boys in the quad were sweeping down upon Figgins & Co, and from their looks they meant business.

CHAPTER TWO

Figgins did not look pleased. The odds were a dozen to three, and the plight of the New House lads was worse than Jack Blake's had been.

"I say you chaps, cut it!" muttered

Figgins.

"Hallo! What's wrong here?" exclaimed a ruddy-complexioned youth, with a masterful manner. "What are you cads up to?"

"What's that got to do with you, Herries?" demanded Figgins.

"I'll show you. Let that kid in."

"Shan't!"

Herries addressed Blake through the gate.

"You're a new kid coming here, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Blake.

And Kerr chimed in:

"His name's Blake - Jack Blake."

"Oh, shut up!" said Blake reddening.

"You talk too much, you New House cads."

"You're coming into the School House, Blake?" pursued Herries.

"Rather! You don't suppose I'd make one of that measly crowd, do you?"

Herries grinned.

"That's the way to talk. That's why these Rats were keeping you out, of course. Wipe up the ground with the Rats, you fellows."

Figgins & Co made a desperate burst to get through the enemy, and they succeeded, but not scathless. When they escaped across the quadrangle Figgins' collar hung by one end, Wynn had lost his cap, and Kerr's nose was bleeding.

The gate swung open, and Jack Blake entered.

"You can come in," said Herries, with a wave of the hand. "We're bound to stick up for you, as you're going to join our house. You'll soon learn how things are at St. Jim's. The School House stood for hundreds of years before any New House was thought of. The other day they found out there wasn't enough accommodation for the increasing number of Kidlets, so they ran up that place."

He jerked his thumb towards the red-brick front of the New House, showing through the elm trees across the quad.

"The other day?" Blake exclaimed.

"Why, I thought --"

Herries grinned.

"You're a green one! I mean the

other day, compared with the School House. The School House has been standing there ever since Henry the Fourth dissolved the monasteries."

Blake smiled.

"What are you grinning at, you new Kid?" exclaimed Herries.

Herries was junior captain of the School House, and strong at sports, but he was weak in scholarship and he knew it.

"I always thought it was Henry the Eighth," said Blake.

Herries looked round on his supporters.

"No wonder those Rats were chipping him," he said. "You see the sort of worm he is. Cheeking his captain the first ten minutes he's at St. Jim's! What shall we do with the mongrel?"

"Skin him!" said Digby. "Boil him in oil!"

"Pull his ears!"

"Give him to the Rats!"

"You'd better let me alone," said Blake truculently. "I can hit, and I'm not going to stand any nonsense."

"Bravo!" cried Herries mockingly.

"Get hold of him, Digby and Walsh; and you, Wilson, twist his ears till I tell you to stop."

Blake was promptly collared.

Wilson took a firm grip on his ear. Herries stood before him, like judge and executioner rolled into one.

"Why don't you fight a chap fairly?" exclaimed Blake.

"Do you mean that, you silly Kid? If it comes to fighting I could knock spots off you with only one hand."

"I'd like to see you do it!" said Blake.

"Then you shall have a chance," said Herries wrathfully. "Let him go, Kids. My only aunt, I'll knock some of the cheek out of him."

Blake's captors released him, and he flew at the chief of the School House juniors. Herries closed with him. Both were just getting down to business, when a sharp, unpleasant voice broke in.

"What does this mean? How dare you

fight in the quadrangle?"

The combatants separated by instinct. Blake looked round, expecting to see a master from the tone, but he only saw a youth of seventeen or eighteen, with a sharp, sour face and little grey eyes. It was evident, though, from the manner of the juniors, that he was a person of considerable importance in the world of St. Jim's.

"That's all right, Monteith," said Herries humbly. "I was only showing the new fellow a -- a trick that --"

"You were fighting," said Monteith. "You School House boys are a disgrace to the school. No more of this, or you'll hear of it sharp."

He stalked away.

Herries shook his fist after him, and, the senior happening to glance back, the junior stood overwhelmed with confusion, his hand still in the air.

"What are you doing, Herries?"

"Nothing."

"Take fifty lines!"

Herries looked rebellious.

"Look here, Monteith, you ain't our prefect, and --"

"Do you want me to come to you?"

"No, thank you, Monteith."

"You'll take those lines to your housemaster to-night. I shall mention the matter to him."

The prefect stalked off without looking back this time.

"Oh, won't I pay you for this?" said Herries in an undertone to Blake. And he took himself off before the new boy could reply.

And so commenced Jack Blake's career at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER THREE

Blake went up the steps and entered the hall. Fortunately he found a maid in the passage who confirmed that he was in the right quarters, and pointed out the study of the housemaster, Mr. Kidd. Blake afterwards learned that it was from the housemaster's name that the School House boys derived their appellation of "Kids", while the New House fellows were designated the "Rats" because their

housemaster rejoiced in the name of Ratcliff.

Blake knew that he had to report his arrival to his housemaster. He tapped at the door, pointed out to him, and entered in response to the "Come in!" in the master's deep, pleasant voice.

Mr. Kidd looked at him. The housemaster was a big, athletic man, and Blake liked him at once.

"I'm the new boy, sir. My name is Blake."

The housemaster's keen grey eyes were lingering upon him.

"Have you had an accident on your way here?" asked Mr. Kidd, rather drily.

"No, sir."

"You have not, by any chance, fallen into a ditch or rolled over in the road?"

"No, sir," said Blake, bewildered.

"Then what do you mean by presenting yourself before me in that state?"

Blake looked at his reflection in a glass opposite, and coloured. His scuffle with the Rats, and his tussle with Herries, had not improved his appearance, though he had not noticed it before.

"I'm sorry, sir," he stammered.

"The fact is --"

Mr. Kidd looked at him curiously.

"Well?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"I cannot congratulate you upon your lucidity, Blake, any more than upon your personal appearance," said Mr. Kidd. "I will overlook this, as it is your first day at St. James's, but it must not occur again. You understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. You may go now and make some improvement. Let me see. Ah, Herries will show you." Herries was just passing the open window, and Mr. Kidd called to him: "Herries, you will kindly show this new boy to the dormitory, where he can make himself look a little less disreputable."

Herries grinned.

"Yes, sir. He looks as dirty as one of the New House cads, doesn't he, sir?"

"That will do, Herries. You may go for the present, Blake."

Blake retired, and Herries joined

him in the corridor.

"Come along, smudgy face!"

"I'll smudge your face, if you don't look out," said Blake wrathfully. "It was your fault I got a wiggling."

"Well, why don't you keep yourself clean? Soap and water ain't expensive. Come on, there's no time to waste, if you're to get clean in time for tea."

"Is this the dormitory?" asked Blake, as Herries stopped at a door and opened it.

"No, you silly Kid! Can't you see there's only one bed in it? You can't go to the dormitory; it's always kept locked during the day. Old Kidlet must have forgotten that. You can wash in this room. It belongs to the porter, and we always run in here when we like."

"Thanks!" said Blake. "When is tea?"

"In a quarter of an hour, so buck up." Herries vanished before Blake could reply.

The new boy lost no time. It certainly struck him that the room was cosily furnished for a school porter, and he was a little surprised to see books and boxing gloves, and foils, and a football lying about. But as he had never been at a public school before he did not know exactly what to expect, and Herries's manner had been too off-hand to excite suspicion.

Blake washed, and was well satisfied when he surveyed himself in the glass.

"I think that will do," he said.

The door opened suddenly, and a big, powerfully-built fellow burst into the room, evidently in a hurry. He came right in without seeing Blake, and then stopped in amazement and stared at him.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo!" replied Blake cheerfully.

"What are you doing here?"

"Cleaning up a bit," said Blake.

"You can do the same if you like." The newcomer looked hot and dusty, and seemed to have just come in from the playing fields. "I don't mind. Anybody can use this room."

The big fellow stared harder at him.

"Can they?"

"Oh, yes. I was just going, so there you are."

"You were just going, were you?"

"Yes."

"Then it's unfortunate for you that you didn't go a little earlier, before I arrived."

"Why?"

"Why? Because I'm going to thrash you for your confounded cheek - that's why!"

Blake jumped back.

"Here, I say, chuck it!" he exclaimed.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Kildare, and I'm captain of St. Jim's, if you wish to know."

"Pleased to make your acquaintance," said Blake. "I really don't see what you want to get your wool off for."

"No; I suppose I ought to take it as a compliment that you should deign to make use of my room," said Kildare grimly, taking a cane from the table. "The unfortunate part of the business for you is that I don't."

"Your room?" ejaculated Blake.

"Herries said --"

Kildare looked at him.

"Well, what did Herries say?"

"Never mind," said Blake, confused.

"I thought this was the porter's room, and that anybody could come here."

Kildare laid down the cane, a smile coming over his face.

"You're a new boy, of course?"

"I haven't been at the school an hour."

"That accounts for it. Cut!"

Kildare threw open the door.

"You're not going to lick me?"

"Not unless I find you here again.

Get out!"

"Thanks!" Blake crossed to the door.

"I'm sorry --"

"That's all right. Clear!"

And the door closed.

Blake walked away. A bell was ringing, and he guessed that it was the tea-bell. A tide of juniors was setting in one direction, and Blake joined it. He arrived at the great dining-hall and

secured a place at one of the tables. impaired his appetite, and he made an
His adventures at St. Jim's had not excellent tea.

* * * * *

POSTSCRIPT: "So commenced Jack Blake's career at St. Jim's," said Charles Hamilton in 1906. And what a career! A career which was to continue for a half-century - and a career which will go on while you are left and I am left. Would St. Jim's have lasted for 57 years had Jack Blake not been eclipsed by Tom Merry? Maybe not, for Tom Merry had some amazing magic which captured youthful imagination as Blake did not. But Jack Blake, as Charles Hamilton's first Peter Pan among school-boys, will always have his name in the hall of fame.

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GREAT NEWS IN THIS ISSUE!

The Penny Popular

No.
267.

Three Complete Stories of—
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SMYTHE IN THE WARS!

See the Grand Long Complete Story
of Jimmy Silver & Co.

Another Mystery

On the opposite page is a cover of THE PENNY POPULAR in November 1917. The picture illustrated an incident in the Rookwood story entitled "The Terrible Thomas." But the same picture (see this page) had been used in PLUCK, eleven years earlier in 1906, to illustrate a story entitled "Expelled" by H. Clarke Hook. The artist was Leonard Shields.

The first series of THE PENNY POPULAR ran from the autumn of 1912 till the spring of 1918. It was entirely devoted to reprints. St. Jim's had been in the Penny Pop from the start. There were a few new illustrations, but, for the most part, the old pictures which had accompanied the stories in the Gem were used.

Greyfriars came into the Penny Popular in January 1917. The old Magnet pictures were used. Rookwood entered the Penny Pop in April 1917. The stories were described as "the early adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co." All readers of the Pop must have assumed that these were the old stories of Rookwood from the Boy's Friend. Then why did not the editor use the illustrations which had accompanied the stories in the Boy's Friend? Why, as we prove here, did he use an old picture from an entirely different story in Pluck of eleven years earlier? We might add that all the pictures used to illustrate those Rookwood stories in the original Penny Popular had never illustrated a Rookwood story before. Many of them were pictures with an old-fashioned flavour by Arthur Clarke who was dead before Rookwood was even created.

In fact, though those Penny Popular stories were described as "the early adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co" they were nothing of the sort. They had not appeared in the Rookwood series in the Boy's Friend.

Then what were they? Probably they were new substitute stories, and, to economise, the editor searched through very old periodicals to find illustrations which would be suitable. On the other hand, they may have been from some very old series of stories, with the school name changed to Rookwood and the names of the characters suitably substituted.

But why on earth did not they use the old Rookwood tales from the Boy's Friend? Well, your guess is as good as ours. The Rookwood tales in the Boy's Friend had started early in 1915, so only just over two years had gone by. Probably the editor thought it too early for reprinting.

Fascinating, isn't it?

A little later the four made their way into Bradbury's room, and at the very first sight of them the master felt uneasy. Stanley came to the point at once, and the look of contempt on the senior's face was something to remember.

Of course, it was a most noisy interview, for Bradbury did his best to brazen matters out at first, and stormed and raved in rare style, but it chanced that he had met a man who could value that sort of thing at its true worth, and in a very few

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"I'm the new boy," faltered the damaged youngster, "my name is Graham, sir. I had to come by an earlier train, and —" (See page 3.)

they let the master know what he thought of him. boy affairs stood between him and young Graham. and Evans both expected that it would come to blows. out Bradbury suddenly gave in. Stanley had even more contempt for him than he had had at first. Bradbury began to whimper.

"I'll make a clean breast of it," he said, "if you will only



ONE FATEFUL HOUR

By R. J. Godsave

* * * * *

Of all the hotels in Bannington, the Grapes was considered the best. Generally the boys of St. Frank's patronised the Japanese Cafe, in the High Street, on their half-holidays, but regarded tea at the Grapes as a treat, usually at the expense of their parents or guardians.

On this particular afternoon, therefore, it was surprising to see Ralph Leslie Fullwood, of St. Frank's College, seated in the lounge by himself. There was an air of expectancy on his face and he was patiently waiting for someone.

The brilliant sunshine of the June afternoon shone through the tall windows, and an atmosphere of calm pervaded the lounge.

A talk man of about thirty, crossed the thickly carpeted floor, and approached the schoolboy.

"Master Fullwood?" he enquired.

"Yes," replied Fullwood. "I take it that you are Mr. Fairfax who asked me to meet him here. I received your letter but could not make out why you wanted to see me."

At that moment a waitress approached them and tea was ordered.

"The fact is, young man," said Fairfax when the waitress had departed, "your days at St. Frank's are numbered unless you do as I say. This is your wallet, is it not?"

"Where did you find that?" asked Fullwood rising to his feet. "I lost it three weeks ago."

"Actually, I found it in Helmsford."

"Why didn't you hand it in at the police station?" said Fullwood sharply. "I made enquiries to see if it had been handed in."

"I would have done so, had it not been for a letter which I found in the inside pocket," replied Fairfax.

"Which letter?" asked Fullwood curiously.

"I'll read it to you" said Fairfax.

He produced the letter from his pocket, and taking out of the envelope, read as follows -

Saturday.

"Dear Ralph,

Enclosed please find £5 note, being your share of a little piece of business, that with your aid we pulled off so neatly at your uncle's house last night. I do not think that anyone suspected us of sharp practice. Let me know when it will be safe for me to make up a table for bridge again.

Hope our luck will hold.

P.S. Burn this letter. "

Jeremy Blakesley.

As he finished reading it, Fairfax placed the letter on the table, at the same time handing Fullwood his wallet.

"I want to know Blakesley's address," he said.

"What do you intend to do if I give it you?" asked Fullwood.

"I think this letter could produce quite a good income from both of you."

Fullwood turned pale.

"You - you mean blackmail."

"Well, you go to a public school, and no doubt your father gives you a good allowance," said Fairfax. "Also your friend must be fairly well connected."

Further talk was interrupted by the waitress arriving with the tea. As she placed the tray on the table, Fullwood snatched up his cap and walked quickly out of the lounge.

How he got out of the hotel he never knew. Stark misery gripped him, and he hardly knew what he was doing. More by instinct he turned towards the station.

"Running away won't help you" said a voice at his side. Fullwood turned and saw the face of Fairfax.

"You had better come back to the hotel," said the man. "Unless we settle this business now I shall get in touch with your uncle, or better still, your headmaster."

Some of the colour returned to Fullwood's face, and he felt calmer. He began to regain his confidence. He had always been a self-possessed boy.

"Give me time to think it over" he asked. "I'm catching the 6.10 train back to Bellton, so I shall have over half an hour to wait."

Now, for some reason, Fairfax seemed anxious to return alone to the hotel, and agreed to meet Fullwood in the station entrance just before six o'clock for his decision.

• • • • •

The sudden departure of Fullwood from the lounge came as a surprise to Fairfax. After hesitating a moment he followed.

As he hurried out he almost collided with a gentleman slowly approaching the hotel. With a muttered apology, Fairfax hurried on.

Surprised by the sudden departure of both customers, the waitress glanced out of the window, and to her indignation saw Fairfax rapidly walking away.

As she turned from the window, the gentleman, who narrowly escaped being knocked down by Fairfax, entered the lounge. Recognising him as a guest staying in the hotel, she moved towards him. In a few words she told him of the incident.

He had come in with the intention of having tea, and remarked, with a pleasant smile, that he could at least save half of it from being wasted.

Accompanying him back to the table, the waitress fussed after him for a few minutes and then left him to his own devices. As she moved away, she picked up a letter from the floor and placed it on the table, assuming that the man had dropped it.

Ten minutes later the door at the end of the lounge opened to admit Fairfax. He made towards the table and was surprised to see a man seated at it.

Realising that he had left the letter on the table, Fairfax had hurried back to recover it. To his consternation, the occupant appeared to be deeply engrossed in the letter which was spread out on the table.



As Fairfax approached, the man lightly placed his hand on the letter. How to get the letter away presented a problem. It was not the sort of letter with which one would openly wish to be associated.

It was as if he had sensed that Fairfax had returned for it that the man turned his head as though to speak. In so doing, whether by accident or design, he knocked the jug of cream over it.

In a flash Fairfax saw how dangerous his position was. He did not doubt that the man had realised the possibilities which such a damaging letter possessed, and had deliberately destroyed it. Perhaps the man was connected with the police. Panic now possessed Fairfax. The penalty for blackmail was severe. Hastily he withdrew and left the lounge.

.....

Fullwood sat in the waiting room of Bannington station turning over the events of the past hour in his mind.

His connection with Blakesley had finished long ago. Fairfax must have thought that the incident mentioned in the letter had happened recently.

How foolish he had been to keep the letter. It had been in the pocket of the wallet which was not open to view in normal use and he had forgotten all about it.

It seemed to him that he had more to lose by exposure than otherwise. After all, the blackmail could not go on for ever. He realised that the friendship of Clive Russell, Nipper, Handforth and the others would be lost. The Head could hardly let him remain at St. Frank's in view of such conduct, even though it had happened before he had turned over a new leaf.

More important was the friendship of Winnie Pitt, his girl chum from Moor View School. All that would be lost. He made up his mind that he would do as Fairfax wished.

As Fullwood walked out of the waiting room and made his way to the station entrance he was greeted by a friendly wave from Handforth & Co. who were going back by the same train. Their friendly recognition made Fullwood more determined to stick to his resolve.

Passing out into the sunlit High Street he was surprised to see Fairfax almost running towards the station on the opposite side of the High Street.

Crossing over, Fullwood stopped Fairfax by pulling on his arm. It was obvious that he had had a shock of some kind.

"It's all right," panted Fairfax, "You won't hear from me again. Some interfering busybody has deliberately ruined the letter." With these few words Fairfax

continued on his way and vanished out of sight.

The relief was so great that Fullwood felt lightheaded for the moment, and joyfully joined Handforth, Church and McClure on the platform.

That the stranger had saved Fullwood from being blackmailed, was a fact, - unwittingly, though, it is true, because Fairfax would never know that the stranger sitting at the table in the lounge was blind.

* * * * *

THE BUTTON

By FRANK SHAW

"Button, button, who has the button?"

For years I believed it was Bulstrode, then a bully and bitter rival to Wharton. John Shaw says it was Hazeldene. The "Glasgow Herald" said it was Vernon-Smith, although he was not yet at the school. Incidentally Professor Brogan, passing through Glasgow for a speaking engagement in London, proved his scholarship by rebuking the "Herald," in person for spelling it Vernon-Smyth."

Many old readers of the Greyfriars stories do not recall this one. I had come to the point when I thought myself I must have dreamt it. When I read this story of someone, competing with Wharton in an exam., who having noticed his nervous habit of fiddling with a button, cut it off, to make him lose, I, for some reason, already knew that this incident had been related as occurring in the life of Sir Walter Scott.

Perhaps that was what set the "Glasgow Herald" off. I get the events at second-hand from the fifth volume of C.D. (1951), No. 49, only recently acquired: which showed it wasn't a dream anyhow.

No less than "The Times" had set the "Glasgow Herald" off. In December 1950, as a few weeks before, they had had a "leader" about the Frank Richards saga. It recalled the old story. An Oxford don wrote mentioning the parallel with the Scott legend. Frank Richards answered him. As with much in his stories, the incident was founded on fact. But he had never heard of the Scott version. He was well-read in Scott, of course, as in English literature generally (he once referred in a -- I think -- Gem story to the lesser Scott novel "Ann of Gierskein." But this incident had happened to a lady friend of his.

Though F.R. did not reveal her name it came out and it was Lady ----- . F.R. had, it seems clear, not even unconsciously gone to Scott as I, indeed, had also thought. What happened to the lady may have been inspired by it. But the tale itself may be part of a much older myth. It is, after all, akin to Achilles heel and the Baldur fable. Some tales run right through history, like the story of Tell and the apple, in various versions, or Gelert and the dog.

But fancy stories written forty years before in a ha'penny paper, for young lads, creating at a time of paper shortage all this interest! The Glasgow Herald's study of the incident went on for weeks and, at one time, Sexton Blake himself was

brought in; though he did not solve the mystery.

The author himself said he wrote the story in 1909 when I could not read. John Shaw showed him it was written in 1908 (when I wasn't born). Its name was "The Mystery of Greyfriars."

F.R. stated that, if it was reproduced, it was by some other writer. I read it. And not in the original "Magnet" and I never saw the "Gem" reprints. I believe it was in those glorious re-tellings of the beginnings of the Wharton story in the "Popular" after the first World War. And I still think it was Bulstrode. What a poor weapon memory, unaided by printed reference, can be!

Without running to the Library to confute me - what do you think?

(I suppose it was Hazeldene. Did Bulstrode put him up to it?)

* * * * *

(EDITORIAL NOTE: The story to which Mr. Shaw refers was "The Mystery of Greyfriars" which appeared in No. 3 of the Magnet. It was reprinted in the Dreadnought in 1915, in the Penny Popular in 1917, and in the Gem in the middle 'thirties.

Harry Wharton, a new boy at Greyfriars, was competing for a latin prize in the Seaton D'Arcy exam. When deep in concentration, Wharton had the habit of fiddling with a button on his waistcoat. Hazeldene observed this - and snipped off the button. As a result Wharton lost the examination.

It was a psychological story, and Frank Richards was many years ahead of his time in writing it. To-day we are well aware that a man will cosh a defenceless old lady as a result of being made to eat milk pudding when he was a boy. He is more to be pitied than blamed - and often is. Nowadays we hear a good deal about psychoses. In 1908 it may have seemed to Magnet readers that it was far-fetched to believe that any boy could go to pieces because he had lost a familiar button. We know better now. Luckily, Harry Wharton lost his propensity for button-fiddling after Magnet No. 3.

Hazeldene was an excellent character study of Greyfriars. Weak, shifty, selfish, he was more true to life than some of the blacker black sheep. In early days, Hazeldene was nicknamed Vaseline, a singularly appropriate appendage which Frank Richards dropped with the passing of time. We never learned why Hazeldene ceased to be known as Vaseline. More than likely, I think, that the word Vaseline was a proprietary name, and the makers of that indispensable medicament may have given a hint that they did not like the name being applied to a fictitious scarp. It's just a guess. Vaseline, as a name for Hazeldene, may just have gone the way of the Black Rock - an inexplicable abandonment.

* * * * *

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THE LANCHESTER TRADITION

By W. J. A. Hubbard

* * * * *

"The Lanchester Tradition" is indeed a forgotten classic. Originally published by the now defunct firm of Smith Elder & Co., only a few months before the outbreak of war in 1914 it was not re-published - by the Richards Press - until 1954. No doubt the grave events which shortly followed its original appearance had much to do with the fact that the book was more or less forgotten for so many years because in my opinion it is one of the most charming stories of school life ever written. Its only fault, perhaps is that it is rather short for it amounts to only 150 pages.

The author, G. F. Bradby, was fully qualified to write a story of school life although "The Lanchester Tradition" seems to be his only book. He was the eldest son of Dr. E. H. Bradby, D.D., sometime an Assistant Master at Harrow and afterwards Headmaster of Haileybury. G. F. Bradby, however, went to Rugby being the first of, I think, three brothers at the school who were noted for their knowledge of the classics and their ability at both Cricket and Rigger. In 1884 he went to Oxford (Balliol) where he obtained a number of classical distinctions and a "Blue" at Rigger. Returning to his old school as a master in 1888, he became a Housemaster in 1908, a post from which he retired in 1920. He died in 1947 at the age of 84. A very popular and highly successful schoolmaster he was known to many generations of Rugby boys.

The School featured in "The Lanchester Tradition" - Chiltern - is however, not Rugby, but probably an entirely imaginary establishment, although there cannot be any doubt that the Dr. Lanchester of the title of the book is to a certain extent based on the famous Dr. Arnold of Rugby fame, although Dr. Lanchester, like Arnold an educational reformer, is portrayed as actually having lived about the turn of the 19th Century, some thirty to forty years before Dr. Arnold's time. Dr. Lanchester, although of course "off-stage," for the period in which the book is placed is just before the 1914/18 War, rather dominates the book and gives the author a good many opportunities for some admirable irony and wit.

"The Lanchester Tradition" is a school story with a difference as it is about the Masters and not the boys. Sport also plays little part in the yarn which is a trifle surprising, perhaps, in view of the author's abilities in that respect. He makes up for it, however, with some fine writing and much brilliant humour.

The theme of the yarn is one that has been used quite a number of times by writers of school stories. Chiltern, a famous Public School, has steadily deteriorated under one Headmaster presenting a task to his successor, a young man acutely conscious of his duties towards the boys and the school, that would daunt any ordinary schoolmaster.

There are four main characters, Dr. Gussy, the retiring Headmaster, hoodwinked and dominated by boys and colleagues alike, the Revd. Septimus Flaggon, the new Headmaster and a surprising choice of the Governing Body, the aggressive Mr. Chowdler, a Housemaster who has dominated and controlled Dr. Gussy and who expects to be able to do the same with his successor, and Mr. Brent, a Form-master behind whose biting cynicism is concealed a great love of Chiltern and his work. There

are also some excellent minor characters, the best of them being Mr. Tipham, another Form-master. A better portrait of an intellectual type young man, fresh from the University, untidy in both dress and appearance and odd in more ways than one has rarely been presented and he would not be out of place in a story of modern school life.

The first part of the story deals with Dr. Gussy's decision to retire from his post, Mr. Flaggon's election as the new Headmaster and Dr. Gussy's farewell to the school which produces many amusing scenes and incidents. Then Mr. Flaggon takes over and finds his task far from easy nor is he helped by the attitude of Mr. Chowdler who does everything he can to be obstructive and influence his colleagues and the boys against the new Headmaster. Eventually Mr. Flaggon is compelled to ask Mr. Chowdler for his resignation, only to find that the latter is entitled under some old Statute of the School to appeal to the Governing Body against his dismissal and to remain at the School while his appeal is being considered. This is the incident that was used by the late Mr. Charles Hamilton in his famous "Brander Rebellion" series in "The Magnet" and which was referred to by Mr. Roger Jenkins in his article "Return to Rose Lawn" in the October, 1962 "Collectors' Digest."

Worse follows, however, for while Mr. Chowdler's appeal is being considered by a very hesitant and divided Governing Body, something is found very radically wrong among the boys of one of the Houses. Mr. Flaggon acts quickly and courageously and certain boys are expelled while others are told they must go at the end of the term. The trouble, however, is found to be far more widespread than at first thought and Mr. Chowdler's house, the best, socially, in the School, is also found to be badly affected. Mr. Flaggon again acts boldly and matters are rectified but he finds public opinion, much of it stupid and misinformed steadily mounting against him while his colleagues with the exception of the cynical Mr. Brent, are divided as to the correctness of his actions.

At last the wavering Governing Body acts and Mr. Chowdler's dismissal is confirmed by the most narrow margin possible. But in all these incidents the author never loses his sense of proportion and fairness and the actions of both the Headmaster and Mr. Chowdler are admirably displayed and discussed in many finely written humorous scenes and dramatic incidents. Mr. Chowdler, in fact, is shown to be very human in the final chapter when, with his dismissal confirmed he breaks down in the chapel before the whole School for in his own way he has loved Chiltern perhaps even more than his rival. Nor are the troubles which the School experiences distorted or over-written as they would be in most modern stories of school life. The reader obviously has to use his imagination but Mr. Bradby's presentation never offends against good taste. And over each scene hovers the spirit of the famous Dr. Lanchester who is gradually shown to be not the conservative that Mr. Chowdler and his friends have always thought but a radical reformer who in his own day was never afraid to act when he judged it necessary for the good of the School. The impression given to the reader, in fact, is that it has all happened before and Mr. Flaggon is merely a re-incarnation of the famous Headmaster.

Judging by the last paragraph of the book Mr. Bradby intended to write a sequel to "The Lanchester Tradition." No doubt the outbreak of the 1914/18 War prevented this. Its re-emergence after being forgotten for so many years and its present day popularity are, however, a much delayed tribute to his writing skill which should have been displayed to the reading public far more often than the lone occasion that it was.

* * * * *

THE GHOSTS OF FLEET STREET

By J. R. Swan

* * * * *

In the street of a thousand papers
 A thousand ghosts do walk,
 If you go there - you'll declare
 That you can hear them talk,
 Of days gone by - the rivers of blood
 Midst shot and shell - storm and flood
 But none of our heroes did baulk!

In this street of a thousand papers
 A thousand names you'll hear,
 There's Varney, Sweeny, Turpin,
 Spring-heeled Jack and Buffalo Bill!
 Harkaway, Sexton Blake, and Nelson Lee you'll meet,
 Along with hundreds of others - there's Jack,
 Sam and Pete!

In this street of a thousand papers
 And a thousand names as well,
 There walks a little lady
 By the name of Little Nell,
 Yes! We mustn't forget the ladies,
 Week by week they went through hell,
 Tied to railway lines, windmill sails
 And to the clapper of a bell!

In this street of a thousand faces
 You'll see a bunch of schoolboys too,
 Tom Merry, Manners, Lowther, D'Arcy and Cardew!
 "I say you fellows, look who's here," a squeaky
 voice did shout,
 It was Bunter with the Famous Five and Quelch with
 Pompous Prout!

There's Jimmy Silver from Rookwood School,
 Up to his usual pranks,
 He's just up-ended a bucket of soot
 Over Handforth of St. Frank's!

There's a younger bunch of schoolboys
 The Stormy Orphans of 'Wizard' fame,
 Playing tricks on another lad -
 Wily Watkins is his name!
 With Morgan the Mighty and The Wolf of Kabul
 There's all the lads from Red Circle School,
 And as we leave this famous street
 The ghosts and voices fade,
 But we'll be back some other day
 To the street where their fame was made!

Note: To be read as the great Billy Bennett's (almost a gentleman) "The Street of a Thousand Candles!"

Solution to Sexton Blake Crossword

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