

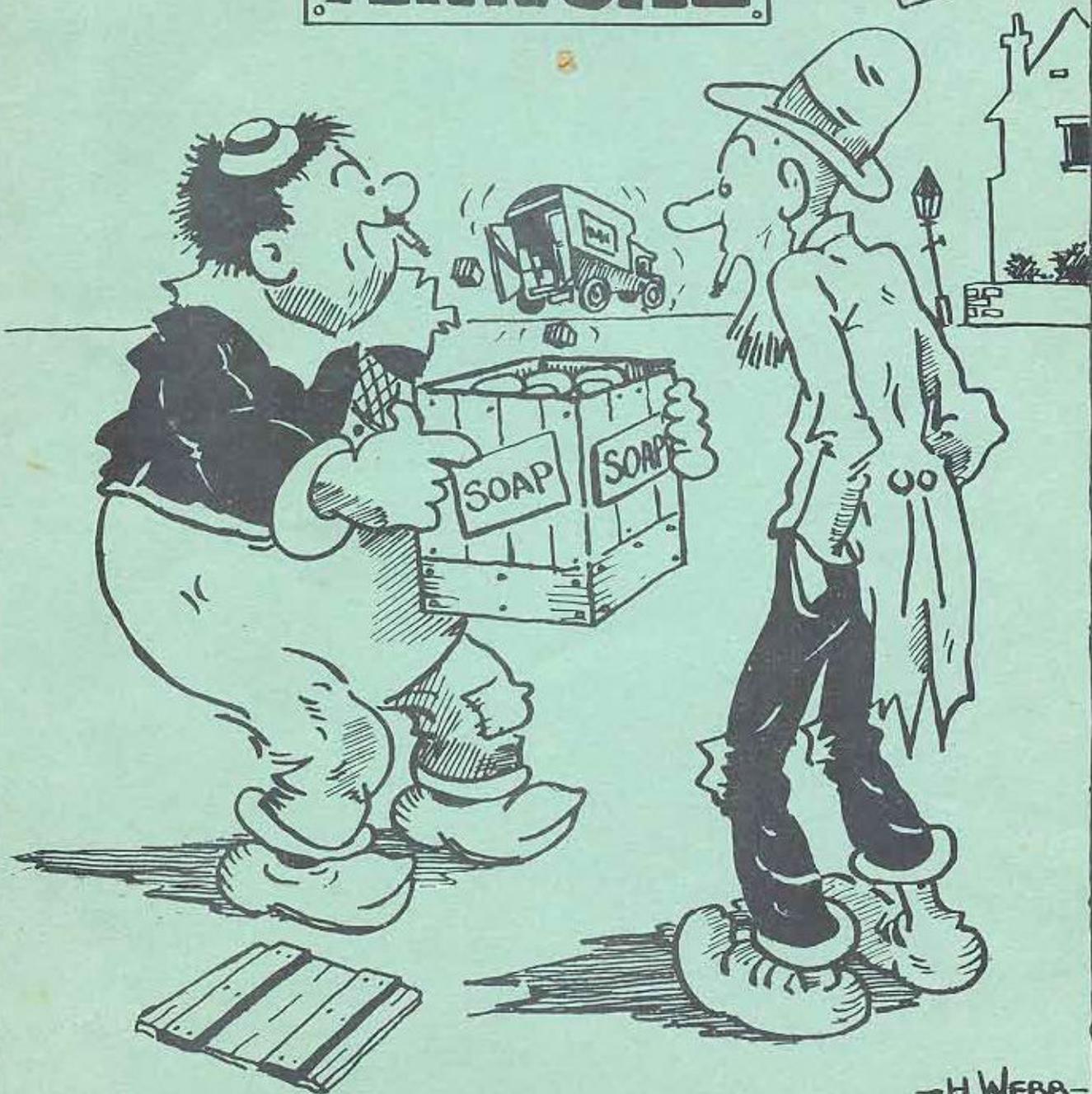
COLLECTORS

DIGEST

ANNUAL

1965

PRICE
15!



-H. WEBB-

COLLECTORS' DIGEST ANNUAL

Christmas 1965

Nineteenth Year

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Annual Time is Memory Time. The season of the year when we are swept back to the joys and mysteries of Yesterday, when the newsagents' shops were stacked with the old periodicals which we grew to love with a love which has never faltered. And as the wings of memory gradually bring us forward again, we pause to dwell for a while on those early Annuals, produced with such affection and care by Herbert Leckenby, the wonderful Yorkshireman who started it all.

Every Annual is the result of many months of hard planning and hard work. As it takes shape and the days drift by, it is accompanied by an orchestra attuned to grunts and groans as the bones creak wearily, to squeaks and squeals as the old brain functions or refuses to function, to ecstatic sighs as the various pieces of the huge jigsaw-puzzle fall into place. But the editorial orchestra is only a minor detail, for Collectors' Digest Annual is no one-man band.

Our thanks go out in warm profusion to our contributors, without whose unselfish and expert work the Annual could never appear at all. These loyal writers and artists do not spend hours on their work for personal profit - their sole reward is our enjoyment. Our thanks go, too, to that splendid Yorkshire firm, York Duplicating Services, who are responsible for the production side of the Annual, and for whom only the best is good enough.

Every year, as the final touch is given to the Annual, I kind of think to myself: "This must be the last. We can never do it again." But, of course, we do - and we shall - with your loyal and affectionate support.

And that's more than enough from me. You want to delve into the contents of this book. Happy reading - and dreaming - to you all.

Your sincere friend,



Excelsior House,
Grove Road,
SURBITON,
Surrey, England.

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Twin Series

By Roger M. Jenkins

* * *

"Oh! for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention."

(Henry V)

By the time the first World War was over, the Magnet and Gem had been the Companion Papers for quite a respectable length of time. They had always shared a common editor, and they both advertised each other's wares. Furthermore, famous characters from one school would sometimes pay visits to the other, and this was often a good indication of the popularity of the visiting schoolboy: for instance, Fisher T. Fish visited St. Jim's in Gem 294, and Ernest Levison visited Greyfriars in Magnets 510 & 511. But no attempt was made at this time to refer to the visit in the paper dealing with the visitor's own school: when Levison was at Greyfriars in Magnet 510, he was also playing a separate role in a holiday story in Gem 510. Each paper, therefore, remained obstinately in its own water-tight compartment - until the first famous twin series in 1919.

* * * * *

The Wally Bunter series

"Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated."

(A Midsummer Night's Dream)

The first twin series took place in Magnets 568-585 and Gems 571-585, and dealt with Wally Bunter, who was identical in appearance to his cousin Billy (apart from his spectacles) but the exact opposite of him in almost every other way. Wally Bunter had rendered his employer, Mr. Penman, a valuable service and as a reward Mr. Penman had arranged for Wally to go to St. Jim's, his old school. Wally, however, would have preferred to go to Greyfriars, where he had a number of friends, whilst Billy had certain pressing reasons for wanting to leave Greyfriars (which he failed to reveal to Wally), the chief one being a debt of £10 owed to Jerry Hawke, which arose during a fit of gambling fever. The following extract from Magnet 568 is revealing, for it shows the high standard of writing achieved at this time, and also the way in which minor characters were still being brought into the stories. Bunter had been gambling on tick with Angel:-

"You young swindler!" he shouted, throwing the pocket-book at Bunter's head. "You haven't any money at all!"

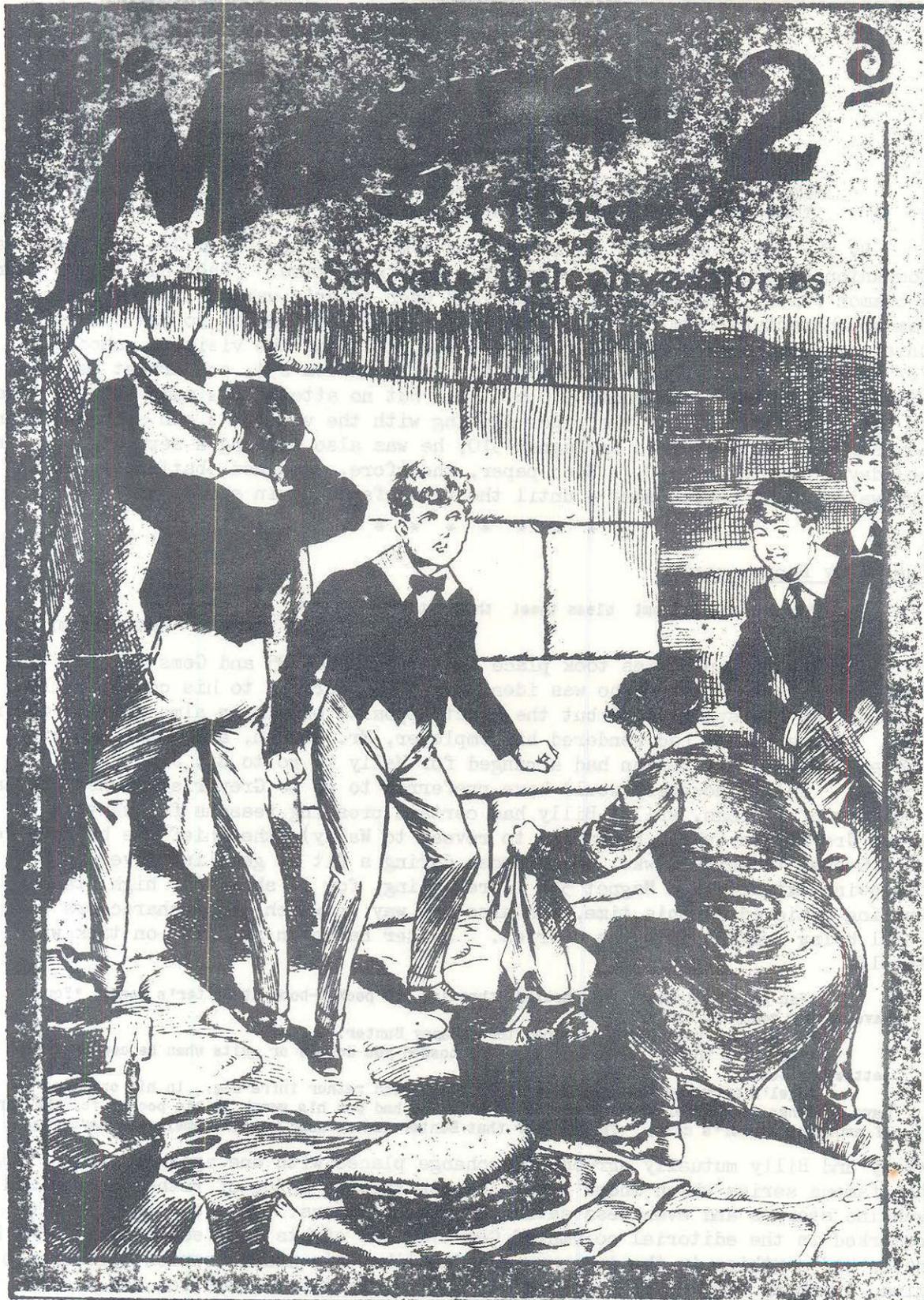
"Oh really, you know - " gasped the unhappy Bunter.

"The awful thief!" said Kenney. "He tossed you double or quits when he couldn't even settle the ten!"

Angel's brow was black with rage. It had been rather infra dig., in his opinion, to have dealings with a fellow like Bunter at all; he had put his swank in his pocket for the purpose of annexing Bunter's cash. To discover that Bunter had no cash was extremely exasperating.

Wally and Billy mutually agreed to exchange places with one another, and so began the famous series which shone like a beacon through a fog of rather uninspired genuine stories and even less satisfactory imitations. As Pentelow himself remarked in the editorial column of Gem 572 (one of his last editorials), "We have never had anything in the two papers quite like this double series - never, to my mind, anything better, if anything as good." Pentelow's diction was always fastidiously precise and fussy, but his judgement was usually accurate.

DO YOU WANT ANY POCKET-MONEY? See Pages 2 & 27.



LOOKING AFTER THE RUNAWAY FROM ST. JIM'S!

(A striking scene from "How Levison Minor Came to Greyfriars!"—this week's magnificent long complete school story.)

The Magnet series began with a number of similar stories, showing how Wally surprised the Removites, who, of course, thought he was Billy. Each week Wally displayed an unexpected side to his character, but each story was rather self-contained: for example, Wally played football for the Remove against Highcliffe and helped to win the match in No. 574, but two weeks later it never occurred to anyone that he should play in a more difficult contest against Lantham. Charles Hamilton had not, at this time, mastered the art of writing a series as a continuing and developing story, but there is no doubt that in this long Magnet series his talents had their first great opportunity to spread themselves in the manner that they richly deserved.

It has often been said that Greyfriars stories which dealt with Highcliffe were always of a high standard, and this was certainly true of Magnets 576-7, which formed a short series within a longer one. Skinner & Co. had some information that induced them to back Greyfriars against Lantham and, although Ponsonby turned and twisted when he realised he had made a bad bet, he could not prevent Greyfriars from winning easily. Unfortunately for Skinner, he was unable to obtain his money, and a number of intensely dramatic scenes followed. This was undoubtedly the highlight of the long Wally Bunter series, and made a welcome improvement on the earlier theme of Bunter astonishing the natives.

After a number of minor episodes, among the most outstanding of which were those featuring Hoskins, Loder, and Bessie Bunter (her first introduction to Magnet readers), the series ended rather suddenly in the Magnet with the precipitate return of Billy Bunter and the enforced departure of Wally for St. Jim's, and it was in the Gem that his ultimate fate (a post in Mr. Penman's Paris office) was revealed.

The Gem sequence of tales had to begin after the Magnet series had commenced because Bunter's reasons for wanting to leave Greyfriars had to be explained and the drama played out before he could arrive on the scene at St. Jim's. The Magnet series was of a consistently good, dramatic standard, but the Gem sequence was infinitely the funnier of the two, and two stories that were particularly amusing were "Spoof" in No. 573 (in which Trimble and Bunter were each tricked into believing the other's boasting tales of wealth and grandeur), and "Bunter's Fund" in No. 577, in which he claimed to know of a Fourth-former in financial distress whom he wished to help. In order to carry conviction, he agreed to reveal the name of the necessitous schoolboy to a committee of three, on condition that they would keep it secret:-

"Well, a fellow can't be too careful," said Bunter sagely. "I don't want any misunderstandings afterwards. You'll tell the fellows that the chap is stony, and is in need of help - if I satisfy you on all these points?"

"Certainly."

"Right-ho, then!"

"Bai Jove, you don't seem in a hurray, Bunter! What's the chap's name?"

Bunter drew a deep breath.

"I dare say it will surprise you," he said.

"Is it old Bwooke?" asked D'Arcy.

"Oh, no!"

"Mulvaney minah, or Tompkins?"

"No."

"Then I weally cannot guess."

"Don't tell us who it isn't; tell us who it is!" said Figgins practically. "What's the name, Bunter? Speak up!"

And Bunter spoke up.

"Bunter," he said.

Bunter's outrageous pranks often make delightful reading: equally delightful are the rare occasions when he amazes the others by showing unexpected sides to his

character or (as happened in Gem 576) when Wally returned to St. Jim's for one day, and astonished the juniors with his pluck and prowess, enabling Billy Bunter to bask in the reflected glory of his cousin for a while afterwards. This incident happens to throw a curious light on this twin series, for it was not referred to in the Magnet, in which, strictly speaking, Billy Bunter ought to have re-appeared for one week while he was missing from St. Jim's. So these series were linked at the beginning and end, but there was no correlation in the middle.

The Magnet series had two substitute stories embedded in it, whilst the Gem series had four, which seems to suggest that Charles Hamilton had not yet adapted himself to the art of concurrent writing. It is not surprising that Pentelow should contribute to the series: probably he was so taken with the theme that he couldn't resist the opportunity of writing some stories himself, which he interpolated into the series. The Gem stories that he wrote were full of references to characters and episodes in the past (Gem 575, for instance, brought back Nobody's Study and the Italian boy Contarini) but, like most imitations, there was a heavy lifelessness in his stories - they never managed to leave the ground, rather like the imitations of Sherlock Holmes. The Magnet story in No.573, on the other hand, looked forward to some later stories in the series about Snoop, and Pentelow's pedantic moralising was too obvious and embarrassing ever to have been written by Charles Hamilton:-

He was not an attractive figure. He looked as moody and discontented and hopeless as he felt.

But somehow Wally Bunter saw him with other eyes than those of Skinner and Stott; somehow, Wally understood that Snoop was groping for the light, trying to be decent, and finding it a desperately hard task.

Samways also contributed to the series (Magnet 581 and Gem 584), stories that the editor stated were in the popular "School and Sport" vein. As they dealt with a sequence of sporting events that had hardly any relevance to the plot of either series, they do not merit any comment here.

It would be interesting to know the exact reason for introducing such a novelty as a twin series. Was it a bolt from the blue, a sudden inspiration, or was there a more practical reason? Those who have read "The Amateur Advertiser" in Gem 608, an amusing account of an attempt to raise the Gem's circulation, and those who recall Pentelow's earlier editorials in the Gem, complaining that the Magnet was forging ahead of its once superior rival, might well be excused for thinking that Billy Bunter was being used to boost the Gem's circulation. But, no matter what the reason, collectors can feel grateful for the end product - a delightful and lively sequence of tales in both papers.

* * * * *

Bunter's Disappointing Christmas

"I know a trick worth two of that." (Henry IV part I)

Bunter was always at a loss at holiday time, when the delights of Bunter Court seemed peculiarly susceptible of fading, and this was the case in 1922, the next occasion on which the Magnet and the Gem ran in double harness. In Magnet 776, Bunter failed to join the party going to Mauleverer Towers, and phoned up D'Arcy at St. Jim's, as a last desperate resort. To his great surprise, Gussy informed him that a barring-out was taking place and the juniors were not going home for the holidays. In the Magnet an asterisk was placed in the text at this point, and at the bottom of the page there was a footnote, which read: "The great barring-out at St. Jim's is recorded in this week's Gem library." This seems to

be the only occasion when a twin series was referred to in such a way.

In Gem 781 Bunter duly turned up at St. Jim's, and contrived to join the rebels by means of an underhand trick. When he discovered that they were on short commons, he decided to depart, and tried to obtain a reward for betraying them, a trick which was foiled at the last minute. This episode in the Gem does not, perhaps, strictly rank as a link in a twin series, because it was not referred to in the Magnet: indeed, at Greyfriars the Spring Term had already begun, whilst St. Jim's was still enjoying a lengthy Christmas holiday - which meant that Bunter was at school in the Magnet but on holiday in the Gem.

* * * * *

The Levisons at Greyfriars

"The wheel is come full circle." (King Lear)

The events leading up to the next twin series were initiated at St. Jim's, and it constituted probably the best of them all from the standpoint of both Greyfriars and St. Jim's, for Charles Hamilton seemed to maintain a high standard on both sides on this occasion.

The episode began in Gem 792, when the Third formers decided to put a jumping cracker in Mr. Selby's grate (a strangely unseasonable prank for April). They were firmly dissuaded by their elder brothers:-

"But that's not all," resumed Levison. "You'd be brought to book, without the shadow of a doubt; but, besides that, it's too thick. You ought not to do it."

"We didn't come here for a sermon!" said Reggie, sulkily.

"Then you came to the wrong study," said Cardew, shaking his head. "The chief output in this study is sermons; and Levison is the jolly old sermoniser. I have to stand it. Why shouldn't you?"

Although they were dissuaded, the jumping cracker found its way into Mr. Selby's grate, and suspicion fell on Frank Levison. Upset that he should be suspected unjustly, he ran off, and was eventually found ill, near Greyfriars. At the end of the story Levison was on his way to his old school again, to stay there till his brother recovered.

Magnets 793-9 tell the story at Greyfriars - though the editor forgot to mention this in Gem 792. The Greyfriars series was exceptionally fine, mainly because it was a vehicle for displaying Levison in one battle of wits after another. There were some inconsistencies - Loder and Ponsonby, for example, recalled events from Levison's shady past despite the fact that they were not featured in the Magnet until after he had had to leave Greyfriars - but this does not really affect the quality of the story. Practically every issue in the series contains plot and counter-plot, with characterisation brought to a new level. In particular, Levison's attempts to help Hazeldene, culminating in Vernon-Smith's intervention, represents particularly fine delineation, especially of Hazeldene, weak, petulant, irresolute, and ungrateful.

The whole episode was neatly rounded off in Gems 800 and 801. Racke induced Skinner to send a malicious telegram from Greyfriars, suggesting that Levison was accused of theft, and there was quite an unpleasant time until he succeeded in "Clearing His Name" in the last number. This twin series, from beginning to end, bears the hallmark of careful planning and fine craftsmanship.

* * * * *

Cardew's Summer Vacation

"For now I am in a holiday humour." (As You Like It)

The same year, 1923, saw another link-up between the Magnet and Gem, and, once again, it began and ended in the Gem, but for once the Magnet did not have the lion's share of the dual story. The famous Thames boating holiday was about to take place, and in Gem 812 Cardew was invited to join up, an invitation he was forced to refuse because Study No. 9 had other plans, though he was not very enthusiastic about them:-

"Clive and Levison have settled that I'm goin' with them. I've settled that I'm not. I'm not goin' on a walkin' tour until some genius invents a way of walkin' sittin' down. No good tellin' them so - they won't take 'No' for an answer, and a chap can't argue in hot weather. My idea is to have a prior engagement fixed up ready. See?"

"I wegard you as an ass, Cardew."

"And a lazy slacker," said Herries.

"An an idle loafter," said Blake.

Cardew nodded.

"How well you know me!" he remarked. "That's the best of public-school life - fellows get to know one another so thoroughly."

Cardew's lazy plan did not succeed, luckily for Harry Wharton & Co., for in Magnet 812 (the end of the Pengarth series), Study No. 9 had walked as far as Cornwall, and were ready on hand to rescue the Greyfriars holidaymakers from an awkward predicament. It was, perhaps, rather absurd that the two incidents should be printed in the very same week in the Magnet and Gem, but it is unlikely that the fault lies with the author of the stories: it is more likely to be a fault in the editorial office, caused by the insertion of substitute stories, thus upsetting the concurrent sequence of stories in the two papers.

At any rate, Cardew & Co. turned up again in the Gem towards the end of the Thames Holiday series - in Gem 818, to be precise:-

"I did not expect to wun acwoss you fellows heah. I thought you were walkin' in Cornwall or somewhah."

"Oh, we've done Cornwall long ago," said Levison. "We stayed with some Greyfriars fellows there for a time, at a place called Pengarth - jolly old place, with a giddy ghost. We've had no end of a jolly walk, haven't we, Cardew?"

Truly, 1923 was a fine year in the Gem, and the radiance spilled over into the Magnet in a most satisfying way.

* * * * *

Wharton's Unhappy Christmas

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel." (Hamlet)

The first Wharton the rebel series is too well known for there to be any need to give a resume of the plot here. Wharton, having quarrelled with his friends, spent Christmas with the Bunter in Nice, but it was a friendship that could not last, and Wharton was soon on his way to England, to the snow and biting winds of Wiltshire. In Magnet 881 he was in the Blue Lion Inn at Wold, waiting for Nugent to come in reply to a conciliatory telegram that Bunter had intercepted and destroyed. He waited in vain, but when Jimmy Silver and Co. entered the inn for morning coffee they recognised Wharton, and he was invited to stay at the Priory, not far from Nugent's home, the Oaks. More embarrassing meetings between Wharton and his former friends were bound to occur in such close proximity - and they did.

For the first time, the Boys' Friend was brought into connection for a twin series - the one and only occasion on which it happened. The earlier part of the 1924 Christmas at Rockwood dealt with Lovell's punishment for having snowballed Dr. Chisholm: he was sentenced to remain at school over the holidays, but he ran off. Eventually, all was settled, and in No. 1230 of the Boys' Friend Wharton

was found at the Priory in a single story about Jabez Wilson, the escaped convict. Wharton was out walking on his own (a clear reference to his moody feelings after the fight with Nugent at Stonehenge in Magnet 881) when the convict appeared, and Wharton was able to come to the assistance of Lovell. The story was only a slight incident, but it was very agreeable to have Rookwood drawn into connection with a Magnet series like this.

The Boys' Friend was nearing the end of its long run at this time, and the demise of the Rookwood stories was even nearer. It might be easy to think that Charles Hamilton was using the popularity of Greyfriars to prop up the failing Rookwood stories, but in point of fact nothing would be further from the truth. The Rookwood stories were as popular as ever at this time, and their ending was a purely voluntary act on the part of the author, for, to use his own words, "After Hinton's time, Maurice Down edited the Boys' Friend, along with the Gem and the Magnet: but changes were made in the middle twenties, and the paper went to another editor: and as I thought I ought to stick to my chief, I ceased to write Rookwood. I was sorry to part with Jimmy Silver: but as it turned out, it had to come, for the Boys' Friend died a year or two later - though whether the loss of Rookwood had anything to do with it, I am too modest to affirm."

It is pleasing to think that at least one of the three main Hamilton schools ended its career by voluntary retirement, an undefeated champion, as it were. It is heartening to note that at least one author rebelled successfully against editorial interference; and it is good to think that Rookwood was featured in a twin series before it was too late.

* * * * *

The Levison and Bright series : the Last of them all.

"But this rough magic
I here abjure."

(The Tempest)

In 1927 clouds were gathering over St. Jim's. Charles Hamilton was destined to write very little more for the Gem, and so the pair of genuine stories in Nos. 1031 and 1034 might reasonably suggest to the reader that he has a treat in store, especially as Levison and Cardew are prominently featured. Unfortunately, the high expectations prove to be false prophets.

The story was very complicated. Mr. Thorpe, a master at Greyfriars, and an uncle of Mr. Levison, had died many years before, and Mr. Levison had inherited twenty thousand pounds as next of kin. Years later, a Mr. Bright turned up with a will of Mr. Thorpe's, leaving everything to him, which of course meant that the Levisons were ruined. It was agreed that Ernest and Frank should transfer to Greyfriars, for certain rather involved financial reasons. What is so odd is the reference to Ernest Levison's departure from Greyfriars in disgrace as though it had happened yesterday, and as though he had never revisited his old school since that day:-

"When you left Greyfriars, Ernest, you were under a cloud - you were in fact sent away for bad conduct. But your old headmaster knows what you have done since, and you are aware that more than once he has offered to take you back if you should leave St. Jim's."

It is understandable that there should be no reference made to any of Levison's previous return trips to Greyfriars, but it is very strange that the events in the Magnet of 1908 should be referred to so constantly.

The Gem stories were little more than a sideview to the real story, which was related in Magnets 1028-34 (excluding No. 1030, a substitute story which has no connection with the series). The Greyfriars tales are on the verge of the

Golden Age vintage, the very first number showing Charles Hamilton at the peak of his form, telling how Vernon-Smith and Redwing returned to Greyfriars after their South Seas trip, and how Sir Hilton Popper was blackmailed by Mr. Bright into recommending his son Edgar for Greyfriars. Sir Hilton was in a similar situation in the Lancaster series four years later, but the earlier version can well stand comparison with the latter:-

Sir Hilton was silent, his features twitching. If there was anything the old tyrant had close at heart, it was the well-being of his old school. His pride in Greyfriars was arrogant, unreasonable, snobbish, but so far as his limited intelligence went, he acted for the good of the school. He would have ruined Greyfriars had he been able to govern it unchecked; but he would have ruined it with the best intentions. Knowingly to give it a push on the downward path was a thing of which Sir Hilton was incapable - if he could have helped it.

Bright was probably one of the most despicable new boys that ever went to Greyfriars, but there was plenty of interesting reading to be had, with Vernon-Smith and Skinner both playing a large part during Levison's last stay at his old school. To a new reader, there was no fault to be found in this Magnet series, but the old reader had plenty to puzzle over. For example, when Levison was at Greyfriars in Magnets 793-9, the Bounder remembered the good turn Levison had done for him in Magnets 510-11, and repaid his old obligation. Yet in Magnet 1032, Vernon-Smith expressed the view that Levison's reform was all humbug, and his veiled animosity broke out into open hostility and fighting. Perplexing though such inconsistencies may be, there is nevertheless great interest to be had in reading the series. Levison's hard shrewdness of character that he had shown in his unreformed days never completely deserted him, and he needed all of it in his dealings with Edgar Bright, the Toad of the Remove, before he finally found the second will of Mr. Thorpe that enabled Mr. Levison to retain the family fortunes.

* * * * *

Envoi

"There's rosemary; that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember."
(Hamlet)

The twin series will not be lightly forgotten, for they added a further touch of reality, an added dimension to the worlds of Greyfriars, St. Jim's - and Rookwood. It was probably only the first one - the Wally Bunter series - in which the two schools featured on more or less equal terms. In the summer of 1923 St. Jim's undoubtedly had the better of the bargain, but apart from that the St. Jim's aspect seemed to become almost entirely subordinate to the Greyfriars story, but Charles Hamilton's technique improved all the time, until, at the very end, in Nos. 1034 of the Magnet and Gem, there is an almost identical version of Cardew's unauthorised call to Levison on Mr. Railton's telephone. This contemporary linking of the two worlds was deeply satisfying to the reader - and it is also astonishing that the fiction of the dual identity of Frank Richards and Martin Clifford should have been persisted in, despite the obvious connection.

Charles Hamilton's decision to abandon writing for the Gem almost completely in the late nineteen-twenties was undoubtedly the main reason for the ending of the twin series, and Greyfriars pursued its own way thereafter, in solitary majesty. If he had taken a different decision, if the Golden Age of the Magnet had also been the Golden Age of the Gem, if there had been further twin series - then what triumphs there might have been! As it is, we can only view with calm satisfaction the twin series that were actually written, with the St. Jim's wagon hitched to the rising star of Greyfriars, and the Gem being given an extra sparkle in the twilight of its career. For the Gem, at least, it was a case of:-

"Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness."
(Henry VIII)

* * * * *

SHERLOCK HOLMES -- By Norman Wright

Detective, Par Excellence

WHO'S WHO



DOCTOR WATSON



SIR HENRY BASKERVILLE



INSPECTOR LESTRADE



COL. LYSANDER STARK



BERYL STAPLETON



MARY SUTHERLAND



COL. SEBASTIAN MORAN



PROFESSOR MORIARTY

If this ever gets into print I expect there will be many readers who willlook....grunt....then take up a sheet of writing paper and send a protest to the editor asking him since when did the SHERLOCK HOLMES saga be regarded as old boys' books. I will therefore endeavour to give my explanation. It must be remembered that Sherlock Holmes was the blueprint on which SEXTON BLAKE was

based, (this statement will probably come in for rather a lot of criticism,) and as one third of our magazine is reserved for Sexton Blake I do not think that it would be out of place to devote an article to his predecessor. Secondly did not our own CHARLES HAMILTON write short stories of Herlock Sholmes? And lastly, from reading the school stories of P. G. WODEHOUSE it seems that all boys enjoy reading the Sherlock Holmes stories.

.....

I intend to look at each book in the Sherlock Holmes saga and give a short history of it; to look at some of the less well known aspects of the saga, and lastly to give a short chart showing the early printing history of the Sherlock Holmes stories.

1. A STUDY IN SCARLET: Doyle had always liked the detective fiction of such well known authors as POE and GABORIAU, and in 1886 he decided to write a detective story of his own. At first Doyle was going to call his detective Sherinton Holmes but changed this to Sherlock. He modelled this detective on a doctor he had known at Edinburgh University, (DR. JOSEPH BELL) who had always amazed Doyle with his remarkable ability at deduction. Doyle sent the MS. of the story, that he called "A STUDY IN SCARLET," to several publishers but without success. At last, however, WARD LOCK & CO. offered £25 for the copyright, if he didn't object to it being held over until next year. Doyle did object, not only to the delay in publishing but to the sum offered and he wrote asking for a percentage on the sales. He received a reply from the firm in which they explained that as the story might have to appear in one of their annuals, together with several other stories, a percentage on the sale could give rise to confusion and that they must therefore adhere to their original offer of £25. Doyle was forced to accept, and although "A STUDY IN SCARLET" has never been out of print to this day he never made a penny more than the £25 out of it. Thus in December 1887 Sherlock Holmes began his career in BEETON'S CHRISTMAS ANNUAL and there was no looking back. Together with it in the annual were two plays, "Food for Powder" by R. ANDRE and "The Four Leaved Shamrock" by CHARLES HAMILTON.

The illustrations for the Beeton edition of "A Study in Scarlet" were by D. H. FRISTON and were not very good. The illustrations in the second edition were by CHARLES DOYLE (the author's father) and these again were not very good as they were only line illustrations. Today copies of the Beeton's edition of "A Study in Scarlet" are rare collectors pieces and change hands for hundreds of pounds.

2. THE SIGN OF (THE) FOUR: The second Sherlock Holmes story the "Sign of Four" (in America it is titled the "Sign of the Four") was written for the American LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE and was far better than the first story.

3. THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: It was the famous STRAND MAGAZINE that really brought Holmes into the limelight and made his name a household word. In 1891 Doyle sent the first short Sherlock Holmes story to the editor of the STRAND who was GREENHOUGH SMITH. Smith liked the story and so Doyle wrote a series of 12 stories that ran until June 1892. These were so successful that Doyle was asked to write another series of twelve. Although the second series was as popular as the first, Doyle considered that Holmes was a hindrance - to use his own words "He takes my mind from better things" and so in the last story of the series he decided to kill off Holmes, the story in question being titled "The Final Problem" but readers did not have to read the story to see what the terrible fate of their hero was for they only had to look at the full page illustration at the beginning of the story. It was titled "The death of Sherlock Holmes" and

showed Holmes and Professor Moriarty locked in mortal combat on the edge of the Reichenbach Falls.

Readers were furious at Doyle for killing Holmes and he received hundreds of letters some pleading, some criticising and some even threatening him if he didn't bring Holmes back to life. But Doyle was firm, and for the next seven years there was no more Sherlock Holmes.

4. THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES: Early in 1900 Doyle was visiting a friend of his, FLETCHER ROBINSON, who told him the legend of a phantom hound that was supposed to roam Dartmoor. It was this legend that Doyle moulded into an early Sherlock Holmes story that he called "The Hound of the Baskervilles." (Fletcher Robinson wrote at least one story himself called "The Terror of the Snow" and appeared in "The Lady's Home Magazine" commencing August 1904.) In August 1901 readers of the STRAND were once more able to read the stories of Sherlock Holmes. It was Doyle's idea that the "Hound of The Baskervilles" would satisfy the public and that they would now stop pestering him for more Sherlock Holmes, but in this idea he was wrong. It only made them more eager for Sherlock Holmes stories.

5. THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: At long last Doyle gave in and brought Holmes back to life in October 1903 when "The Adventure of the Empty House" appeared in the STRAND. This series lasted until December 1904 and was published in book form under the title of "The Return of Sherlock Holmes." From the end of the "Return" series until 1914, a period of ten years, there were only seven Sherlock Holmes stories published. (These together with some later stories were later collected in the volume titled "His Last Bow.")

6. THE VALLEY OF FEAR: In 1914 the last of the long stories was published. This story, like "A Study in Scarlet," was in two parts, one part being set in England and the other in America. (The novelist JOHN DICKSON CARR regards this story as the best in the whole saga.) The illustrations for this story were by Frank Wiles.

7. HIS LAST BOW: This is the title given to the volume that contains the story of the same name, and it is the story that I want to discuss. Chronologically it is the last Sherlock Holmes story and takes place in August 1914. In it Holmes is an old man, and the story describes how he catches a German spy named Von Bork. To me this story always brings thoughts of sentiment; my exact feelings can be summed up in Holmes' own words to Watson "Stand with me here upon the terrace for it may be the last quiet talk that we shall ever have." When one considers how in Holmes' earlier days he had always regarded sentiment with scorn, it seems strange that it should be he who says this. Could it be that he was getting soft in his old age?

8. THE CASE BOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: From the time "His Last Bow" was published four more years went by before another story was published. Between 1921 and 1927 twelve more stories were published and collected in the volume entitled "The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes." The very last story to be published, "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place" was a very unremarkable note on which to end the Sherlock Holmes saga.

After Doyle's death on July 7th 1930, HESKETH PEARSON who wrote the biography on Doyle called "Conan Doyle" found among Doyle's papers a complete, unpublished Sherlock Holmes story titled "The Man Who Was Wanted" and although this story has not been published in Britain it has been published in America in the COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE (August 1948).

9. Much of the early success of Sherlock Holmes was due to the artist SIDNEY PAGET who illustrated the first two adventure series, "The Hound Of The Baskervilles" and the Return series.

Sidney Edward Paget was born on October 4th, 1860, and was the fifth son of Robert Paget, vestry clerk of Clerkenwell. On leaving school, Paget studied from the antique at the British Museum for two years, after which he went to Heatherley's School of Art. At twenty-one he entered the Royal Academy Schools for a term of six years. He married in 1893 and died in 1908. As well as the Sherlock Holmes stories Paget illustrated many other of Doyle's works that appeared in The Strand Magazine. These included "Rodney Stone" and "The Tragedy of the Korosko."

10. OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SAGA: In 1951 the Sherlock Holmes Society of London was formed. The activities of the society are "The society meets about five times a year. The general pattern is for members to have supper together, and to follow this by the reading of a paper on some subject of Holmesian interest."

In May 1951 the Sherlock Holmes Exhibition was opened in London and was later sent on tour to America. Interest in Holmes is as strong now as it ever was, there have been many films made about him, many plays, and even an opera and a ballet.

In 1954 ADRIAN CONAN DOYLE and JOHN DICKSON CARR wrote between them twelve stories of Sherlock Holmes under the title of "The exploits of Sherlock Holmes." These stories are very good, (in point of fact I suppose they could be called Substitute stories) and I myself cannot tell them from the ones written by Doyle himself.

For those who want to know more of the history of Sherlock Holmes there have been many books published on the subject. Here are the titles of the better ones:-

- "Baker Street By-Ways" by Edward Holroyd
- "My Dear Holmes" by Gavin Brend
- "In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes" by Michael Harrison
- "Sherlock Holmes Of Baker Street" by W. S. Baring-Gould

The last of the above titles is a biography of Sherlock Holmes consisting of extracts from the Sherlock Holmes stories and adventures written by the author himself. This book makes fascinating reading and I strongly recommend it to those readers who enjoy the Sherlock Holmes stories.

* * * * *

EXCHANGES INVITED: Holiday Annuals; Lees; S.O.L's; Comics; Science Fiction; Wizards; Hotspurs; etc. S.A.E.

J. COOK, 178, MARIA STREET, BENWELL, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, 4.

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REG GUEST, 35 THORNSETT ROAD, LONDON, S.E. 20. SYD: 6850

THE name and fame of John William Wheway will last as long as there are collectors of juvenile magazines. He was possibly the most prolific of the many Fleetway House authors, and, in an emergency, or when some particular skill was needed, editors were apt to say "Send for Wheway - he's the man to do it."

Short, slight, with dark hair and pale complexion and an unassuming manner he was undoubtedly one of the most popular men at Fleetway House, mainly I imagine, because he was a good listener and a firm friend. When he made a friend he made him for life. Although unassuming he had the reputation of doing things in the grand manner. Not content with one typewriter, at one time he had six, and in the 1920's he sported a pipe so big that it took half an ounce of tobacco at one filling. Not content with being an expert on football (he possessed several filing cabinets crammed with over 30,000 cuttings on football and associated sports) he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of ceramics, precious stones, geology, archaeology, anthropology, zoology and printing and that by no means exhausts his interests! His library was extensive and I doubt if he ever knew how many books he possessed.

Although he was seldom given the credit for it he was definitely a man of ideas, and if he had possessed the dynamic personality and drive of a man like Addington Symonds there is no doubt he would have risen much higher. Many of his colleagues attained Directorships of the Amalgamated Press and one suspects that his unassumingness and, dare we say it, willingness to be put upon and possible

J. W. WHEWAY - An Appreciation

By Frank Vernon Lay

air of self-doubt that held him back. All his life, he says, he has been pursued by "gremlins" sometimes good but generally bad. So much so, that instead of being able to carve his own career, things always happened to him. He did not possess the ability to mould his own future. He is not alone in this, of course, and it is certainly not to his detriment. My late friend Ernest Edward Briscoe, the famous illustrator, remembered him after a lapse of twenty years, and spoke of him in terms of very great affection, and the other great artist G. M. Dodshon bequeathed him one of his drawings as a "remembrance of the happy times we had together" and this is still a treasured possession of Mr. Wheway's.

Born in Walsall, Staffs, at the turn of the century, he came early to London and was apprenticed at the printing works of the Amalgamated Press in Lavington Street. Brought up on the Magnet, Gem and Boys Friend etc. he longed to write and his spell in the reading box where he encountered the clear, condensed writing of Sidney Drew, who wrote all his stories in small exercise books, and never, by any chance, deviated from his rate of 500 words to the page, the classic backward slope of Cecil Hayter who always wrote on flimsy pad paper, the bold roundhand of Louis Carlton, the neat, flowing script of Horace Phillips and the copperplate calligraphy of Robert Leighton, only served to increase this determination. The immaculate typewritten manuscripts of Charles Hamilton and Clarke Hook were a joy to behold, and gave him a useful knowledge of how stories should be presented. It was here it produced his first magazine, mainly hectographed and loaned out for 1/2d a copy.

Came the War and like all loyal subjects away to the Front he went. His Army career was undistinguished and in due course he returned to Civvy Street (not without having produced magazines in the trenches however, which under the then prevailing conditions was no mean achievement). It was with a sigh of relief, however, that he cast off his khaki and sought to resume his interrupted career.

Under the impression that his apprenticeship was completed he decided in company with an ex-army friend, to become a master-printer. So with their gratuities and whatever moneys they could beg or borrow they started up as the Selway Printing Company in Charnock Road, Clapton.

Then this gremlin took a hand in the form of a letter from the Works Manager of the Amalgamated Press demanding his immediate presence at Lavington Street. Here, on presenting himself, he was informed that, due to an Act of Parliament, inspired by Lloyd George, he still had another two years apprenticeship to serve!

So it was back to the world of Lavington Street once more. He attempted to keep the printing business going in his spare time as it was his brains and knowledge that were vital to it, his colleague having no printing experience whatever. But it was a losing battle and a few months later they were forced to sell out.

Now, however, a beneficent gremlin in the person of one Sidney Goy, his friend and overseer, was working away behind the scenes on his behalf and so successful was he that in 1919 he was offered and joyfully accepted a post at Fleetway House. The magazines he had produced in the trenches and elsewhere no doubt helped to bring this about. And as shall be seen the powers that be at Fleetway House realised that a sub-editor with an excellent technical knowledge of printing could be potentially very useful indeed.

So at the end of 1919 we find him installed in the editorial department of Mr. "Billy" Back and under the immediate supervision of Mr. Harold Twyman, at the start of a career that was soon to grow to an output of a million words a year.

Allowing for the temporary hiatus caused by the Second World War and the decline in the demand for the printed word since the end of that war, it is safe to say that John W. Wheway has been responsible for at least thirty million words for the Amalgamated Press alone. Add to that his output for the Thomson papers and other opportunities that came from time to time and the total cannot be far short of Forty Million Words of good, clean, wholesome fun and adventure - no mean achievement that!

During his probationary period Wheway assisted Twyman, "Twy" as he was called, on the Detective Library, which was staggering along under a sort of suspended death sentence, liable to go at any moment. This made things very difficult for the editor as he was afraid to commission very far ahead and serials in particular presented a very sticky problem. The only answer was the good old-fashioned A.P. remedy of reprinting. Twyman dug out "Nipper at St. Ninians" a serial which had been a great success in the Boys Realm many many years ago and Wheway was given the job of sub-editing it. Full of enthusiasm he tackled it, but try as he might, he could not get rid of the out-dated nineteenth century flavour that clung to it. In despair he consulted Len Pratt, then an up and coming editor full of ideas and practical common-sense. "There's only one way to modernise a reprint" Len said "Write it up as an entirely new story." So his ambition was achieved - he got into print - true the plot and the characters were not his, but hours of labour had gone into the rewriting and although his name would not appear under the title he knew it was his and so he was, at last an author! "Twy" was pleased and more

and more rewrites came his way and finally he was given his chance to produce his own stories. The stories he had produced during his early amateur journalistic activities at Lavington Street and in the Army were carefully rewritten. Readers liked them and asked for more. "Twy" asked Mr. Back to pay Wheway for them, which he did at half-rates. Wheway saved the three guineas he received for each story and bought his first typewriter. He felt he had arrived!

One of these early detective stories written in his Army days had been called The League of the Black Diamond and the hero was Robert Weston. For the Detective Library Robert Weston was changed to Nelson Lee and Black Diamond to Black Vulture!

Having successfully completed his probationary period Wheway became "Twy's" right-hand man on the Nugget Weekly. It was Twy incidentally who gave him his first pseudonym, (apart from rewrites of old stories that is) of Colonel MacShane, an expert on the Wild West and Red Indians in particular! He was given full authorship status by J. N. Pentelow and Stan Boddington in the Marvel and Boys Realm (where his first serial The Black Buccaneers appeared) and became a sub on All Sports and Sports for Boys and Fleetway Novels and a minor editor when Mr. Back gave him the Nugget Library.

The man who most influenced his career was John Nix Pentelow, then editor of the Boys Realm and the Marvel. His assistant was Stan Boddington and sharing their office was R. T. Eves, editor of the School Friend and his assistant E. Lythe Rosman, and an artist named Reg Kessell.

To this office every Monday morning, regular as clockwork tramped E. E. Briscoe, clad in his homely tweeds and heavy boots, up from his charming old-world cottage in the wilds of Surrey, bending slightly to ease his massive frame into the already overcrowded office.

Stan Boddington has perhaps never been afforded the credit in our pages that he undoubtedly deserves. He was one of those men who inspire affection and reverence in all those he contacted and I well remember the deep and sincere longing in the voice of Briscoe when he asked me to try and get in touch with "Boddy." He knew his days were numbered and he dearly wished to make contact with those men who had really meant something to him in the days of his prime and Stanley Boddington and John W. Wheway were two who really meant something to him (he was not a man who made friends easily). To-day I am happy in the thought that I was able to at least bring them into touch before it was too late.

Boddington was the source and inspiration of many a successful story and was the feed-box of many authors. For instance he was the instigator of Wheway's most popular Boys Realm serial Corinth for the Cup - a yarn that is remembered with affection by many men in all parts of the globe.

John Nix Pentelow, Wheway's boss for a number of years, he speaks of in terms of great affection, one might almost say love. We, in the C.D. have always regarded Pentelow with, shall we say, mixed feelings. As, perhaps, a man who pushed himself forward at the expense of others, a sentimentalist and a bit of an "old woman." But Wheway gives us a different picture - sentimental, yes, but in the real old-fashioned way. A man who would help anybody - he played the Good Samaritan to many and could seldom refuse a call for assistance. Although he and Hamilton can scarcely be said to have been friendly they both endeavoured to impart in their writings those ideals of conduct which can be best summed up in that now out-dated phrase "he's a white man even if his name is Inky!" And this brings us to rather a peculiar paradox. Hamilton, the doyen of the writers, the man who taught them all the tricks, was a born gambler, and a snob to boot. He

appears to have made very few, if any, firm friends and to have fallen out with several of his colleagues. Yet Pentelow's memory is revered by those who knew him well. As the man wrote, so he was - a "Very Gallant Gentleman!"

Wheway met Hamilton once only - let me quote. "That was somewhere in the twenties, when he paid one of his rare visits to Fleetway House (he did amble along about every five years or so). I was introduced to him by Maurice Down or was it Wood-Smith? I forget which - but it was obvious then that Hamilton couldn't have cared less who I, or anyone else was. He had just conducted some rather unsatisfactory business I concluded, for he wore a thin and rather lethal smile. He was pleased to meet me, he said with expressionless politeness, but I could see it wasn't true of me or any other Fleetwayite. I've not the faintest doubt that within ten seconds of saying goodbye, he had forgotten all about me."

It is perhaps not generally realised the awe with which Hamilton was regarded at Fleetway House in his prime. He was a law unto himself - so many of the papers revolved around him - he was almost Fleetway's bread and butter - what would happen if he suddenly died? hence the constant and never-ending search for the ideal "sub." Can you imagine how he was regarded by the rank and file? He came when he liked and said what he thought and departed and yet he was revered by the sheer brilliance of his writing. In all the years no sub-writer ever came anywhere near the master.

Is there any wonder that, to quote Wheway again "the Reading Room at Lavington Street bore many resemblances to the Remove at Greyfriars and the Shell at St. Jim's. Subconsciously the reading boys modelled themselves upon the characters in those famous scholastic establishments. It was, perhaps, natural that we should seek to emulate the achievements of the Famous Five and the Terrible Three in our daily lives. In so doing the Reading Room became our Fourth Form classroom."

"Thus hardly a day passed without some sensation or other. We were given to crazes, to jape-playing. Having been instructed in the Reading Room by Hamilton we rigged booby traps to fall upon the heads of unsuspecting visitors; we poured electric snuff through cracks in the floor to provoke blustering and prevaricating gales on the part of the inoffensive comps. below. We dropped itchy powder down each other's necks; surreptitiously we threw stink bombs into the Process Department and listened with hilarious delight to the vermilion invective that volleyed forth in consequence."

"We played sly jokes on our Correctors of the Press by leaving their hats in the firepails and stuffing their overcoat pockets with lino slugs and mono sorts from the hell box. We flipped bits out of each other's faces with towels and we flicked weals and bruises on to each other's bottoms. We filled snuff boxes with cocoa and sugar tins with salt."

"Like the Greyfriars fellows we had our sports. Our Gym. was the old Institute in Nelson Square where we learned billiards and boxing, inflicting much grievous bodily harm upon each other. Our Swimming Pool was the Lavington Street Baths where we took an unholy delight in pushing in the ditherers."

"We played cricket and football matches in Lavington Street itself - usually abandoned owing to unsympathetic police intervention. We had our secret celebrations (in Boss Harrison's sweets-and-pop emporium in Gravel Lane). In summer we went to the Northcliffe Camp, near Broadstairs, all miraculously, returning undrowned."

"We were, of course, never birched, but we were often clouted. And though frequently threatened, only one of us was ever 'expelled'."

"There was Mr. Butler in the Reading Room whose weekly job it was to correct the proofs of the Magnet. He, unlike the other readers, never shouted twice for a boy. We literally fought for the privilege of reading the copy for the galley proofs of the latest Billy Bunter story - always immaculately typed on foolscap and, except for an occasional comma altered to a full point, untouched by the hand of the sub-editor.

"But since we couldn't all read Billy Bunter, it was a point of honour with the fellow who did, to intone more loudly than usual so that we could all enjoy the story. And much annoyed was Mr. Butler, who, while perhaps struggling with a difficult transposition, found his boy gaily galloping half a galley on." Thus Wheway recalling his early apprenticeship days.

Then some forty years later, Charles Hamilton saw in a paper an advertisement for the Fleet Street School of Authorship giving the name of John W. Wheway as "the author of the Bessie Bunter stories." Although Wheway has written some nine millions words about Cliff House and Bessie Bunter and an "encyclopaedia" about her and her chums Hamilton rose in his wrath and threatened to take him and the school to court and it took many weeks of cajolery and persuasion before he was mollified and accepted the fact that Wheway was one of his staunchest admirers. Hamilton, in fact, only wrote six Bessie Bunter stories and was followed by Horace Phillips, William Gibbons, Reginald Kirkham and Pip Rosman. The School Friend was then changed to the Schoolgirl and Wheway kept Bessie Bunter going until the paper shortage in 1940 finally closed the Schoolgirl down. But she was once more resurrected and under the name of Tilly Tuffin rewrites of Bessie Bunter appeared in the Princess, Wheway using his well-known pen-name of Hazel Armitage instead of Hilda Richards.

It was the dream of every A.P. writer to edit and produce his own magazine and working with Pentelow and meeting such authors as Joyce Murray (Sidney Drew), Henry T. Johnson, Clarke, Hook, Cecil Hayter, Hamilton Teed, Lewis Carlton, Trevor Wignall, John Hunter - many of them worshipped from boyhood - only served to stimulate the desire.

Early in the 1920's Wheway produced his "dummy" of The Fleetway Herald, much the same as we produced our dummies of the Greyfriars Herald and Popular in our famous competitions of some years ago. His dummy eventually found its way into the sanctum of sanctums, the office of the then Chairman, Sir George Sutton, and in due course John was summoned to the august presence. This in itself was an achievement as only about one in twenty of the dummy number one's that were produced got as far. But there it ended. John was quite unable to cope with the searching questions of Sir George. "You really feel you could produce this magazine if it were given to you? And what circulation do you think you could achieve? Do you think" he gently pressed, "that it would sell, say two hundred thousand copies?" Wheway floundered, he hadn't thought about such things and when Sir George questioned him about advertisements etc. he was completely lost, and so Sir George, murmuring sweet nothings, terminated the interview. But as they say nothing is wasted and the fruits were yet to bud.

About this time Wheway wrote two of the famous Mapleton Rover stories that were published under the Richard Randolph pseudonym of Pentelow, and it is a tribute to Pentelow that Wheway to this day regards it as a very great honour to have been allowed to write them and have them published as having been written by

Pentelow himself.

However the writing was on the wall for the Marvel. Jack, Sam and Pete who had been one of the biggest money-spinners for A.P. for many many years had been losing their hold steadily for a number of years. S. Clarke Hook, their author, although he had always been a free lance was retired on what was then considered a handsome pension - and the Marvel staggered along for a while until its place was taken by a newcomer Sport and Adventure, a paper which to-day is known but not remembered.

In the North a new challenge was arising, one which was destined to give the A.P. many headaches and probably still does - the entry of the House of Thomson into Boys' Papers. Circulations began to suffer in all directions, - Magnet, Gem, Boys' Friend were dropping thousands and something had to be done and so a new star was born.

One, Addington Symonds submitted his dummy as Wheway had already done, but with one big difference. He could answer the questions when he was asked them and so he got his big chance and The Champion was born - a paper that was destined for a time to attain the highest circulation of any of the A.P. papers - almost half a million copies a week only to be exceeded later by The School Friend which went over the million mark.

Champion No. 1 was almost ready and Symonds needed a ready-written serial and he came to Pentelow for it. As it happened Pentelow had one, "The Bell of Santadino" by Eric McClean, which had previously been published in an Australian paper. As it lacked a sporting interest the Boys' Realm office had not used it but thought very highly of it and fully intended to use it at the very first opportunity, maybe in Sport and Adventure which badly needed a shot in the arm. But Pentelow couldn't resist extending a helping hand and much to the annoyance of Boddington and Wheway, Symonds got his serial and Eric W. Townsend was launched on his career.

To return to Wheway however, his dummy had not been forgotten. It was felt that Symonds was a brilliant man but lacked editorial experience and technical know-how whereas Wheway had both. So once more he was sent for and this time he was told he was to be assistant editor to Symonds. When he saw the first set-up of No. One Champion he was staggered at the resemblance to his own Fleetway Herald.

Wheway was heart-broken to have to leave his friendly office in Room 63 and one can imagine the different atmosphere in his new surroundings - Addington Symonds, dynamic, always with a sheaf of manuscripts and fountain pen at the ready, bursting with ideas, his assistant Miss Margaret Marshall also a live wire (she later became publicity chief of British International Pictures of Wardour Street). Immediately Wheway became "Referee" the sports-ace of Champion and was commissioned to write a serial and half a dozen completes.

The staff grew rapidly, Alfred Edgar, Gwyn Evans, Cecil Eaton Fearn and Willie Home-Gall, all names well-known to us. As the Champion went from success to success so other papers followed; Pluck and then The Rocket all modelled on the same formula and Young Britain was added to the group.

It is not surprising that Wheway couldn't stand the pace - a nervous breakdown followed and on his return from convalescence he found Alfred Edgar (now Barry Lyndon a Hollywood script-writer) installed in his place. High words followed before Wheway once more established his rights.

Then Symonds' day faded - he had differences with the powers that be and he

folded his tents and went, leaving behind him a record of success that has probably never been bettered. The early Champion will always be his memorial and it is easy to see when he ceased to be the editor and similarly with the Champion Annuals. Although they continued to be very popular they never repeated their early success and it is significant that when the War caused the closure of so many papers the Champion carried on for many years.

Wheway remained but the six or seven pounds to be earned by being "on the staff" and relying on the various commissions for the balance was small beer to what the best free-lances were getting. So in 1934 Wheway became a free-lance and for a time shared an office with E. L. Rosman at 188, Strand.

World War Two came and once more papers folded right, left and centre. He was lucky if he averaged 5,000 words a week. Eventually, due to the call-up system, trained staff became short and George Garrish asked him to help out and for two years in company with Walter Bury he kept the circulation of The Miracle rising.

Came V.E. day and Wheway's temporary job was over. The demand for writing was small and competition was fiercer than ever. John almost went back to print but at the last moment his good gremlin went to work and he was commissioned to finish a serial in place of another author who had been suddenly taken ill and this led to another. He was recommended to the Adana Printing Machine Company and for eight years he edited "Printcraft" a very competent and worthwhile production for amateur printers.

In 1955 R. T. Eves the editor who had been responsible for him becoming a freelance invited him back to the staff at Fleetway to act as undertaker to the Champion, a nostalgic job in that he had been one of its midwives so to speak and also to sub-edit Girls Crystal and so to his retirement in 1962.

Not that retirement meant the end of writing, far from it. Since then he has rewritten Cliff House stories for the Princess, edited several Pets Annuals and has several projects always on the go. But nothing he can ever do will exceed the enjoyment he has given to so many of us in the twenty years from 1920 to 1940, in the pages of Boys' Realm, Boys' Friend, Champion, Pluck, Rocket, School Girl, School Girls' Own, Sport and Adventure, Girls' Crystal, Triumph, Schoolgirls Weekly, Boys Magazine, Gem etc. etc.

Of his inventiveness there is little doubt. In 1934 he was responsible for introducing in The Schoolgirl pull-outs in which 4 pages (2 leaves of the paper) were made into a 16 pp booklet. I have several examples before me as I write, entitled Indoor Games for Schoolgirls, Schoolgirl's Own Chummy Clubs, The Book of Cliff House Pets (a fascinating one this, giving details of most of the Cliff House girls' pets), Hilda Richards Book of Schoolgirl Beauty, The Happy Holiday Book. This idea has been used time and time again since.

In 1924 as Referee he organised the Champion Football League with silver cups and medals for the winning teams in each division at the end of the season. This was very popular and when Pluck started it also had its Football League. Then the F.A. got to hear about it and decided it transgressed their rules and threatened to expel all affiliated clubs if they continued membership. Wheway had many heated arguments with Frederick Wall as he then was but the F.A. stuck out and the leagues had to close down.

Early in his career he organised and carried out the Surprise Footballs stunt. Footballs were sent to clubs whose names were extracted from provincial newspapers as an advertisement for the Marvel. Later the Boys Realm gave away five footballs

every week.

1928 was the year of the great Annual slump, all the annuals, boys and girls doing badly. Wheway heard they were being sold at £2 a ton for repulping! So he thought up the Birthday Scheme in which the Annuals were saved and made into prizes. This scheme with refinements and additions has been used ever since.

In 1925 he wrote a serial "Spence of the Spurs" which was published in Pluck. Wheway himself was a character in the story as were most of the Spurs players. Most of his spare time for ten weeks was spent at the Spurs ground with the players. He received £90 for the story and his personal expenses which had to be paid out of his own pocket came to £80! But one has only to read his football serials to realise they were labours of love. He was lucky to be able to do the work he loved and get paid for it as well. His favourite players then were Tommy Clay of the Spurs and Charlie Buchan, then with Sunderland.

During his career he has used so many pen-names that, as he says, he doesn't remember the half of them but we do know the following: Hilda Richards, Wanda Smallways, Gladys Cotterill (the name of his first wife), Daphne Anson, Hazel Armitage, Vickie Belgrave, Anne Gilmore, Heather Granger, Diana Martin, Chester Wynn, Isabel Graham, Audrey Nicholls, Grant Cotterill, Vincent Armitage, Colonel McShane, J. Winchester.

It has been my honour and privilege to meet John Wheway on many occasions and to draw him out over a pint of mild and bitter in a convivial atmosphere and fascinating to hear him reminisce of Fleetway in the Sparkling Twenties.

Anecdotes of Len Pratt, then editor of Prairie Robin Hood and Sexton Blake Libraries; of Crichton Milne, an expert in the art of taking editors for a ride and the earner of so much cash it wasn't true and withal always broke, being an inveterate gambler.

Of that great entertainer Draycott Montague Dell, who as editor of Chums was responsible for Wheway's appearance therein; of Edgar Wallace downing a pint of champagne one lunch time at the Press Club and of adventurous Hedly O'Mant who sold Wheway his first typewriter when he first gave up the A.P. for the stage.

Phil Swinnerton, who devoted his life to Rupert the Chick; "Bill" Stanton Hope and his plans for setting up a publishing house down under and taking half the Fleetway staff with him, all expenses paid! E. L. McKeag, editor of the Girls Favourite and mainly responsible for the formation of the Fleetway Players and who once was lost in the catacombs of Paris in the company of Reggie Kirkham for a whole night.

Harold May, editor of the Nelson Lee and Balfour (Bill) Ritchie editor of the Boys Friend Library, Clive Fenn and Harold Twyman who was responsible for John's one and only Sexton Blake story in the Union Jack. Nights at Charnock Road when half a dozen or so of the Clapton (now Leyton) Orient football team arrived to drink beer and play pontoon till the early hours.

Monty Haydon, who took over in 1925 from Willy Back control of the Boys' Friend group, as well as the Magnet group edited by Maurice Down and was later responsible for producing two outstandingly successful papers, The Modern Boy and the Thriller, followed by the Wild West Weekly and the Knockout and finally retired in 1961. And Walter Tyrer, author of The Miracles most successful serials and founder of the Fleet Street School of Journalism.

And the artists too - Harry Lane, a boyhood favourite of Wheway's, Leonard

Shields who thought nothing of dashing off a sketch while you waited, his great friend Val Reading, E. E. Briscoe as smooth and as round faced as any of the juvenile heroes he portrayed, H. M. Lewis who possessed the most impressive cranium Wheway has ever seen. As Wheway says it was a great crowd and it was grand having to work for a living among them all. In those days life was so full of excitement and interest that you had a slightly conscience-stricken feeling that you ought to pay the A.P. for letting you have your job!

Can you wonder, then, at the eagerness with which I await my next chance of spending a few hours with J.H.W. and being transported back with him to the halcyon days of Fleetway House in its prime.

Although he has retired from Fleetway he has by no means given up the writing game and I know all readers of the Collectors Digest Annual will join with me in wishing him many more years of active writing and let us hope a revival of Bessie Bunter and thank him from the bottom of our hearts for the many hours of pleasure he has given us and still continues to give us when we re-read his wonderful stories, that, truly stand the test of time.

As he has said of so many of his colleagues, he, also is "a white man."

* * * * *

FOR SALE or EXCHANGE

1922 Holiday Annual, Trouble for Trimble, Bunter Does His Best, Tom Merry and Co of St. Jim's, Billy Bunter's Banknote, 3 Wodehouse Penguins, Authentic Photostat copy map of Greyfriars district 2/6d.

WANTED: G.H.A.'s 1920, 1928, 1929, 1931 - 1935, 1938, 1940 and GEM "Tom Merry Expelled."

R. F. ACRAMAN, 24 SPINNELLS ROAD, HARROW, MIDDX. Tel: FIE 7587

E. B. FLINDERS, 18 CONQUEST, HITCHIN, HERTS. WANTS

GEMS Nos. 727, 802, 812, 813, 816, 817, 1189, 968.

MY GRATEFUL THANKS TO Eric Fayne, Bill Gander, Harry, Tom, Jack, Ivan and all Midland Club Members; to Ben, Frank and all London Club Members; to Albert Watkins and especially to Henry Webb.

STAN KNIGHT, 288 HIGH STREET, CHELTENHAM

SEASONAL GREETINGS TO

Gerald Allison, Eric Fayne, Jim Swan, and all other Hobby friends.

WANTED DESPERATELY any copies Dixon Hawke Library.

J. McMAHON,

54, HOZIER CRES., TANNOCHSIDE, UDDINGSTON

THE GIRLS' FRIEND LIBRARY

By Derek J. Adley

A reader unfamiliar with the "Girls' Friend Library" would at once assume that it was a companion monthly to the Boys' Friend Library, - how wrong would this assumption be! A former editor of the B.F.L. once stated that it catered for the age group 8 years to 16 years, whereas the G.F.L. was aimed at girl readers from 16 years upwards. On this basis, therefore, the G.F.L. could rightly be argued to be an adult publication.

This fact is borne out in the material content of the library and in the editorial comment which said it catered for ladies of all ages especially the engaged girl and the married lady.



"A PRAIRIE MAID."

A new volume of "The Girls' Friend" 3d. Library, consisting of the above-named celebrated novel, will be out on



Friday, January 14th.

Readers are strongly recommended to get a copy of "A Prairie Maid"—a splendid story of love and adventure.

120 PAGES. - - PRICE THREEPENCE.

These volumes of "The Girls' Friend" Library can still be bought:

"Madge Derry."

By **HILDA BRIERLEY.**

"Pollie Green at Cambridge."

By **MABEL ST. JOHN.**

"Just a Barmaid."

By **MABEL ST. JOHN.**

Following the great success of the B.F.L. which commenced in 1906, the G.F.L. appeared on the bookstalls in 1907 and was priced at 3d with 144 pages. The honour of writing the opening story went to Mabel St. John, a pen name, which hid the identity of Charles Henry St John Cooper, who himself had in that period, an output probably as prolific as Charles Hamilton and he certainly was the leading contender

for the crown of King (or Queen?) of girls' story writers.

The covers of the G.F.L. were illustrated up till number 7. Then was substituted a plain mauve cover showing just the title and author of the story. Production costs must have been pretty low in those days for the stories were mainly reprints and even the £5 illustrator's fee was saved on the dropping of the cover illustrations.

In January 1921 illustrations returned to the G.F.L. and a few years prior to

this the price had risen to 4d, but this must still have been a good publishing proposition.

During the years of publication well-known authors names appeared on the cover - names well-known in womans fiction - such as Ursula Bloom and Barbara Cartland.

Adverts were carried in the early days and some of these would have been vastly out of place had G.F.L. been a juvenile publication, I refer to adverts such as the following:-

"Crosskeys tablets if you are anaemic!"
 Mother Siegel's Syrup for constipation and torpid liver!
 Epp's Cocoa and Milk Chocolate (perhaps not the latter)
 Red, White and Blue Coffee
 Keatings' Powder for fleas and bugs (just in case)

- but I think you will agree that the following is a gem, - a tramp wrote to say that "since using Pears Soap two years ago I have used no other."

Some of the titles were good examples of exactly how adult the publication was, titles such as "Love Wins," "Should Cousins Marry," "Somebody Loved Her," "Little Bill's Mother" or "She deserted her child." From these titles one can imagine that the stories were of a highly melodramatic nature and I have selected at random the following extract:-

" The girl who had been running swiftly through the dreary streets towards the river, stopped for breath at last, and leaned heavily against the stone wall.

She was still in her early teens - a mere child and yet the eyes which gazed out from her white face looked as if they had already seen too much sorrow.

"I will never go back - never! she cried with a gasp. "I couldn't - I would rather die. Ah, I should love to die."

"By Jove! Someone's flung herself over the parapet," cried a voice..... "

Pretty dull stuff this but although this was the general pattern for the stories of the period, Mabel St John's stories had far more sparkle in them. In fact I am told that his/her character creation Polly Green was a fantastic success and she was featured in many tales through the years.

Regarding St John, there is an interesting little story worth repeating here. Such was the fame of Mabel St John that once when Henry St John Cooper was in the Press Club he was introduced to a man who always wanted to meet his sister Mabel - because 'her' stories had so greatly thrilled his wife (and indeed him).

I can well understand why the advert appeared in a recent C.D. for number 53 of the G.F.L. entitled "The Twins of Twineham" by Mabel St John for this really was a schoolgirl classic! and this story had a definite appeal to the younger reader, quite out of context with the usual G.F.L. material.

The twins were Betty and Nancy Moore, born in India and brought up by two old maiden sisters, Misses Olivia and Lesbia, and Mabel St John wrote descriptively:- Both Betty and Nancy had the same tangle of deep golden hair, both had the same delicately oval faces and complexion that would be creamy but for the fact that it had been tanned by the sun and wind. Betty's eyes were blue - inclined to violet. Nancy's were grey with a leaning towards green. Both had the same delicately chiselled tip tilted noses, both had the same scarlet-lipped mouths.

Twineham College was an old fashioned rambling red bricked Elizabethan building that once had been known as Twineham Court but now its name had been changed and across the antique frontage was a long black-painted board on which the gold letters were inscribed 'Twineham College for Young Ladies.'

When the twins sat for their entrance examination and could answer none of the questions Betty wrote:-

"I can't answer these questions a bit
Though I know that to some they'd be fun
If for forty-five years I should sit
I couldn't do more than I've done."

It is interesting to read some of St John's very descriptive passages even though he drew them out a little, such as the following :-

" Mr. Pondcherry was fat and greasy. He had three chins that swayed and wobbled as he walked. He had a pair of thick fat lips that were set in a constant smile which displayed an uneven row of teeth. His nose was insignificant, his eyes were small, his head was covered by a scanty thatch of red hair, and whiskers of the same hue decorated his pendulous cheeks.

He was short, but of enormous bulk. He wore a seedy frock-coat and a white waistcoat, in the creases of which he carried samples of his dinners, breakfasts and tea for the last three days. His hands were large and very moist. "

Leaving St John, it is quite interesting to note that authors of the G.F.L. that had written Sexton Blake yarns were well to the fore, amongst them F. A. Symonds, Richard Goyne, A. Murray, Stacey Blake, Douglas Walshe, Edward C. Davies, Crichton Miln, Oliver Merland, Louis Essex, C. M. Hincks and doubtless many others.

If St John Cooper was well to the fore in early stories the claim for mass production in the later years must go to three well known writers: W. E. Groves, Richard Goyne and H. Crichton Miln.

Richard Goyne, whose name when spelt "Paul Renin" was splashed across the lurid suggestive novels of the thirties with their brazen covers that were frowned on by many, and yet Richard Goyne actually earned pounds by supplying stories to the upright house of Amalgamated Press for inclusion in the G.F.L.

But how tame and harmless his stories really were. My word, compared with today's style of suggestiveness, his was laughable. How times have changed!

Other publications were given advert space in the G.F.L., papers such as - Home Circle, Girls Home, Cosy Corner, Handy Stories, Girls Friend Weekly, Woman's World, Girls Reader, Heartease Library. (The latter featured a story 'The Sweetest Woman in the World) - how about that for a statement.

With such a variety of pen names used in the G.F.L., many of which were not featured in other papers apart from the Source paper Girls Friend Weekly, the job of a statistician sorting out the identities of the pen names is somewhat difficult and indeed many of the facts would probably be of little interest to the average C.D. reader. However, for the record here is a selection of pen names traced.

Richard Goyne wrote as Aileen Grey, Florence Riddell, Diana Dane,
Sheila M. Grenville, Grace Lyall

W. E. Groves wrote as Effie Scott, Mary Carlyle

Crichton Miln wrote as Mavis Lee Hope, Sybil Hurst, Frances Seymour,
Agnes Leigh, Madge Crichton

F. A. Symonds wrote as Earle Danesford, Pauline Rayne, Joan Wilding
Leslie Beresford wrote as Edna Deans

All in all, the G.F.L. reader had a good month's reading and whilst these tales are of a bygone age they must have thrilled many thousands of young girls and ladies.

The run of Girls Friend Library was as follows :-

1st Series	578 Issues	-	1907 to April 1925
2nd Series	728 Issues	-	May 1925 to May 1940

It then continued as Oracle Library and Miracle Library alternately, and in 1949 these two libraries continued as independent publications and are still being published today. It is interesting to note that the trend in Blake authors being contributors has continued for both Oracle and Miracle Libraries have had contributors such as G. E. Rochester and Walter Tyrer and in fact I believe have used stories originally intended for the Sexton Blake Library.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

For a good many years the Girls' Friend Library consisted of complete stories which had been run as serials in the little set of companion papers which included the Girls' Friend, the Girls' Reader, the Girls' Home, and the Heartsease Library. The Girls' Friend was the first in the field, and it was so successful that it was soon followed by the Girls' Reader which was printed on paper of the same size and colour. These two periodicals were so similar in appearance and content that they were more twin papers than companions. The Girls' Reader started as a halfpenny paper, and after about a year was doubled in size and price.

Not so very much later, the halfpenny paper, the Girls' Home put in an appearance on the stalls, differing from the other two only from the fact that there were half the number of sheets and they were green.

All were lavishly illustrated, and were indeed most attractive. Even fifty years later they are quite charming. The star artist, without any question, was George Gatcombe. He was extremely talented, and he must surely have been the most prolific illustrator of any age. Though his heroines all tended to look alike, he certainly made his pictures come alive. Though Gatcombe seems to have supplied 50% of the illustrations in these three papers, we find pictures from plenty of other artists, including many men famous to us for work in boys' papers. It was noteworthy that one artist would be commissioned to illustrate one particular serial throughout the length of its run.

We find C. H. Chapman illustrating a serial entitled "Her Lover From India" in the Girls' Reader of 1911. About the same time R. J. Macdonald and Leonard Shields were illustrating certain serials. J. Louis Smythe took on a heavy share of the work.

One thing strikes me about these artists. Messrs. Chapman and Macdonald were as good then as when we knew them in later years. Shields, however, was inferior at that time. He was the only one who showed marked improvement down the years. From being only fairly adequate at that time, he went ahead so that many maintain that he became the finest artist of all.

The curious thing was how quickly the stories appeared in book form in the G.F.L. after their serialisation ended. One would have thought that it might

NEW YEAR! NEW STORIES!

THE GIRLS' FRIEND 1^D

A Home Story Paper for Readers of all Ages

No. 530.]

ONE PENNY.—EVERY WEDNESDAY.

[JANUARY 1st, 1910.]

HEARTIEST NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO—

Pollie Green at Twenty-One

— BY —

MABEL ST. JOHN,

Author of "Plain Jane,"
in "The Girls' Reader."

(New readers should first of all read the synopsis of the commencing chapters at the foot of the next page.)



Pollie's Champion
 "That's what you wanted to see, ain't it?" asked the foreman.
 "Oh, yes. Thank you so much!" Pollie said.
 She could hear herself speak now. They had passed out of the card-room into another small room that was entirely empty, but for themselves.
 "And now what am I—?" the young man began.
 Pollie looked round quickly.
 "Where is Coosha?" she asked.
 He shrugged his shoulders.
 "Stopped behind, I expect. Anyhow, it don't matter about the black. Two's company, and three's none—eh?"
 He looked down at her with an expression on his face that made Pollie's heart suddenly beat with something that, if it was not fear, was very like it.
 "I'll go back now," she said calmly. "I must find Coosha."
 "Oh, hang her! There's something else to settle up first!"
 "Settle up?"
 "Of course! What am I going to get for my trouble, eh, my dear?"
 An arm in a lead check sleeve suddenly went round Pollie's slim waist; a red face was suddenly thrust close to Pollie's.
 "It's no good kicking, my dear. You ain't going to get away. Better give in quietly. I'm going to have a kiss for my trouble. I don't know that I ain't going to have two or three. Steady! Whoa!"
 Pollie struggled, but it was useless. The young man was strong and determined. He held her securely.
 "Coosha!" Pollie shrieked.
 "Better give over, my little sweetheart! I saw to Coosha some time back. Didn't notice



Mr. Francis was standing by the gate. Coosha had told him Pollie was coming, and he had hurried out to meet her. "Pollie, little girl—" "Daddy!" she said.

have been good policy to let a year or two go by before reissuing them, but such was not the case. Probably readers who had enjoyed a story as a serial were anxious to obtain it complete.

As Mr. Adley has indicated in his article, Mabel St. John was obviously the

most popular of all the writers. She would have so many serials running at one time that it is impossible not to come to the conclusion that other writers' tales were published under the name of Mabel St. John. If anyone had the time to read Mabel St. John continuously there is no doubt that we should know the answer, one way or the other.

Mabel St. John's most popular character would seem to have been "Pollie Green." As time went on, the addition to the Pollie Green stories of "Coosha," a black girl, provided a form of slapstick which hardly improved them. There was "Pollie Green at School," "Pollie Green and Coosha," "Pollie Green at Cambridge," "Pollie Green in Society," "Polly Green at Twenty-one" and "Pollie Green - Engaged." All of these appeared as serials in the Girls' Friend, were issued as complete stories in the Girls' Friend Library, and later serialised again in the Girls' Home. Pollie would seem to have been a money-spinner on the lines of Billy Bunter.

Other prolific writers were Hilda Brierley, who contributed mystery stories (one of hers was "The Ghost of Deepdene Grange"), and Mrs. De Winter Baker, whose name reminds me irresistibly of "Rebecca."

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GOOD PRICES OFFERED for ANY of the following

COMPLETE MAGNET SERIES: Must be fit for binding -

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| Valentine, Mystery of Study No. 1 | Da Costa | High Oaks |
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ALSO WANTED COMPLETE SINGLES, (Hamilton only).

P. HANGER, 10 PARK SQUARE, KINGS HEATH, NORTHAMPTON

OTTO MAURER would be glad to enter into communication through the editor of Collectors' Digest with anyone interested in Roland Quiz or owning the octavo edition of the Golden Pheasant, whether with a view to purchase or not.

Sincere CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
to the Editor and all
Contributors to Collectors' Digest,
and grateful thanks to Laurie
Sutton for kind assistance.

JOHN TROVELL
COLCHESTER

WANTED: SCHOOLFRIEND 1919-1921;
SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARIES 1st
Series; HOLIDAY ANNUAL 1922,
1934-1941; BOYS' CINEMA 1919-1921

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4, RUSHMERE ROAD,
NORTHAMPTON

Ramblings on Popper's Island

by MAURICE KUTNER

Barring-out stories have apparently always been popular with the young reader if their frequency can be used as a guide. Whenever a hiatus occurred, and they occurred as regularly as dogdays, the silly season and high festivals, the publishers decided on a barring-out or rebellion story, very much in the manner of an army cook who, being uncertain of the menu for the day, is quite certain he cannot go far wrong by "giving 'em stew." If all the fictional schoolboys who have taken part in rebellions and barrings-out were laid end to end they would not only stretch a long way but would also stretch one's imagination and credulity.

The reasons for these noisy, undecorous, and periodic upheavals in the scholastic curriculum fall into three main classes, the new Head, the senior master acting-Head, and an act of injustice by the regular Head. The temporary new headmaster, often a stranger to the regular staff, having been selected as a suitable candidate for the post by a self-satisfied Board of Governors, turns out to be a sadistic bully and tyrant, subjecting our heroes to describable torments. There was even a case, to prove the equality of the sexes, when a member of the school governing board, a Miss Jane Trumble, took over the Headship, and St. Frank's had to endure the horrors of petticoat rule.

Temporary headmasters appear to have nerves and constitutions of iron, in strong contrast to the usual Head who is plagued with a periodic indisposition apparently for the sole purpose of delegating his duties to the most senior master in whom he misplaces his trust, that is, if the school governing board do not intervene with their own pet tyrant.

A senior master may be an obedient subordinate and seemingly ever in agreement with the policies defined by his Chief but, once the mantle of power descends upon his servile shoulders, an unfitness for the job is immediately shown. Intolerance and pigheadedness are displayed as his badge. The realisation grows that perhaps for years he has secretly coveted the position of power and probably brooded silently and perpetually on the changes he considered necessary, changes that should have been put into operation long ago if his Chief hadn't lacked moral fibre. A salutary lesson to be learned here in counting our friends.

The animus of these temporary headmasters are usually directed towards the junior forms, an excellent arrangement for, not only are the readers largely interested mainly in the Lower school, it gives the opportunity to bring into the picture the caddish section of the seniors who are more than anxious to aid and abet the new regime in an effort to pay off old scores.

As schoolboy codes of honour do not permit tale-bearing, misguided letters of complaint to the local member of parliament or to the school governing board are out of the question. In any case they would receive scant notice and certainly no acknowledgement. School governing boards are noted for their blind faith and confidence in headmasters, plus a nineteenth century attitude towards boys. A period of unjust and often painful treatment finally goads the junior form into open revolt.

The barring-out (within the confines of the school) and the rebellion

(entrenchment outside) is decided upon to enforce assent to their youthful demands, the venues of action being many and varied, from trenches in the playing-fields to the tuckshop, from the classroom to Popper's Island.

It is the revolt of the entire Remove of Greyfriars in the 1934 Magnet series which led to the barricades being put up on the island and gave Frank Richards yet another opportunity to indulge in some fine pen-painting of the turbulence created in the minds of those in authority. This was a case in which a kindly and usually fair-minded Head created an injustice based on error.

Fisher T. Fish possesses a little account book wherein are entered his various business transactions, especially with the "babes" of the Second Form. This book is dropped by Fishy and picked up by Mr. Prout. In terror of being discovered as the owner of such incriminating evidence Fishy decides on drastic action and, squirting ink over the master of the Fifth Form, retrieves the book. Curiously enough, Billy Bunter had been planning to "ink" Mr. Prout but had been forestalled in his delectable intentions by the action of the American junior.

Suspicion falls on Bunter and he is sacked by the Head, but the Owl of the Remove, innocent for the nonce, refuses to accept expulsion. He hides in the school for more than a week and is supplied with surreptitious meals by members of his Form who believe in his innocence. He is eventually rooted out and dispatched for Courtfield railway station in the care of Wingate and Gwynne. The Remove, who have cut classes and set authority at naught, overtake the trio by Courtfield Common on their cycles, rescue Bunter and "down" the two Sixth Formers who refuse to negotiate. After being tied up, each with one leg free, the seniors are forced to hop their disconsolate and undignified way back to Greyfriars. The only sympathy received from the Head is a thundering "you allowed Lower boys to treat you in this disrespectful and absurd manner?"

The entire prefect force are immediately sent out to search for stray Removites. Lord Mauleverer, realising the truth of unity being strength, suggests Popper's Island as just the place for holding the fort. He organises a shopping expedition on a super-grand scale at Chunkley's Universal Stores and the entire Remove Form, food and camping materials are ferried across to Popper's Island and the game's afoot. The rebellion ends at such time as the real culprit is discovered and the Head rescinds the expulsion of Bunter.

One would have wished that the loyalty of the leading lights of the Remove to Bunter and their dour struggle against authority had been for a far worthier cause. But what was Greyfriars without Bunter? In fact, what was the Magnet of the thirties without Bunter? Those who formulated policy at the Amalgamated Press wouldn't have entertained that possibility for a moment.

The sojourn of the rebels on the island is enlivened by a story within a story, the advent of a desperado, one Gunner Briggs, so-called because of a trigger-happy propensity to shoot his way out of trouble, and men of this type are always in trouble. Robbing the Courtfield and County Bank, shooting a man in the process, the gunman, escaping from the general hue and cry, finds a hiding place on the island, living on rations filched from the encamped juniors, for which the whiter than white Bunter is unjustly blamed. Suffice it to say that, after putting the Remove in dire peril with his automatic which seemed to hold, and fire, as many bullets as a machine-gun in an old Keystone comedy, the gunman is eventually over-powered, thereby making Inspector Grimes at the Courtfield Police Station a very happy man when the key is at long last turned on the desperado of Popper's Island.

While the rebels are defying authority, what are the authorities doing? Dr. Locke has a very unhappy time of it and is intensely irritated by the suspicion that Mr. Quelch, his right-hand man for over 20 years, shares the belief of his Form in Bunter's innocence. The Head believes, like all in high places, that it is for the Chief to make decisions and for the subordinate to yield to authority. The slight disagreement between himself and Mr. Quelch is painful to both. The Head orders the tow-path area opposite the rebels' stronghold to be put out of bounds except to his prefects who are then inflicted with a monotonous succession of guard duties.

Delegation of authority being part of the system, even one's sentiments and remarks of the obvious begin to be delegated as when Dr. Locke points out to Mr. Quelch that such a state of affairs cannot continue, the hapless Mr. Quelch passes that interesting information on to George Wingate who, as captain of the school bears the brunt of his irritated superiors, and is stuck with the information from above that the state of affairs couldn't continue.

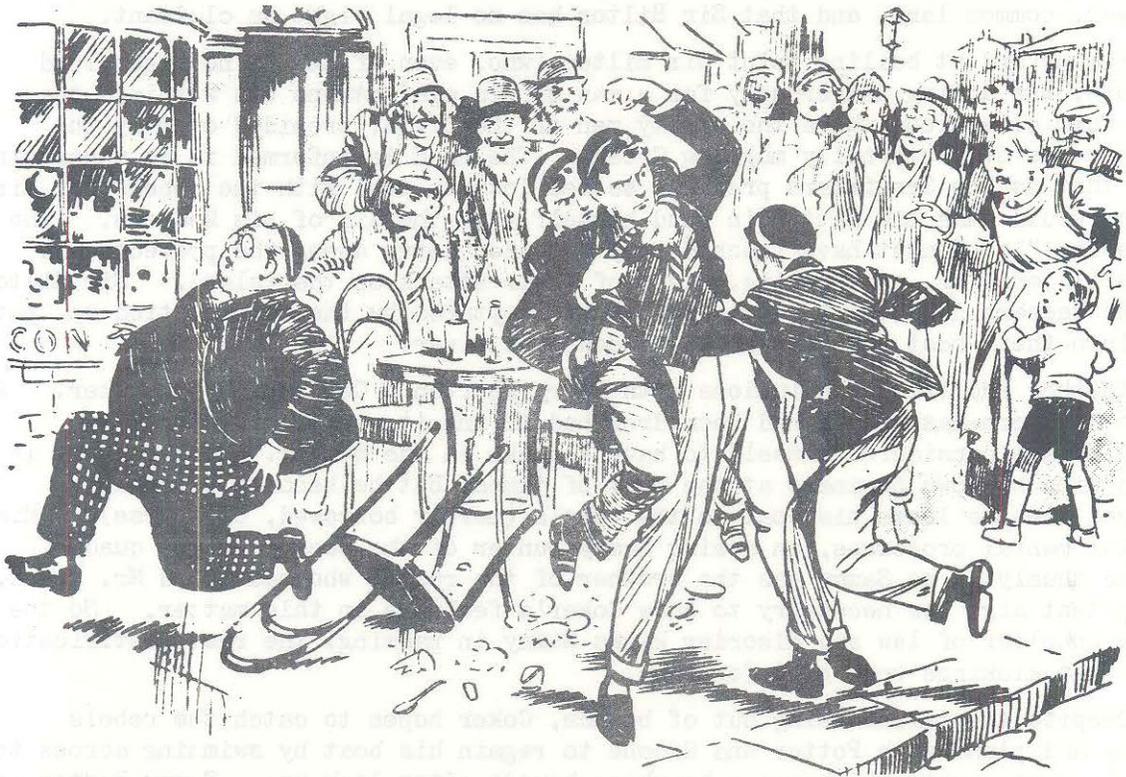
On the first evening the prefects under his leadership attempt a landing on the island but are overwhelmed by superior numbers and retire defeated, wet and weary, with a plentiful supply of swollen noses, dark shades around the optics and, if not exactly cauliflower ears, at least a splendid collection of aches and bumps.

Trying to beat the rebels in a straightforward, sportsmanlike manner was really unworkable under the circumstances. George Wingate couldn't help but put the prefects at a disadvantage by playing the game. Dr. Locke's tactless and undiplomatic "Really, Wingate, I expected better things from my prefects," did nothing to appease their lamentable lot. As all attempts ended in failure they in turn became as testy as their superiors and far too many whoppings were handed out to the remainder of the Lower school by the disgruntled prefects.

Unbeknown to Wingate, Gerald Loder plans to get Bunter away from the island by informing him, from the towpath, that his brother Sammy had been run over by a car, brought home on a stretcher and was lying in sanny in a critical condition. It is to Billy Bunter's credit that although he was enjoying life to the full, with no real early-rising bell, no masters, no lessons, and plenty of food, he was ready to forgo the fleshpots and attend to his brotherly duty. The plan nearly succeeds but for the suspicious Vernon-Smith, and Loder returns to Greyfriars, minus Bunter, but with the contents of a tin of soft and sticky tar streaming over his head to keep him company. Wingate's straightforward frontal attack, and Loder's low cunning, both proved that authority had to suffer much perturbation of spirit, - and a few hard knocks, before the innocent Owl of the Remove was vindicated.

At a time when the Head was floundering in a slough of uncertainty, a source of annoyance to him was the reception of several disagreeable communications from Sir Hilton Popper, the self-appointed owner of the island, and chairman of the school governing board, and as such had to be grimly taken notice of by Dr. Locke.

The rebellion is first made known to Sir Hilton when, from the towpath of the river Sark, he sees some of the Removites having an early morning dip. Upon learning that they are out of school without leave, he orders them back to school, giving them the further incentive to obey his command by threatening to have them all soundly flogged and the ring-leaders expelled. As these sweet cajoleries, to the accompaniment of his brandishing stick, and stamps of rage, fail to impress the rebels, he complains to Mr. Quelch that his form is trespassing on his



(ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE POPPER ISLAND SERIES DRAWN BY LEONARD SHIELDS)



property. Mr. Quelch is very quick to point out that the island is, and always has been, common land, and that Sir Hilton has no legal right as claimant.

Fuming and at boiling point Sir Hilton (who, even if he had no high blood pressure, was acting dangerously for a man of his age) stamps his way into the Sixth Form class-room where the mighty men of the Sixth, presided over by the Head, are as ever eternally mugging Greek. The Head is informed in no uncertain terms that as the Greyfriars prefects seemed loth to deal with the rebels he, Sir Hilton, would take the matter in hand himself with the aid of his keepers. The expression "loth" must have touched many a tender nerve among the prefects who were still showing, and feeling, signs of their attack on the island. Sir Hilton and his keepers do attempt a landing but are captured by the rebels, tied up, put back into their boat and sent drifting down the river.

Another who tried conclusions with Harry Wharton & Co. was Horace Coker. As it was his Form-master who had been drenched in ink it was possible that the mighty Horace considered himself to have a stake in the matter. Coker never is one to mind his own business at the best of times, but he becomes personally involved when he loses his boat to the rebels (merely borrowed, of course). His peculiar mental processes, on seeing Sammy Bunter of the Second in the quad, reasons thusly:- as Sammy was the brother of the rascal who had inked Mr. Prout, some patent sign was necessary to show Coker's feelings in this matter. So the mighty upholder of law and disorder kicks Sammy in passing, the real justification being that kickings were good for fags.

Despite the island being out of bounds, Coker hopes to catch the rebels napping and plans with Potter and Greene to regain his boat by swimming across to the island at night, which means breaking bounds after lock-up. Sammy Bunter, as proficient in the aural exercise of eavesdropping as his more famous brother, overhears Coker's intentions and gets a warning across the narrow stretch of river to the Removites who prepare to welcome their visitor.

The trio of the Fifth duly break bounds that night and Coker swims very noisily and splashily across to the island. He is nabbed by the rebels and sent packing. Returning to Greyfriars the luckless trio find themselves locked out. With the prospect of having to face the consequences Potter and Greene express their admiration for their leader by banging Coker's head on the lobby door which was, and needed to be, of stout English oak. They got detentions to the end of term.

Although the rebellion was a source of worry to Mr. Quelch, perhaps a bigger source of vexation was his colleague, Mr. Prout, whose booming voice was forever reminding him that the Remove Form was still absent from the school, and it was time - high time - something was done. If one could believe his reiterated assurances, Mr. Prout certainly had no wish to intervene in the management of a colleague's form, but he certainly appeared to delight in reminding the form-less master that it was time the unprecedented state of affairs were brought to an end, if one can judge by the number of times this obvious sentiment was boomed forth. The Fifth form-master not only considered the situation scandalous but also wished that the Head had the sense to place the matter in his hands when he would very soon bring the young rascals to heel. Furthermore, it irked him that so far from giving him full authority to act in the matter, the Head had not even asked his advice. Mr. Prout confided to his most attentive, and abject listener, Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, that when he had offered some unsolicited advice the Head had answered with what Mr. Prout described as "extreme curtness."

Like the rest of the teaching staff at Greyfriars, Mr. Prout strongly suspected all along of Mr. Quelch having some sympathy for the rebels, and expressed his surprise, indeed astonishment that Mr. Quelch should venture to question the justice of the Head's sentence. Also, he was amazed that his colleague should venture to utter a word in defence of the disrespectful young rascals. Now, no one should ever, whatever the provocation, call the Remove Form of Greyfriars School "disrespectful young rascals" in Mr. Quelch's hearing. Mr. Prout discovers this very definitely when this charge is answered by Mr. Quelch with the deep voice usually reserved for the Remove form-room, "Mr. Prout," he says, "You are an ass." Mr. Prout cannot believe he has heard aright, but Mr. Quelch, walking away, assures him that he had heard him correctly the first time by repeating "An ass!"

Since the Remove had cut classes their form-master had, from the first, been in a difficult position. He had always been able to discipline his large form but for the time being his authority had lost its power. True, he believed Bunter to have been unjustly expelled and had a certain sympathy with the rebels, yet felt lost at finding himself a master without a form. He was aware that some of the other masters smiled, or even sneered, at his discomfort. Such as Mr. Lascelles, the maths master, were men of tact and avoided passing any comments either to him or his colleagues, but Mr. Prout was the chief culprit in the gentlemanly art of pointing out the obvious, which was answered silently by Mr. Quelch by the simple, but expressive, expediency of turning his back.

It was more than painful to Mr. Quelch to be in disagreement with his Chief who he deeply respected; a man who had honoured him over the years with his friendship. As he could not find excuses for his absent form on the one hand and uphold the authority of the Head on the other, he offers to resign, and this offer is promptly turned down by Dr. Locke who decides to permit his subordinate a more active part in ending the rebellion.

With the Head's permission Mr. Quelch announces to the rebels on the island that no expulsion of the guilty party will take place if the culprit will speak out. Fisher T. Fish, anxious to get off the island, seizes upon this as a way out, settles for a whopping, and confesses. The siege of Popper's Island is over.

Billy Bunter comes out of this series very well, being accused of inking a form-master, and raiding the tuck during the desperado's sojourn on the island and, wonder of wonders, being innocent on both counts. An almost perceivable halo floats above his podgy head even though one remembers that he had been seriously thinking of "inking" Mr. Prout in the first place.

Some of Bunter's new-found saintliness must have been observed by his gimlet-eyed form-master for, in conversation with the Head, hinting at a possible miscarriage of justice in the case of William George Bunter, Mr. Quelch utters a remark worthy to be placed amongst the Gems of Hamiltonia. It was this:-
"It is my personal knowledge of the boy's character that causes the doubt in my mind." Crumbs !!

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CHARLES HAMILTON MUSEUM

Please send your duplicate copies of the GEM and MAGNET - funds are now available to purchase.

JOHN WERNHAM, 30 TONBRIDGE ROAD, MAIDSTONE

GEMS OF RICHMAL CROMPTON

Richmal Crompton has been delighting generation after generation for the past 45 years or so. Everybody knows William, and all but the curmudgeons love him. Probably no single boy, Billy Bunter apart, has ever won such fame.

Roger Jenkins once wrote that the main joy of William was not his effect on other children, but his impact upon adults. Nothing truer was ever said.

Richmal Crompton has a remarkably shrewd knowledge of human nature. She draws her pen pictures from real life. We have all met people like Mrs. De Vere Carter, Mrs. Bott, Mr. Faulkner, and scores of others of Miss Crompton's glorious adults. Seldom does she overtint her pictures. She doesn't need to. She shows us the quaint little failings of mankind in a handful of words - and we chuckle, and go on chuckling as the years go by. We recognize so many people we know - but we never see ourselves. How could we?

Just occasionally she irritates us mildly by putting a modern child's slang into the mouths of her boys. William overdoes "Gosh" and "It's smashing" now and then. So far as we are concerned, this is a bit of a mistake. The same mistake that Charles Hamilton made when he introduced "twerps" into his tales for a short time.

But with her glorious adults, Miss Crompton seldom puts a foot wrong. They stretch down the past forty years in a glowing calvalcade of human nature at its funniest.

Richmal Crompton's stories over the decades are packed with wonderful, unforgettable gems of writing which scintillate down the corridors of our lives. Here are just a few of them.



"DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?" THE STRANGER SAID MAJESTICALLY.

"NO," SAID WILLIAM SIMPLY. "AN' I BET YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM, EITHER."

Aunt Emily fixed her eye upon him.

"Will you be good enough to procure a conveyance?" she said. "After the indignities to which I have been subjected in this house I refuse to remain in it a moment longer."

Quivering with indignation she gave details of the indignities to which she had been subjected. William's mother pleaded, apologized, coaxed. William's father went quietly out to procure a conveyance. When he returned she was still talking in the hall.

"A crowd of vulgar little boys," she was saying, "and horrible indecent placards all over the room."

William's father carried her bag down to the cab.

"And me in my state of health," she said as she followed him. From the cab she gave her parting shot.

"And if this horrible thing hadn't happened, I might have stayed with you all the winter and perhaps part of the spring."

William's father wiped his brow with his handkerchief as the cab drove off.

"How dreadful!" said his wife, but she avoided meeting his eye. "It's - it's disgraceful of William." She went on with sudden spirit: "You must speak to him."

"I will," said William's father.

Mr. Falkner had been staying at the Browns' house for a very long time.

He had written to Mr. Brown to remind him of the fact that they had been at school together and to ask if he might pay him a short visit. Mr. Falkner was like that. Also his idea of a short visit was not Mr. Brown's.

Not that Mr. Falkner needed much entertaining. He entertained himself. He talked. Mr. Falkner talked perpetually, and the subject of all his conversation was Mr. Falkner. Mr. Falkner was a never ending source of interest to Mr. Falkner.

He talked about his exalted position, his many and varied talents, his marvellous exploits, his ingenuity, his aristocratic friends.

"Oh, yes, the Duke and I are the greatest of pals. Always have been. The way the man pesters me to go and stay with him! But all my friends are the same. There's the Honourable Percy Wakefield - you've heard of him, of course? - I ran into him again last week. He simply wouldn't take 'No.' I managed to put him off at last. Quite a nuisance, these people. Simply won't let one alone."

Politeness prevented Mr. Brown from remarking that he did not grudge Mr. Falkner to the Duke or to the Honourable Percy. Instead, Mr. Brown sat, silent and oppressed, trying to read the evening paper and to look as if he weren't doing so.

And Mr. Falkner talked on.

There was a certain monotony about William's reports. Masters who had a delicate shrinking from the crude and brutal truth wrote "Fair." Those who had the courage of their convictions wrote "Poor." The mathematical master, who was very literal, wrote "Uniformly bad."

The horror and disgust of William's father at these statements was generally as simulated as William's penitence. They knew their respective roles and played them, but they had gone through the scene too many times to be able to put much spirit into the parts.

But this time Mr. Falkner was there. Before Mr. Brown could begin his set speech of horror and disgust, Mr. Falkner took the paper from him and began to

comment on it squeakily.

"By Jove, very different from the things I used to get. 'Excellent' and all that sort of thing all over them. Some of them simply couldn't say enough. 'Remarkable talent' and 'Very industrious' and 'Splendid work,' and all that sort of thing. I remember the Headmaster saying to my father one speech day 'Brilliant boy of yours, that!' Very keen-sighted man he was, too. Never made a mistake. I believe I was a great favourite at school. I've no doubt I'm still remembered there."

"Neither have I," said Mr. Brown.

"Yes," bleated Mr. Falkner, "it's extraordinary how anyone at all above the average makes himself felt through life. So often I find people who've only met me once remember me when I've quite forgotten them."

Again Mr. Brown had no doubt of it.

As he emerged from the front door Jumble greeted him tempestuously, wagging his collie tail, cocking his fox-terrier ears, sniffing joyously with his retriever nose, his dachshund body a-quiver with the anticipation of a walk with William in the wood.

Miss Tressider remembered Miss Bullamore. Miss Bullamore, on the strength of of possessing a handbook on palmistry, did the fortune-telling at all the local fetes and was generally supposed to be psychic.

Miss Tressider had lost her dog, Hereward. She begged Miss Bullamore to use her psychic powers in order to discover where he was. Miss Bullamore tried but without success. In spite of the handbook on palmistry, her psychic powers were somewhat uncertain. They worked best after the event. When anything had happened Miss Bullamore often impressed her friends by saying that she'd had a "feeling" that it was going to.

Miss Mortimer begged her to have a "feeling" about Hereward, but Miss Bullamore explained that she could not have them to order. She told Miss Mortimer to go home and said that she'd try to have one when she was alone. She hoped that Hereward would be found soon and then she could have had a "feeling" that he was there all the time.

Doris was a well-intentioned girl, but she seemed to think that no statement was complete until it had been repeated several times in the same or different words. This gift of hers of serving up the same statement in any number of different ways amounted, indeed, almost to genius.

"You see," she went on earnestly. "Well, what I mean to say is that if they'd give up the chance of the championship - well, it shows, doesn't it? I mean, they wouldn't do it unless they loved you, would they? I mean, it does prove they love you, doesn't it? Well, I do think it does. I mean, if they'd give up a chance like that, it shows they love you better than a chance like that, and -- well, it does show they love you, doesn't it? I'd say that -- well, that if they can give up a chance of honour and glory like that it will show you that they love you."

"We want to be 'vacuated, too,'" said Arabella Simpkin, a red-haired long-nosed

(continued on Page 52).....

The Demon Within Him

By R. J. GODSAVE

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THE DEMON WITHIN HIM

In the autumn of 1922 E. S. Brooks departed from his usual practise of writing the St. Frank's stories in serial form and produced a dozen or so single complete stories. No. 391 o.s. "The Demon Within Him" was a rather unusual one depicting evil dominating the mind. In this case the person was Cecil De Valerie of the Remove.

It is true that we all have a demon within us, and when it's aroused and takes possession of a person it needs a great deal of driving out.

Trivial, insignificant things become greatly enlarged, and what normally would be regarded as a trifling affair becomes of importance to anyone in this condition.

The story opens with practically the whole school in a discontented frame of mind, owing to Dr. Stafford's refusal to allow the scholars to indulge in skating. The early December day had

been exceedingly cold - freezing hard and snowing slightly. The frost had held for four or five days, and there was every prospect of a strong healthy ice on the River Stowe. Everybody declared that the ice was secure enough to bear the school, even if everybody was as big as Fatty Little.

But the Headmaster had not yet given his permission.

Why wasn't skating allowed? It was so ridiculous - so rotten. There was the ice waiting to be used, and all the fellows were held up, just because the school had been forbidden to take advantage of the frost.

The villagers were already skating - scores of people had been seen on the ice that afternoon. But the juniors failed to remember - or at least they ignored the fact - that there had been already one or two nasty mishaps. Two village boys, for example, had broken through the ice at a tricky bend in the river. They had managed to scramble out, but only after a struggle.

Tom Burton was a particularly keen skater, and he was feeling rather out of sorts having partaken of some sardines which had been open for a week. The sunny Bo'sun was prepared to snap at anybody just now. There had been so much exasperation over the skating that tempers were rather on edge. De Valerie, usually so good tempered, had picked a quarrel with the Hon. Douglas - absolutely over nothing. And both had gone off in a huff.

It was unfortunate that Burton's study-mate, Jerry Dodd, felt he had to do something to pass the time, and it struck him that making toffee was a really terrific wheeze.

With Burton feeling a bit squeamish, a few short-tempered words from him on the suitability of using the study for that purpose soon had the pair quarrelling violently.

Anybody who has felt bilious, even in a slight degree, will easily sympathise with Tom Burton in his present ordeal. But Jerry was feeling fine, and all he wanted was to see the toffee done.

This tiff between the chums of Study F was destined to lead to something far more grave and serious than a mere study squabble. And it will also prove how easy it is for one quarrel to cause another between different parties.

Jerry Dodd, fed up with the BO'sun, flung himself out of the study and ran into an inky, baggy-trousered junior, with frowsy hair and an extremely crumpled collar. Needless to say, this untidy specimen of humanity was no less a person than His Grace the Duke of Somerton.

"Hallo!" he said, as he bumped into Jerry. "Who's been biting you? You look frightfully fierce!"

"That blessed son of a sea captain has been irritating me all the evening!" said Dodd. "We had a squabble at last, and I've cleared out - I wouldn't stay with the Bo'sun for another minute. I'm going to find some other study."

Somerton whistled.

"As bad as that, eh?" he said sympathetically.

"What's the matter with Study M? Why don't you come in with De Valerie and me?" he asked generously.

Jerry looked up keenly.

"By jings!" he said, "I'd love to share a study with you two fellows."

They both turned into Study F. and found Tom Burton. A pang entered Jerry Dodd's heart. Even then reconciliation might have come about - but for the Bo'sun's first words. They positively closed the door to any settlement.

"Who told you to come back?" he snapped fiercely.

"Clear out of this cabin, and keep out! I'm sick of the sight of you."
"Keep your hair on!" snapped Jerry. "I've only come to fetch my books."

Jerry Dodd and Somerton marched into Study M and found that Cecil De Valerie was seated at the table doing his prep. And it was not at all remarkable that De Valerie was a bit irritable, too.

He was a keen skater, and had chafed at the Head's ban. Furthermore, he loathed Algebra with a loathing which was something solid. And to be disturbed in the middle of it was the worst thing of all.

"Here you are" said Somerton. "Plenty of room here."
Jerry Dodd looked round with approval.

"Yes, it's bigger than my old study" he said. "It's jolly decent of you two chaps to let me come in."

De Valerie looked up.

"Can't you chaps stop jawing?" he demanded tartly.

De Valerie was just about to settle down again when he glanced at the other end of the table and saw the pile of books, football boots, and other odds and ends.

"What the dickens are those things?" asked De Valerie frowning.

"They're mine!" replied Jerry.

"Then what are they doing here?"

"I suppose the Algebra has got on your nerves" said the duke soothingly.
"Dodd's coming in here with us - I told him that we'd welcome him with open arms as a study mate."

Cecil De Valerie laid down his pen.

"Oh, did you!" he said sharply.

"Yes, I didn't see --"

"I don't want to be nasty, but I think it was confoundedly thick of you" interrupted De Valerie. "I'm not mean or selfish - but I'm jolly well going to put my foot down against any outsider pushing his way in here."

Jerry stood there, flushing rather deeply.

"I don't want to push my way in" he said warmly "it was Somerton's idea, anyhow. He said you'd be delighted."

"I'm not delighted!" exclaimed De Valerie. "And what's more I won't have it."

"Look here, Val" said the duke quietly.

"We've always got on well together and I'm not one to start any nastiness. But I think you're being beastly selfish over this business."

This brought a sharp reply from De Valerie and a threat to kick Jerry Dodd out of the study.

Such was the build-up of a quarrel between De Valerie and Somerton, developed from a quarrel between Dodd and Burton.

The Duke of Somerton, unutterably miserable wended his way towards the Common-room. He detested a squabble more than anything else, and it pained him greatly. It wasn't like De Valerie to be like this.

Nipper was making a speech to the fellows when Somerton entered.

"The fact is, I'm after subscriptions" said Nipper. "This subscription is for old Griggs, the carrier. He's had a piece of rotten luck. His horse slipped coming down a hill the other side of Edgmore. It broke a leg, and had to be destroyed."

"Couldn't he buy another horse?" asked Handforth.

"How can Griggs lay his hands on forty or fifty pounds? During the past week the old fellow has borrowed a handcart, but he hasn't been able to earn enough to keep his family."

The contributions came in rapidly. All the well-to-do fellows in the Remove such as Singleton and Archie Glenthorne dubbed up handsomely. The others subscribed as much as their funds would allow them.

"Now, let me see!" said Nipper as he checked the various sums. "What about the chaps who aren't here? By jingo! There's De Valerie."

"You won't get much out of him!" said Somerton.

"Why not?"

"He's too selfish!"

"Oh, don't be so bitter!" smiled Nipper. "Just because you've had a bit of a squabble with him, you needn't say things like that, Sommy. I happen to know that De Valerie received a fiver this morning from his pater. He can whack out two quid, anyhow, and still have enough cash left for himself."

Nipper, with a few others went to beard De Valerie in Study M.

"We've come for a contribution towards a well deserving fund," said Nipper.

"I haven't any money to give away," interrupted De Valerie curtly.

"What about that fiver you got this morning?" demanded Handforth.

"What I've got is nothing to do with anybody else. You can clear out - the whole lot of you! I won't give a cent!"

"Dash it all, don't bark like that!" protested Nipper. "There's no need to jump down our throats, De Valerie! And I think you might at least hear what this fund is before you refuse to contribute."

De Valerie controlled himself with an effort.

"Well, what is it?" he growled thickly.

Nipper told him. He listened with obvious impatience, and an unpleasant expression came over his face as Nipper finished.

"You want me to give some money to this dirty old village carrier?" he asked sourly. "What's Griggs got to do with me? Of course I won't contribute, why should I?"

"Do you mean that you won't give anything at all?"

"Yes, I do!" retorted De Valerie, glaring.

"All right, keep it!" said Nipper quietly.

All the fellows were thoroughly sick with disgust at De Valerie's behaviour, and they cleared out of the study uttering loud and pointed remarks.

De Valerie slammed the door and locked it.

* * * * *

For five minutes De Valerie sat in his study when he heard a tapping at the door.

"Go away!" he shouted roughly. "If you think I'm going to unlock this door --"

"It's me, Master De Valerie," came the voice of Tubbs, the pageboy.

"What the dickens do you want?" shouted De Valerie. "Go away, Tubbs, or I'll come out and kick you down the passage!"

"I won't disturb you, Master De Valerie, but there's a gent and a young lady asking for you."

De Valerie jumped up filled with alarm.

He went to the door and unlocked it.

"What's that you said?" demanded De Valerie. "A lady and gentleman to see me?"

Before Tubbs could speak any further two figures appeared from the lobby, and De Valerie gasped. At the first glance he recognised them - his Uncle Dan and his Cousin Mary.

He felt furious with his uncle for coming at all. Hadn't the man any more consideration than to drop on him like this without giving him a minute's warning. It was outrageous, and De Valerie, in his present mood rebelled.

And while he was thinking this way, the two visitors entered his study. Uncle Dan was big, bluff, with a round clean-shaven face which expressed jollity and good humour.

His fair companion was a really pretty girl of about fifteen. She was small and attired in a very trim musquash furcoat, with a little fur hat, which suited her to perfection.

"Hallo, Cecil!" she exclaimed gaily, as she ran forward.

"Ho, ho, my boy! Caught you by surprise, eh?" laughed Uncle Dan. "We thought we'd just drop in and have a look at you."

De Valerie looked at them sullenly.

"You might have given me a bit of warning!" he exclaimed in a growling voice.

"Eh? What's this - what's this?" asked his uncle. "You don't seem to be in the best of tempers, Cecil. Has anybody been upsetting you?"

"Yes, I'm not feeling up to the mark."

"That's no reason why you should be so boorish, my lad," said Uncle Dan.

"Oh, Cecil, I think you're horrid!" exclaimed Cousin Mary. "Why, you haven't even shaken hands."

"What's the idea of coming here?" asked De Valerie abruptly.

"As the matter of fact, I brought Mary down here because we hear that there's some excellent skating on the Stowe. We're staying with some friends just near Bannington. Mary can't skate much, and I thought you'd be gallant enough to teach her a few of your special little tricks. You're a good skater, Cecil."

"Won't it be lovely?" asked the girl gaily. "The ice is just glorious, and I'm ever so keen on learning. Dad has got permission from the Head to take you back with us. So you'll be able to stay the night, and then we can go out skating tomorrow."

Under any ordinary conditions De Valerie would have leapt at the chance. But he was still feeling bitter, angry, and perverse. The spirit of selfishness was strong upon him.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but I don't want to come."

"Oh, Cecil," said the girl in dismay. "But --"

"I can't help it. I've got something better to do than teach people skating!" growled De Valerie.

"Can't you pay somebody to teach you? I don't see why I should be dragged about when I don't want to go!"

Uncle Dan's smile turned to a frown.

"It is bad enough for you to show temper towards me, Cecil, but I am pained and hurt that you should speak to your cousin in such a way," he said quietly.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Oh, nothing!" said De Valerie. "It's not my fault. The fellows have been

rowing with me over nothing," went on De Valerie, breathing hard. "I don't want to come."

"Oh, I didn't know you could be so horrid!" said Cousin Mary angrily.

"Didn't you?" sneered De Valerie. "Then it's about time you found out! I'm not an angel, and it's no good thinking I am! It's too confoundedly thick when people come here without warning, and then expect me to do favours!"

"Favours!" repeated his uncle sharply. "You infernal young boor! You ought to think yourself extremely lucky to have the opportunity. Favours, indeed! We shall certainly ask no favours of you, Cecil! And until you apologise - both to Mary and to me - I have not another word to say to you."

"Good!" grunted De Valerie nastily. "That's a relief anyway."

"Upon my soul!" said Mr. Cunningham, clenching his fists. "Come, Mary! We won't stay another moment in this wretched young puppy's presence! I can see that all my former opinions of Cecil were sadly at fault."

The girl hesitated a moment.

"Oh, Cecil, you can't mean what you say," she said earnestly. "Father wants you to come over with us --"

"I want nothing of the kind!" interrupted Uncle Dan.

"But, dad, it'll be all right if Cecil apologises --"

"You can save your breath - I shan't apologise," broke in De Valerie gruffly. "If you want to learn skating, there's plenty of other fellows who'll be glad enough to teach you."

The girl stood there, flushing deeply.

"Oh, you - you cad!" she exclaimed with hot emphasis.

And she swished round, and walked out of the study, holding her head high. Uncle Dan followed, without giving another glance in De Valerie's direction. The junior stood there, scowling with passion.

Even as he had been uttering the words, he had been amazed and shocked with himself.

Cousin Mary's last words had hit him like a lash of a whip. The expression she had put into that word "Cad" made De Valerie squirm as he remembered it.

De Valerie clenching his fists strode out into the Triangle. Tiny snowflakes were falling, for the temperature was well below freezing point. He paced up and down the Triangle, chilled to the marrow. He suddenly made up his mind he would go indoors. He wouldn't say a word to anybody. If the chaps addressed him he would cut them dead. He wouldn't give anybody a chance to cut him first.

The demon still held command of his victim.

* * * * *

"Impossible!" said Jack Grey excitedly.

"It's true you ass - absolutely true."

"Go and look in the lobby if you're not satisfied," grinned Reggie Pitt.

"This morning the Head's not only given permission, but he's stamped the thing by giving the giddy school a whole holiday."

De Valerie started.

The information was news to him. He had been ignored by all and sundry. As soon as breakfast was over, he mooched off by himself. He would make all the juniors feel how rottenly they were treating him. But as he watched the fellows getting ready for the day's sport he did not see many indications of sympathy for him.

In fact he was ignored - nobody had a thought for him.

"Oh, all right - hang the lot of them," muttered De Valerie savagely. "I wouldn't go with them, even if they asked me."

He suddenly determined that he would go for a ramble - a long walk along the frosty country road. After all, this would do him more good than skating.

His thoughts were as bitter as ever as he strode along the country lanes. He didn't pay much heed where he went - in fact, he didn't actually know which direction he took. He was only aware that he was walking along the smallest lanes he could find, with snow covered hedges on either side.

His thoughts strayed towards the Fund which was being raised for old Griggs. In a perverted kind of way, De Valerie considered this to be humorous. The Fund was still open - waiting for his contribution.

What did he care if Griggs did starve? The man was nothing to him. Why, he hadn't even seen the other members of the Griggs family.

De Valerie, in short, was going from bad to worse.

Being alone was responsible for this probably. For he was allowed to brood, and there was no other influence to assist him. He felt that every hand was against him, and he would fight the lot.

A slight shower of snowflakes caused him to look up at the sky. When he had last eyed the weather conditions, the sun was shining. But now, in some strange way, the whole sky had become overcast, and snow was beginning to fall in heavy flakes.

De Valerie trudged on, and within five minutes the snow was whirling down in real earnest, and the wind had increased to a miniature gale.

And now, as he walked, he had a most peculiar experience. Straining his eyes, it seemed to him that a shadowy kind of figure was about twenty or thirty yards in advance.

He couldn't see distinctly, but hurried along in order to overtake the mysterious figure. Then came a momentary lull in the storm - just a clear space for a second or two. And De Valerie grunted with disgust. For the figure after all, was merely that of a man pushing a hand-cart.

There was something strange about his gait. It was uncertain - wavering and unsteady. As he walked, he swayed and lurched from side to side. But he continued to push the barrow in safety. And now De Valerie was rapidly overtaking him.

A curious thought came to him - a thought which rapidly became a certainty. This man in front of him was Griggs - Griggs the carrier! And he was as drunk as a lord, pushing his confounded hand-cart.

"By gad!" exclaimed De Valerie. "And this is the rotter they expect me to help! Rolling along the road, as full as a barrel."

They were ascending the little hill out of the valley, and Griggs was finding it hard to push his barrow.

Then suddenly he slipped.

He fell sprawling, the hand-cart slewed round, and tipped up into one of the snow-covered banks.

A miscellaneous assortment of odds and ends slithered out, and lay there jumbled in a heap.

Griggs attempted to rise, and he succeeded in getting to his feet. But he swayed, his knees sagged, and he fell again, uttering a low groan. De Valerie who had paused, looked on with contemptuous interest.

He advanced, arrived opposite the prostrate man and looked down at him. Griggs was just trying to struggle up again. Then he caught sight of De Valerie, and held out a hand appealingly.

"Thank heaven you've come, young sir!" he said weakly. "My legs don't seem to be what they used to be. I'm feeling mortal queer, sir!"

De Valerie looked at him with a slight catch in his throat.

Instead of a bloated, beer-soaked face, there was something quite different. The rugged countenance of Griggs was as pale and ashen as that of a corpse. His cheeks were stricken, his eyes hollow. And it seemed to De Valerie that the eyes burned with a feverish, unnatural light.

In a flash he forgot his own affairs.

He bent down beside the man, and then went on his knees.

"I say, pull yourself together Griggs," he exclaimed quickly. "It's all right - you only just slipped over."

Griggs sighed with a kind of contentment as he felt himself raised in De Valerie's arms. There was a peaceful expression on his face now, but no flush in the ashen cheeks.

De Valerie knew well enough that this man had not been drinking. There was no sign of it. His lips were blue with cold, and there was scarcely any wonder for this. For Griggs ragged coat was almost threadbare, and De Valerie caught a glimpse of the thin suit he wore underneath. And the man's boots were gaping with holes. To be walking abroad in a snowstorm thus attired was ghastly.

"Why on earth did you come out?" he demanded gruffly. "Good Heavens, that's a horrible cough you've got! You'll catch pneumonia if you're not careful!"

"It's all right; it don't much matter now, anyway, sir!" said Griggs weakly. "I don't reckon I'll last long enough to catch no illness. I didn't ought to have come out to-day. But a man can't allus do what he wants."

"You must have been ill before you started," said De Valerie. "I thought you were drunk at first, the way you were lurching along."

"Drunk!" Griggs uttered a weak hollow laugh. "Bless your heart, sir. I ain't touched a drop of anything except water for the last ten days. We haven't had no wood for a fire, and no money to buy tea. I dessay I was a fool to come out this morning, but there was a chance of earning a honest shillin'."

"A shilling!" muttered De Valerie dazedly.

Suddenly Griggs clutched De Valerie's sleeve. "Tell-tell the wife I was thinking of 'er! An' the kids, sir! I - I ain't forgot 'em. I - I - "

His voice trailed away, and then it seemed to De Valerie that all the rigidity went out of the man's body. He flopped back, and his eyes closed. He lay there, in De Valerie's arms still and silent, and there was a peaceful expression upon his poor, rugged face.

De Valerie was nearly mad with emotion and fear. In spite of himself, great

floods of tears welled into his eyes. The man has fainted - fainted from sheer lack of sustenance. He had never seen anybody in a faint like this before.

And then, as he still crouched there with the unfortunate Griggs in his arms, he heard a kind of purring noise in his rear. He glanced round and saw a small motor car was coming along through the thick snow.

De Valerie gave a gasp of relief. He had never been more thankful to see a stranger. He gently allowed Griggs head to fall in the snow, and rose to his feet.

"Stop - stop!" he shouted.

But the motorist needed no bidding. He had already stopped, and was just climbing out of his driving-seat as De Valerie ran up. Then the junior was further gladdened by the fact that the newcomer was Dr. Brett, the village practitioner.

"Oh, thank goodness its you, Dr. Brett!" panted De Valerie.

"Why, my boy, what on earth's the matter?" asked the doctor curiously. "Good gracious! Who's that?"

"It's old Griggs, sir! The village carrier!" broke in De Valerie. "He was pushing his barrow up this hill when he fell down, and I went to help him. But he's fainted! The poor old fellow's collapsed in my arms. Let's get him home, sir, for goodness sake!"

Dr. Brett hurried across the snow-covered road to the spot where Griggs lay still. He knelt down in the snow, raised the old carrier's head, and then gave a sharp exclamation.

"My boy, I am too late!" said Dr. Brett quietly. "This man is dead!"

Cecil De Valerie felt that the world had crashed to atoms.

He found himself looking down at the still figure in a fascinated way.

"Dead!" he stammered. "But - but - Oh, you've made a mistake, sir!" he burst out "He can't be dead! It's impossible --"

"Steady-steady!" exclaimed Dr. Brett, as he gently laid a handkerchief over the white face. "I'm a doctor, de Valerie, and I don't make mistakes of that kind."

De Valerie clenched his fists, and his own face was as pale as a sheet. All his limbs trembled, and his cheeks were wet with tears.

"Dead!" he said, nearly choking. "And - and would he have lived sir, if he had got into a proper bed last night, with blankets and food --"

"I have not the slightest doubt that Griggs would have recovered his full health and strength. If I had known Griggs was so ill I would have done something for him. It is a pity - a terrible pity!"

And while De Valerie was attempting to gain a further hold on himself, Dr. Brett lifted up the pitiful remains and placed them reverently in his car.

"You had better come with me, too, De Valerie" he said quietly. "This shock has been a great one for a boy, and I can well understand your emotions. Come home with me, and I'll soon make you feel better --"

"No - No!" said De Valerie fiercely, "I don't want to come, sir - I want to be alone - alone! Don't bother about me, I shall be all right; a walk in the cold air will do me better than medicine."

Dr. Brett considered for a moment and then nodded.

"Very well, my boy," he said. "Go for your walk."

De Valerie didn't seem to hear. He hardly knew the car had started off. In fact, De Valerie didn't know anything - until, suddenly, he found himself quite alone.

"He's dead - he's dead!" breathed De Valerie remorsefully. "And I could have saved him! Oh, how could I guess that things were as bad as that?"

He walked along, blindly - not caring where he went.

"It isn't fair" he burst out. "The fellows didn't tell me it was serious as all that - " He paused. "But they did tell me!" he went on fiercely. "It's my fault - absolutely my fault entirely!"

The fact came home to him that if he had contributed to the fund the previous evening all would have been well.

The snow had ceased to fall now, and the sky was clearing once again. But De Valerie didn't know anything of this - he had no thoughts for the condition of the weather. Neither had he any realisation of the passage of time. He wasn't even aware that he had left the road, and wandered off through a kind of skeleton wood to a spot where a steep hill-side ran down to the banks of the river.

It lay before him now - a winding sheet of ice, peaceful and alluring. In the far distance figures could be seen - fellows keenly enjoying themselves, skating, and flushed with warmth and health.

Then his heart jumped strangely.

From afar, as though unreal and ghostly, came a shrill cry. And the scream came again - a wild despairing cry for help. This time it was louder.

De Valerie turned, every nerve on the stretch. He stared down towards the river and could hardly believe his eyes. There in one spot near the very centre of the river, a sinister black hole had appeared - a black hole with jagged edges.

And as De Valerie looked, the head and shoulders of a girl rose up - a girl attired in a musquash coat, with a neat fur hat.

The girl was Cousin Mary.

And then she vanished, she slipped back into the black patch of deadly water, and she did not appear again. And this blow, coming so suddenly after the other dreadful affair was nearly enough to send De Valerie crazy. It was too horrible for contemplation.

His cousin, struggling in the icy water of the Stowe.

There was only one person in the world who could save the girl - and that was himself. He was galvanised into fierce activity.

His cousin - that sweetly pretty girl - had been skating unescorted. She was a novice, she knew practically nothing about the sport. But she was high-spirited and confident, and she had obviously set out on her skates without troubling anybody to accompany her.

And it was De Valerie's fault.

He, like a blackguard, had refused to go out with her, and this tragedy was the result.

He had to save her - he had to.

Even as he ran, he was horrified at the realisation of his own ungentlemanly conduct the evening before.

He found he couldn't go direct down to the river bank. For just here the hillside was so steep that it became a precipice. He had to make a detour, and in a few minutes he found himself tearing through the wood.

Panting, gasping for breath he ran on. It seemed hours before he broke out into the open once more. And all the time Mary was in that icy water, sinking into the depths.

His thoughts came to an abrupt halt, for he could see across a short meadow now - he could see the spot where Mary has vanished. He could see a number of St. Frank's fellows had come up attracted by the cries for help. De Valerie ran over the meadow like one possessed. At last he tore on to the ice of the river.

He could see Pitt and Handforth were in the water. They were hoisting something out - something limp and still. A choking cry of relief came into De Valerie's voice. He was too late - but they had got her.

It was a terrible task to bring the girl to safety. Again and again the ice broke. But with the help of the others Handforth and Pitt struggled on. At last Cousin Mary lay there on the ice. Church and McClure had ripped off their coats and these were wrapped round in next to no time.

"Is - is she all right" croaked De Valerie. The juniors turned, and looked at him with pale, drawn faces.

"I - I don't know" said Handforth, between chattering teeth. "Goodness knows, we did our best."

"Mary - Mary!" shouted De Valerie.

He flung himself down on his knees, and lifted the girl in his arms. Her pretty face was as white as a sheet, even to the lips. There was no sign of life - not a twitch or a flicker.

"Oh!" wailed De Valerie. "She's dead!"

"No, she can't be - it's impossible!" gasped McClure. "She'll come round if we try artificial respiration. Quick! There's not a second to waste, or she'll die of exposure."

De Valerie seemed incapable of doing anything.

In a kind of a trance he watched the others at work.

A voice came to him like a whisper.

"It's no good, you chaps - it's no good."

De Valerie gave a wild, awful cry.

"It's all my fault - it's all my fault!" He said chokingly. "Can't you understand it's all my fault. I wish I had fallen into the river instead of Mary. Oh, why was I born? Why should I bring such trouble and suffering."

He swayed, staggered as he stood, and involuntarily took two or three steps backwards.

"Look out!" yelled McClure, in alarm. But it was too late.

Cecil De Valerie, before he could stop himself, felt the ice cracking and splintering beneath his feet. And then, before he could recover his balance, the ice cracked into a thousand fragments. He felt himself going down. The cold, black waters enveloped him.

He slipped down and down, and the icy waters closed over his head. He was choking, and fight as he might, he found it impossible to rise. His limbs were numbed, his mind was tottering.

The River Stowe had claimed him.

* * * * *

Crash!

Cecil De Valerie struggled fiercely for life, fought desperately and madly against the icy waters which swirled cruelly round him. He struck out his hand, and something went over with a splintering sound. Then, shivering in every limb, he found he was sitting on something hard. Dazedly, he found he could open his eyes. He did so, and was dazzled. The bright gleam from an electric light fell upon him.

The icy chill had gone, and there, in front of him, was the fire of Study M, now dying down somewhat.

De Valerie gasped - a great, gulping gasp. Just in front of him, on the floor, lay the shattered remains of a jug, which somebody had apparently knocked off the corner of the table. The easy chair was there. Only a minute before De Valerie had fallen out of it.

He picked himself up, steadying himself by clutching the table.

For one hopeful second he had a wild idea that he had been dreaming. But that was impossible - no dream could be so vivid and horrible as this.

Somehow or other, they had got him out of the river and had brought him to the school and left him in front of the fire.

His eye caught sight of the door.

The key was in the lock and the door was locked on the inside.

This proved - beyond question - that nobody had been in there. He glanced at his watch.

Half-past seven!

Gradually De Valerie convinced himself that it must be a dream. But what about his uncle and Cousin Mary? Had they really come to the school, or was that part of the dream, too?

He unlocked the study door and hurried out.

Handforth was just coming along. De Valerie ran up to him, and clutched his arm.

"Has - has anything happened, Handforth?" panted De Valerie.

"Yes" said Handforth. "You've been sent to Coventry."

"I mean to my Cousin Mary!" said De Valerie. "Did she break through the ice - is she all right?"

Handforth stared.

"Your Cousin Mary?" he repeated. "Oh, that girl who was here with the fat man? I think they're having a talk with Mr. Lee in his study."

"Oh, thank Heaven" said De Valerie.

He rushed down to the Common-room and found that the room was fairly well-filled. Pitt and Nipper were just off to the village with five pounds which they intended to give to Griggs at once.

"Just the chap I wanted to see!" exclaimed De Valerie as he grabbed hold of Nipper.

"I've had a look at myself as I was an hour ago and I'm pretty well disgusted with the picture" said De Valerie steadily. "I want the whole Remove to accept my apology and know that I don't deserve to be forgiven."

De Valerie took something crisp and crinkly from his pocket.

"I want to contribute this to the fund for Griggs."

Nipper took the money - a five pound note - and looked up sharply.

"But this is all you've got."

"I don't want the money, I'd rather do without it. Poor old Griggs can do with it fifty times more than I can. Please take it, Nipper; I shan't be comfortable if you don't."

"Right you are!" said Nipper heartily. "I'm not going to refuse if you put it like that. I'm jolly glad De Valerie. I knew you were decent at heart; you weren't yourself earlier this evening."

Somerton took his chum's arm.

"Thank goodness, Val!" he murmured. "You don't know how glad I am that this wretched business is over. By the way, Jerry Dodd and the Bo'sun are friends again."

It was an absolute mystery to nearly all the other fellows. For a junior to change so completely in every way - and with such dramatic suddenness - was unheard of.

At that moment Fenton of the Sixth came into the Commonroom.

"Anybody seen De Valerie?" asked the prefect.

"Here I am," said that junior.

"Your uncle and cousin are just leaving, I thought I'd better let you know."

"Thanks, awfully, Fenton!" said De Valerie.

He rushed out, tore into the lobby, and was just in time to catch Uncle Dan and Cousin Mary as they were emerging into the Triangle.

"Uncle!" shouted De Valerie.

Uncle Dan looked round frowning. The girl, prettier than ever, regarded De Valerie with cold indifference. There was a flash in her eyes which hurt De Valerie like a lash.

"I - I say, uncle!" he pleaded, "Can you forgive me? I don't know what I was thinking of when I spoke to you as I did. And you Mary! I was a rotter - a beast! I'm so sorry that I don't know what to say."

The girl's eyes softened.

"I was rather severe, too," she said. "But, oh, Cecil, you did make me angry."

"You called me a cad, and I was worse than that!" said De Valerie. "I've

never known anything cut me so much, Mary. But you were right, and I was a fool not to realise it at the time."

"Oh, Cecil, I'm so glad!" said Mary simply.

"My boy, you needn't say any more; I quite understand," said Uncle Dan. "I'm glad, Cecil, infernally glad! Good lad!"

De Valerie clasped his uncle's hand and then hugged his cousin.

"What about that little favour?" asked Uncle Dan.

De Valerie swallowed hard.

"Favour!" he echoed. "Why I'm the luckiest chap in the world to be allowed to teach Mary to skate. I'd just love to go back with you uncle!"

"Then you'd better hurry off and get your things together!" said Mr. Cunningham. "We'll wait for you in the study."

De Valerie flew off, and tore upstairs like lightning. The Duke of Somerton was waiting and he followed.

In the dormitory he looked at De Valerie in a strange way.

"What caused it, Val?" he asked quietly.

"I'll tell you!" said De Valerie. "I had a dream."

"A dream?"

"Yes, I fell asleep in the armchair, after I'd been such a beast to Uncle Dan," said De Valerie. "I dreamt it was to-morrow, and the Head granted the school a whole holiday so that the school could go skating. It was so vivid that it seems almost real. Old Griggs died and I could see myself in a true light. Then my cousin Mary fell through the ice into the River Stowe and was drowned."

"That wasn't a dream - it was a nightmare."

"Of course it was, but it served to show me how beastly I've been. I went through absolute agony in that dream. As a finish I fell into the river myself, and found that I'd dropped out of the chair."

"I'm just getting a few things together. I'm buzzing off with Uncle Dan and Mary this evening. They're staying with some friends near by, and I've been asked to go."

"Lucky bounder!" said Somerton.

De Valerie took a deep breath. "By Jove! I should think I am."

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GEMS OF RICHMAL CROMPTON (continued from page 38)..

girl, who automatically constituted herself the leader of any group of which she formed a part. "They get all the fun."

"Yes," grumbled Frankie Miller, a small, stout, snub-nosed boy of seven.

"They got a Christmas party an' a Christmas tree."

"An' tins of sweets all round," put in Ella Poppleham, a morose-looking child, with a shock of black hair and a squint.

"I been 'vacuated," said a small, foursquare child proudly. "It made my arm come up somethin' korful."

"Shut up, Georgie Parker," said Arabella. "It's a different sort of 'vacuated you have done on your arm. It's to stop you turning into a cow when you have it done on your arm."

"Well, never mind that," said Maisie Fellowes, a roly poly girl, who bore a striking resemblance to Queen Victoria in her old age and who vied with Arabella for leadership of the group.

Pippiniana ~ Collop the Fourth

The Biography of Roland Quiz

By Otto Maurer

Richard Howard Martin Quittenton was born at Castle Hill, Lancaster, on November 23rd 1833 and seems to have had no brothers or sisters. Of his father little is recorded beyond the somewhat lugubrious fact that he was "especially interested in a society founded for burial purposes" and that he died young. His mother was a niece of the distinguished Regency portrait-painter Thomas Leeming. At the age of six he was left an orphan, and when he was only eight he became store-boy in an oil and colour store. He had somehow contrived to read and write, and was in due course apprenticed to a printer in Lancaster, a certain Mr. Ford, who seems to have recognized his



THE WEEKLY BUDGET, Christmas

(Roland Quiz, aged 48, with his publisher, Henderson, and his first columnist, "Rupert.")

promise and helped him in his self-education by lending him books. In spite of his precarious fortunes he spent on the whole a happy boyhood, playing with his companions on Castle Hill and in China Lane and Freeman's Wood, fishing in the Lune and on rare occasions trudging to visit distant relatives at Preston, Morecambe and Southport. But he tenaciously made time by very early rising to carry on the arduous business of educating himself. He became a compositor on the Lancaster Gazette, reaching the status of foreman, and his gift of narrative invention showed itself even in these early years; one of his fellow compositors records how they would often say to him: "Dick, tell us a tale!" He cannot have been much more than twenty years old when he married Mary Bentham of Lancaster, by whom he had seven children.

About 1856 Quittenton moved to Manchester, becoming foreman compositor to the Manchester Courier. But before long, thanks to his ambition, energy and ability, he was able to enter the white collar profession of a reporter. It was probably about this time, in the mid 1850's, that he wrote as his first longer story, A Mystery of the Lune, which was serialized at some not yet ascertainable date in the Liverpool Weekly Courier and was reprinted, again as a serial, in the Lancaster Guardian in 1906. It is a lurid tale, such appeal as it makes depending chiefly on the vivid Lancastrian local colour. Quittenton had probably already adopted the pseudonym "Roland Quiz."

Decisive for his entire career was his meeting about this time with James Henderson of Laurencekirk, Kirkcudbrightshire, then on the staff of the Manchester Guardian. In 1861 Henderson founded, with Quittenton as Editor, the Weekly Budget, a popular journal of the Sunday newspaper type, in which accounts of the most sensational crimes, accidents and divorce cases were a prominent feature. When Henderson transferred this Weekly Budget from Manchester to London in 1862, Quittenton, of course, accompanied him. We find him soon after this established for many years in Peckham Grove, Camberwell. It is not till 1863-64 that signed literary contributions by "Roland Quiz" began to appear in the Weekly Budget. These are broadly humorous sketches in the Dickensian manner, with such titles as Harry Long's Love Dream and its Realization and Tom Tootal's Ghost; or the Duel on Kersal Moor. He is referred to in December 1863 as "Mr. Roland Quiz, that popular Manchester story writer" and complimented on "his happy and peculiar style in recording such humorous incidents of Manchester social life." In summer 1864 one of Henderson's satellite papers, The Household Journal (original The Key), began a weekly feature: Nursery Rhymes/Little Romances for Little Folks, most of which were contributed by Roland Quiz, particularly interesting for us being the storylet: Tim Pippin and the Currant Loaf, published in the last issue of the Household Journal in January 1865. The feature was then transferred to the Weekly Budget itself. Quittenton had here discovered the field peculiarly fitted for his genius. A selection of these verses and tales was published in book form in 1865 by Pitman under the title: Juvenile Rhymes and Little Stories and had considerable success, apparently even finding favour in the Royal Nursery. According to a family tradition, which was given much publicity in 1936, Quittenton was in February 1873 "offered the honour of a knighthood by Queen Victoria" on the strength of this book and of his later juvenile publication, Giant-Land.

In August 1866 Quittenton embarked on the regular writing of serial stories of a more adult and even blood-and-thunderous character for the Weekly Budget, stories similar in fact to A Mystery of the Lune. The Black Pirate; or the Exploits of a Lancastrian (1866) was followed in winter 1866-67 by Belle Vue, A Manchester Romance, in 1867 by Walter the Warrior; or The Knight of Braxholm, in 1868 by Felix the Hunchback; or The Mystery of Broughton Hall, in 1870 by The

Divorced Queen; or The Fortunes of Alexander and in 1872 by The Sea Sprite; or The Dashing Exploits of a Lancashire Sailor. Most of these stories were republished in the now quite unobtainable threepenny People's Pocket Story Books with lurid pictorial covers. Belle Vue was particularly successful and appeared in a dramatized version on one of the London theatres. But it is not on these works that Quittenton's enduring reputation depends.

Some time about the middle of the 1860's Quittenton must have lost his first wife and married Helen Louise Waller (1846-1911) of Kennington, by whom he was to have fourteen children.

In December 1870 Henderson started, at the price of one halfpenny, a very modest venture, Our Young Folks Weekly Budget, which was initially little more than the old children's section of the Weekly Budget given independent existence, the editor being Miss S. Holland. Quittenton was originally only associated with this new paper by occasional odd contributions, some of them reprinted from his Juvenile Rhymes. But one of these contributions, The Giants of the Wood; or The Fortunes of Minikin, a characteristic adaptation of Grimm's Valiant Little Tailor, deeply impressed Master George James Henderson, the small son of the publisher, and this led to the suggestion that Quittenton should produce a longer serial story on the same lines. The brilliant cartoonist John Proctor was engaged to provide large, bold front-page illustrations, and the first instalment of Giant-Land; or The Wonderful Adventure of Tim Pippin appeared on 22nd June 1872. It is characteristic that the very first giant whom Tim Pippin kills, Big-Feet, was conceived of by the author and portrayed by the artist as a caricature of Quittenton himself. The success of this story was immense. The circulation began to increase at the rate of 5,000 a week, and Our Young Folks Weekly Budget was soon established as one of the most popular juvenile periodicals of the day, with at least 150,000 readers. In May 1873 it doubled its size and advanced to the more dignified price of one penny. But "Roland Quiz," who had thus been the making of it, still remained its mainstay. Sequels to Giant-Land were eagerly demanded, and he supplied no fewer than four, terminating the saga with the last instalment of The Golden Pheasant, and the 105th of the whole, on 25th December 1875. A separate study would be required to give the complex and chequered chronicle of how these Tim Pippin stories continued to be reprinted again and again in the most varied forms down to 1947 and, in spite of this, most of the time remained and still remain almost unobtainable. There must be large numbers of people, probably in the first place zealous housewives, who take a perverse, self-righteous pleasure in decimating these ill-fated publications, as though there were something vicious about them.

In the intervals between the sequels, when Quittenton was "enjoying a well-deserved rest," imitations of the Tim Pippin stories were produced for serialization in Our Young Folks Weekly Budget by other writers, notably by Miss S. Holland, Walter Villiers and later Alfred R. Phillips. The height of Quittenton's success was reached in winter 1874-75. In September 1874 somebody began advertising in the chief London dailies for "stirring TALES OF ADVENTURE &c (in the style of 'Jules Verne,' 'Roland Quiz,' Mayne Reid and others)... for a new high-class magazine for boys." Tim Pippin was the hero of no fewer than three Christmas pantomimes during the 1874-75 season, at Day's Music Hall, Birmingham, at Hengler's Circus, London and at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Longton, where "his juvenile Majesty was admirably enacted by Master George Arrowsmith."

The completion of the Tim Pippin series did not mean the end of Quittenton's association with Our Young Folk's Weekly Budget. "Our good friend Roland Quiz

does not intend to desert us when Tim's adventures are all recorded," the Editor writes on March 13th 1875. He followed them up with Jack the Valiant and its sequel Tor, two serials of 89 instalments together, excellently illustrated by W. Bowcher and somewhat exceeding in their combined length the entire Tim Pippin saga. These stories, which began in August 1876 and ended in June 1878, are similar in character to the Tim Pippin series, but a degree more sophisticated. They enjoyed considerable popularity and were often reprinted, though not so often as the Tim Pippin ones, and they only once reached the distinction of appearing in book form.

After the completion of Tor in June 1878 Quittenton disappears completely and permanently from Our Young Folks Weekly Budget (or Young Folks, as it was, by a process of attenuation eventually to be called) - unless we are to regard the curious, truncated reprint of the Tim Pippin series in the years 1889-90, in which he certainly had no hand, as a reappearance. There was a radical change of editorial policy about autumn 1878. By then Miss S. Holland must have been replaced as Editor by the very much sterner Mr. H. Clinton,¹ who was determined to give the paper a more grown-up and also a culturally more ambitious character. There was one more serial fairy tale, Miss Holland's Marvel-Land, poorly illustrated by W. Crawford, and after that the new editor based the journal on the adolescent and near-adult story of adventure. There is conclusive evidence that he continued for at least ten years to be bombarded with innumerable letters from old readers protesting against this change of policy, and demanding fairy tale serials of the type they had become attached to or, better still, reprints of all the old tales, especially of the Tim Pippin ones. But he firmly set his face against these malcontents, advancing such arguments as:

The taste of young readers has undergone a remarkable and beneficial change since Young Folks first appeared, and they now look for mental food of a more substantial kind than that they were once satisfied with. (25 Feb. 1882)

The only concession he made to these clamours, until he was at last, in 1889, reluctantly forced to reprint the Tim Pippin stories in a section headed "The Younger Folk's Special Columns," was the ten-instalment serial by A. R. Phillips, St. George; or The Seven Champions of Christendom (July-September 1880) which, with its inferior illustrations, was transparently devised to wean conservative readers of their childish tastes. The Editor could refer to its failure subsequently as a justification of his own chosen policy:

The later stories of the supernatural kind were not so well received as you appear to think. There are few who expressed any regret at the conclusion of St. George. (23 April 1881)

In a word, Clinton had by 1879 totally transformed the character of Young Folks. Pride of place was now given to historical narratives modelled on Scott, Lytton, Ainsworth and G. P. R. James, and to adventure stories, usually with an exotic setting, Alfred R. Phillips being the chief contributor up to 1885. It was this revolution that made Young Folks a fitting arena for the literary debut of R. L. Stevenson with Treasure Island (1881), The Black Arrow (1883) and Kidnapped (1886).

One consequence of this change of editorial policy, which seems for a considerable time to have proved successful, at least so far as circulation is concerned

1. Clinton is nowhere explicitly named as the Editor of Young Folks, but there is strong presumptive evidence that it can only have been he.

was that Roland Quiz was now totally excluded from the paper which he, more than anybody else, had been responsible for popularizing during the first eight years of its existence. There was no longer any room in it for the special type of imaginative fiction which he can be said to have invented and which might in no derogatory sense be called the "fairy tale blood." His pen was, however, versatile, and he had already, in *Walter the Warrior* and in *The Divorced Queen*, proved his ability to produce historical narratives more or less of the type now in demand. He must, for reasons we can only guess, either have refused to do so, or never even have been asked to do so. Everything points to there having been some kind of fairly serious breach here, not indeed between Quittenton and the publisher Henderson himself, who remained his faithful friend to the last, but between Quittenton and H. Clinton. There is every reason to suppose that, when Clinton wrote on 15th March 1879 to a correspondent calling himself "Jack the Valiant": "We fear it will be a considerable time before the author makes his appearance amongst us again," he can only have been referring to Roland Quiz. The condescending and pedantic way in which Clinton treated the *Tim Pippin* stories in 1889-90, when he certainly only reprinted them most reluctantly, under strong pressure from old readers, shows that he cannot have approved of Quittenton's work. Herein presumably lies the explanation of the remarkable fact that "Roland Quiz," as an author, virtually disappears for over twenty years - from summer 1878 to winter 1898-99. He continued to edit the *Weekly Budget*, but without writing any more serial stories for it, and the only literary work we definitely know of his being engaged upon during those twenty years is the preparing of the abridged version of *Giant-Land* in 1881 and the production, in collaboration with Miss Holland, of a volume of verses for children published in December of the same year under the title *Happy Times*. It must have been discouraging and galling for Quittenton to find that he was no longer considered good enough as an author for *Young Folks*. One may suppose that he had the vulnerable sensitiveness of a self-made and self-educated man, conscious of his own limitations. We can hardly imagine his completely ceasing to write until 1898, but whatever he may have produced during that long interval, it cannot have been for Henderson's or under his beloved pseudonym "Roland Quiz." Possibly it was at this time that he made use of the unprepossessing pseudonym which has also been attributed to him, "Uncle Do-Good" and that he produced *Bertram the Brave* under the pseudonym "Robin Goodfellow." To anybody who can supply me through the Editor of the *Collectors Digest* with information about work published under either of these pseudonyms I should be extremely grateful. So far I have not been able to trace them.

From the records which have come down to us Quittenton appears in his prime as "one of the best-known figures in Fleet Street," and as an immensely energetic, expansive, sociable, genial and popular personality, with a great zest for life, and with a genius for friendship and good fellowship. He was widely read and familiar with the great classics of English literature, particularly with Shakespeare, as emerges from frequent quotations and allusions in his writings. Goldsmith's *Animated Nature* seems to have been one of his favourite books and a source from which he derived some of his monsters, and he had all sorts of out of the way lore at his fingertips. He was proud of having spoken to Thomas Hood the younger (1835-74), to Dickens and to R. L. Stevenson. His annual holidays took him to many parts of the British Isles and sometimes, I believe, also to the continent. The topographical backgrounds of *Walter the Warrior*, *Jack the Valiant* and *Tor* show to what good purpose he had travelled in the Scottish Border country and in Cornwall and Ireland. On the occasion of the coming of age of the *Weekly Budget* he was fêted with a banquet on the 7th January 1882 and presented with a

gold watch and a "testimonial." With his twenty-one children, only five of whom survived him, he was a truly patriarchal family man, even by Victorian standards of fecundity. He took a lively interest in wrestling contests in his youth, and was himself a keen swimmer, angler, cricketer and bowls-player. We have a vivid description of him driving a jolly party from Fleet Street by Richmond Park to Kew on the occasion of the annual "Wayzgoose" in July 1878:

ROLAND QUIZ took the reins. You know he is so well accustomed to deal with all sorts of powerful animals that we felt there was no one in our small company so well adapted for the post; and if a pair of his own fiery dragons had been yoked to our waggonette we could not but have felt perfectly safe under the guidance of one who knows so well how to make them, how to slay them, or, when that extreme proceeding is not necessary, how to control and direct their movements in the most satisfactory manner. And the event proved that our confidence was not misplaced; for he conducted us through the maze of the busy streets of mighty London with admirable skill.

(Our Weekly Chat, Young Folks No. 399; probably by Miss Holland)

Quittenton was no puritan and certainly enjoyed conviviality within due limits; he is also known to have been a passionate whist-player. He was a Freemason and a Forester and belonged to other friendly societies. Together with his second wife he engaged in various philanthropic work - thus we hear of their helping to provide soup-kitchens for the poor in Camberwell and of their starting an evening adult school in 1896 in Hockley, where they were Parish Councillors.

At some time after 1875 Quittenton must have moved from Camberwell, where the Tim Pippin stories were written in the early hours, before breakfast, to East Ham. By 1895 he had become a commuter, residing first at various addresses in Hockley, then at Westcliff, Southend and South Benfleet. There seems to have been quite a Henderson colony in the Southend district. In May 1897 he was involved in an Underground railway accident, on his way to Liverpool Street Station.

There was to be a great come-back for Roland Quiz as an author, after the dismal eclipse of 1878. When Young Folks, refined to ever greater respectability by H. Clinton, was gradually expiring under its final title, Old and Young, Henderson started in May 1892 a curious new publication, Nuggets, one half of which contained comic strips and similar pictorial material, the other reprints of the early Young Folks serials with their original illustrations. The first thing the readers clamoured for was that the Tim Pippin stories should be reprinted - and this time complete and unabridged; they were still largely the same readers who had been besieging Clinton with the same request since 1879 or so. To begin with they were given reprints of Walter Villiers' Silverspear and of Jack the Valiant and Tor. Then, in March 1896, the reprint of Tim Pippin at last began, occupying 103 instalments and running till February 1898. This was so great a success that Quittenton was asked to follow it up with the adventures of Tim Pippin's son, which appeared, also in Nuggets, under the title The Prince of Giant-Land, from December 1898 till January 1900, in 58 instalments, illustrated by Bowcher. This is in its way an excellent piece of work, blending the technique of the original Giant-Land stories with that of Jack the Valiant, and shows no decline in the imaginative and whimsical inventiveness which is Quiz's chief endowment. He was now 65 years old, and the precious years from 45 to 65, normally the most productive in a writer's life, had remained in his case, to the best of our knowledge and certainly so far as the characteristic work by which his name lives is concerned, virtually a blank. It may be noted that just at the time of beginning The

Prince of Giant-Land Quittenton also finished in two and a half instalments a sensational story entitled *The Masked Miner*, the author of which, "Mabon Day," had suddenly died. This piece of hackwork, which appeared in the *Garland*, a companion paper to *Nuggets*, did not bear Quiz's name and adds nothing to his reputation.

In 1904, in his 71st year, Quittenton was obliged to retire from his editorship of the *Weekly Budget* by failing eyesight. He was on this occasion presented with a "morocco-bound" arm-chair. The wish he had cherished that he might keep a country inn during his declining years was not fulfilled. But the new burst of productivity which had begun in winter 1898-99 continued undiminished to the last, though he had to depend more and more on the assistance of his youngest daughter, Lilian, to supplement his failing eyesight as reader and amanuensis. It was presumably about 1902 that he wrote his "Essex sensational romance," *Sword of Damocles* for the *Southend Echo*, which I have not yet succeeded in tracing. In September 1906 *Hendersons* began to publish *Young Folks Tales*, of which Quittenton was Editor till 1909 and the principal contributor until his death.² After the entire original Giant-Land cycle and *The Prince of Giant-Land* had been reprinted in fifty penny numbers of *Young Folks Tales* at the rate of two a month, Quittenton began turning out new stories for the series in prodigious quantities, the most remarkable amongst them being those devoted to chronicling the further adventures of *Tim Pippin the Younger*, (illustrated by W. G. Wakefield), which began in November 1910 and appeared without interruptions for 43 numbers, until May 1914, the final numbers being the work of Quittenton's youngest son, Bertram or "Roland Quiz the Younger." A certain inevitable decline in quality due to age and impaired eyesight is observable in these latest productions of *Roland Quiz*, but it is surprising how far he manages in some of them to recapture the magic of his heyday.

On the occasion of Quittenton's 80th birthday, 23rd November 1913, an appeal was launched through various mediums, including some of the great London dailies, for a "testimonial" for one "whose stories have proved a source of endless delight to readers in all parts of the world." Less than two months later, on Monday 19th January 1914, he died after a brief illness at his home, *The Laurels*, *Thundersly Avenue*, *South Benfleet*, and was buried with a Masonic funeral in the *Borough Cemetery*, *Southend*. The *Southend Standard* and *Essex Weekly Advertiser* reported:

He wrote up to the very last, in fact, on Sunday night he had just completed the introduction to his next story (in *Young Folks Tales*), while earlier in the afternoon he had recited extracts from Robert Burns and Shakespeare to the family assembled round him.. He was particularly keen on whist, at which he excelled, taking a hand up to last Saturday.. In the course of a few words at the graveside the Rev. A. Waller said his soaring imagination had lifted many a young life into enthusiasm and high ideals.. He was an exemplary writer for the young, and he had the benediction of many a child's heart.

We cannot here attempt to assess Quittenton's literary claims or to explain the enduring hold his stories have exercised for so many generations upon thousands of readers from all walks of life. We may, however, quote the tribute paid to him by *Israel Zangwill* in writing in *T.P.'s Weekly* on 12th December 1902 about *The Books of my Childhood*:

"Tim Pippin by Roland Quiz stands in my memory as distinctly as more classic works; it is full of delightful imaginings anent Giant-Land and Fairy-Land."

(My principal sources for this article have been a set of newspaper cuttings kindly lent to me by Richard M. H. Quittenton's youngest daughter, Mrs. Lilian Burroughs, the recollections of her father which she has from time to time communicated to me, and my own gleanings from the editorial and correspondence columns of the *Weekly Budget*, *Young Folks* and *Nuggets*. - O.M.)

2. Cpl. Pippiniana, Collop the Second, in the *Collectors Digest Annual* for 1960, p.p. 4-12.

THE EDITOR'S DECISION WAS FINAL

By Gerry Allison

I never won a prize in my life. Not one of all the tuck-hampers, scooters, paint-boxes, meccano sets, bicycles etc., etc., ever came my way. Neither did any of the cash. And yet I tried time and time again. I am just one of the unlucky ones.

But those competitions - fascinating and infuriating still! For even today I find myself browsing through the lists of prize winners, and when I see an address familiar to me, I still get a faint thrill. Sometimes something more.

Number 641 of MY QUEEN LIBRARY - an Aldine publication - dated February 8th, 1908, gives the result of a Limerick competition.

There was once a young man of Ardeer,
Who was thought by his friends rather queer;
When he fell on his head
They all chuckled and said

The first prize of £5 went to Dan M. Hunting, Arcade Chambers, Reading, whose final line entry was "He'll be ordered 'All sops,' but no beer." But one consolation prize of 8/6d was won by the entry - "The first 'Back to the Land' rush this year." The winner was FRANK RICHARDS, 27, WESTBOURNE GROVE, ILFRACOMBE!

Well, well! Whadayou know? Could it be, do you think. Bill Lofts will know, but I am satisfied in just wondering if -- ? You see however what fascination there can still be in the old competition pages.

I mentioned fury. Well, every time I look at the Greyfriars Film Star series, in Magnets 660 - 665, I grind my teeth, and in words 'not loud but deep' I curse the editor. Need you ask why?

On page 13 of Magnet 660 - a 'Great Bumper Issue' is the first of six sets of puzzle pictures of a 'Splendid New Competition.' There are eight drawings, and beneath each drawing is an initial letter. "What you have to do" - says the fool - "is to fill in the missing letters - THEN CUT OUT THE PUZZLE PICTURE."

Each set of pictures covers two-thirds of a page. Out of the six sets, no less than FOUR cut out a vital chunk of the Greyfriars story - mostly from the final chapter! ("Grrrrrrrrrr!") The other two cut-outs mutilate the serial story "Marcus the Brave" in the same way. Now; why the heck wasn't the competition printed on the penultimate page - No. 19? In that case, only the adverts would have suffered. Just a maddening example of editorial stupidity. And in the Editorial page of that same issue is a letter from a reader in Colchester, praising Frank Richards as a great writer - 'fresh, versatile, original, and never failing.' (Grrrrrr, again!)

The same type of competition began in YOUNG BRITAIN Number 33, together with five serial stories - including "Just Boys and Girls" originally printed in CHIPS as "The School Bell." The hidden words were Heroes and Heroines. In this instance, however, the pictures were on page 2, so only the front cover page would suffer. Luckily my copies must have belonged to a non-competition addict, so

they remain perfect and intact.

This was a very popular kind of serial contest, and always the pictures for the first week could have been solved by Bunter. They grew progressively more and more difficult, and Reggie Coker of the Greyfriars Sixth would have had to exercise his brain-power to solve the final set.

It is interesting to note that a competition of this nature formed part of the plot of Archibald Marshall's fine school story "Jimmy, the New Boy" in CHATTER-BOX ANNUAL 1917. The school was Whyborough and Stanhope's House were going in for the competition. Jimmy Henshaw has just arrived, and is being interviewed by Bertram, the House captain. Here is a brief extract from Chapter 11.

"Look here, Bertram," said Manning, taking no further notice of Jimmy. "I've mugged out a few of these things. I wonder if I've got any that you haven't."

He put on the table some sheets of paper, containing a series of pictures - cabalistic signs, which were in fact items of one of those competitions which were very popular in penny weekly papers a few years ago. Each hieroglyphic represented the name of a railway station, and the prize for guessing all of them right was likely to be a large sum of money, as these competitions were just then at the height of their vogue, and thousands went in for them.

"I've just been collecting all that people have brought back with them," said Manning. "But there's one here that nobody has got - I see you haven't either."

"No, I couldn't get that one," said Bertram. "It must begin with B - as I suppose that's a bee, unless it's a wasp - and end with PLACE, as there's no doubt about the letters. But I can't find anything that fits. What's that in the middle? It's a hand pointing at you. The whole thing's a puzzler."

The two boys studied it, but could make nothing of it.

"Here, young Henshaw, come and have a look," said Bertram. "You might just hit on it by chance."

"I expect it's Beaulieu," said Jimmy, pronouncing it 'Bewly' - more because the place was near his home than because he understood exactly what was required of him.

"Don't be a little ass," said Bertram.

But Manning said "Wait a minute; I wonder if he's right. B; and the hand pointing might stand for 'you.' But what about 'place'?"

"It's spelt 'lieu,' but pronounced 'ly,'" said Jimmy. "'Lieu' is French for 'place'."

"By Jove! I believe he's got it," said Manning triumphantly. "That's been puzzling me all the holidays. I say, young 'un," he added with a grin, "you seem to be a pretty sharp lad; but did you know anything about this competition before?"

"No," said Jimmy. "But I live near Beaulieu, and it just came into my head."

"Well, it's a lucky thing that you do live near Beaulieu," said Bertram. "Nobody who didn't would be likely to guess that. You've done the House a good turn. You can go now, Henshaw."

Manning laughed. "You might tell him as a reward," he said, "why he's done the House a good turn."

"Well," said Bertram, "the whole House is going in for this competition, and if we win it we shall get a lot of money, which we shall spend on something for the House itself. Other fellows are going in for it, too, though

we're the only House that's competing altogether. You're not to let that out. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Jimmy.

See Chapter XX for the result of the competition. (I have read 'Jimmy, the New Boy' more often than the Waterlily series.)

Bertram was right when he said 'a lot of money.' Here is the fifth set from a UNION JACK competition of this kind, with a prize of £10 a week for life. Have a go at solving them. I will give the answers at the end of this article.



There were ten sets in this particular competition, and I can assure you that the above puzzle pictures are easy as compared with the final frame. The lucky winner was a Scot - Mr. E. Gansden, 199, Fountainbridge, Edinburgh. I wonder if he is still drawing his £10 a week?

The Greyfriars Herald $\frac{1}{2}$ d series, devoted every front cover to a Puzzle Picture Story Competition - and awarded Tuck Hambers as prizes. One of these puzzles - the 9th - was reprinted in No. 200 of The Collectors' Digest. To prevent cheating, three alterations were made to the original solution. These were:-

Greyfriars Herald.

- A beautiful robe
- House
- Married

Collectors' Digest.

- Splendid attire
- Dwelling
- Wed.

In each case the first prize was £1, but whereas Master Harry Wright (Manchester) submitted a perfectly correct answer in 1916 to the editor of the Greyfriars Herald (Harry Wharton), I see that the winner of the "Collectors' Digest" reprint, Master R. M. Jenkins (Havant) had two errors in his solution.

I think the most difficult picture puzzles of this type were those which appeared in the Girl's Own Paper in the late 1890's. Even when I compare the puzzle with the

printed solution I cannot for the life of me make out the meaning. I wonder if you can? Here is an example from the Girl's Own Paper, No. 969 of 23 July, 1898.

OUR NEW PUZZLE POEM.



Take a help
 Drive it to
 If perchance you see it
 fall
 Try to find the place
 And, as it is very
 small
 Hit again that hapless
 ball
 With a savage grace.

If your strength and
 courage stand
 Such unwonted strain,
 By-and-by your ball
 will land
 On a little plain,
 Near a hole - you
 understand -
 Into which you putt
 it and
 Then begin again.

* * *

The prize winners
 received 7/6d each,
 and they had to put
 up with the sardonic
 humour of the com-
 poser of the puzzle,
 who commented on the
 entries when the
 result was published.
 E.g.

"We wonder how many
 of the solvers who
 wrote 'helpless' in
 the first line, really
 discovered that the p
 was less than the
 other letters. It is

Now here is the solution, printed in No. 986 of the Girl's Own.

TO A GIRL GOLFER

Take a helpless little
 ball,
 Drive it into space;
 If perchance you see it
 fall,
 Try to find the place.
 And, as it is very
 small,
 Hit again that hapless
 ball
 With a savage grace.

If your strength and
 courage stand
 Such unwonted strain,
 By-and-by your ball
 will land
 On a little plain,
 Near a hole - you
 understand -
 Into which you putt
 it and
 Then begin again.

* * *

The prize winners
 received 7/6d each,
 and they had to put
 up with the sardonic
 humour of the com-
 poser of the puzzle,
 who commented on the
 entries when the
 result was published.
 E.g.

"We wonder how many
 of the solvers who
 wrote 'helpless' in
 the first line, really
 discovered that the p
 was less than the
 other letters. It is

also to be observed that the ball in the same line was much smaller than the others in the puzzle and therefore was intended to be designated as 'little.'

Hence the rhythm required the word 'very' in the fifth line -- s very small. So many solvers failed to notice these points it is necessary to call attention to them.

The poor girls certainly had to earn their three half-crowns!

I think the paper which had the biggest variety of competition was undoubtedly THE SCOUT. There were sometimes three a week and a glance at the index of any SCOUT volume, will show how the ingenuity of both competition solvers and setters was tested. In the 1921 volume the list runs all through the alphabet. Author; Behead; Birds; Blank; Camp --- to Word-builder; Yuletide; and Zigzag. I particularly liked those which appeared on the front of the Xmas numbers, where scores of different objects were concealed in a maze of lines, scrawled all over the page.

In fact, a volume of THE SCOUT would certainly be my choice of a Desert Island Book. It is practically a Robinson Crusoe's "HOME COMPENDIUM." I have just glanced again at the Index for volume XVI for 1921, and the first item under letter "M" is 'Magnets, and Their Attraction,' Page 750.

I have mentioned before the competitions in "PUCK" where the prize winners had themselves introduced by name into the detective story about Val Fox, the Ventriloquist Detective. In No. 724 of that delightful comic, Michael Redgrave of 9, Chapel Street, Belgrave Square, London, won half-a-crown, and appeared in the Val Fox tale. Finding his name was another competition bonus.

The GEM and MAGNET awarded prizes for Limericks and Jokes sent in by readers, but they were never very funny - or so I thought. I preferred those in the BOYS' MAGAZINE under the heading "The Jester's Realm." The prizes were Footballs and Fountain Pens, and nine out of ten prize winners chose a fountain pen. Here are a couple of jokes from No. 527 of the BOYS' MAG- with its pink, red and blue cover.

A GOOD MEAL

Two men lost in the jungle, got very hungry, so they built a shack, and Jim went for some food. He had not gone long, when he came back with a lion at his heels. He dashed up to the shack, flung open the door, and the lion rushed in. At the same time Jim shouted: "Skin that one Bill, while I fetch another."

BUSINESS

Proprietor: "Anyone given any orders while I've been away?"

Assistant: "Yes, sir. One man came in and ordered me to put up my hands while he emptied the till."

The warning about the editor's decision being final used to puzzle me. Henderson's YOUNG FOLK'S TALES - those delightful green booklets - always had a Painting Competition. In my copies for 1907 the picture to colour was an illustration from the companion number - that is the King Pippin story had a picture from the current Silverspear story, and vice-versa. By 1910 however, the drawing was headed Steedman's Young Folks, and said that only healthy children thoroughly enjoy work or play, and that Steedman's Powders kept children healthy.

The directions for entering this competition ended with the stern warning that "The Editor's decision in awarding the Prizes must be final." How anyone - except a youthful Leonardo da Vinci - could dispute the award without seeing all the other entries baffled me then and still does.

And so one could go on for ever. Competitions seemed to appear in every kind of old boys paper. And now I have to apologise for deceiving you in the first paragraph of this article. For my memory has been jogged by someone dear to me - I DID WIN A COMPETITION, ONCE.

In September 1956 I was on holiday at Scarborough, and good old Herbert Leckenby sent my copy of the "Collector's Digest" - No. 117 - to my holiday address. There was a Prize Crossword Competition in that copy, and the following month's issue gave the answer. It also said "The first correct solution came from Gerry Allison, to whom a postal-order for 5/- has been sent."

So on that note of triumph I will end this rambling dissertation on competitions.

Answers to the UNION JACK competition given earlier in this article;

33 Bradshaw. 34 Furness. 35 Box. 36 Sargent. 37 Euclid
38 Carton. 39 Whithead. 40 Kettle.

* * * * *

W A N T E D : GEMS before 1379. Write with price required to:-

LOFTS, 56 SHERINGHAM HOUSE, LISSON STREET, LONDON, N. W. 1.

W A N T E D :

"THE REASEDALE SCHOOL MYSTERY" by Smith. Your price paid plus postage.

WARK, GREENKNOWE, CLYDE STREET, KIRN, ARGYLL

REQUIRED: Small number of Rookwood stories as featured in the BOYS' FRIEND Green Paper.

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

W A N T E D : BULLSEYES, THRILLERS, BOYS CINEMAS, "BOYS WILL BE BOYS" "LAUREL AND HARDY" Book.

BOX MRTS, c/o COLLECTORS' DIGEST

W A N T E D :

Weeklies, Annuals, 1920 to 1939; TIGER TIMS, PUCK, BUBBLES, CRACKERS, PLAYBOX, RAINBOW.

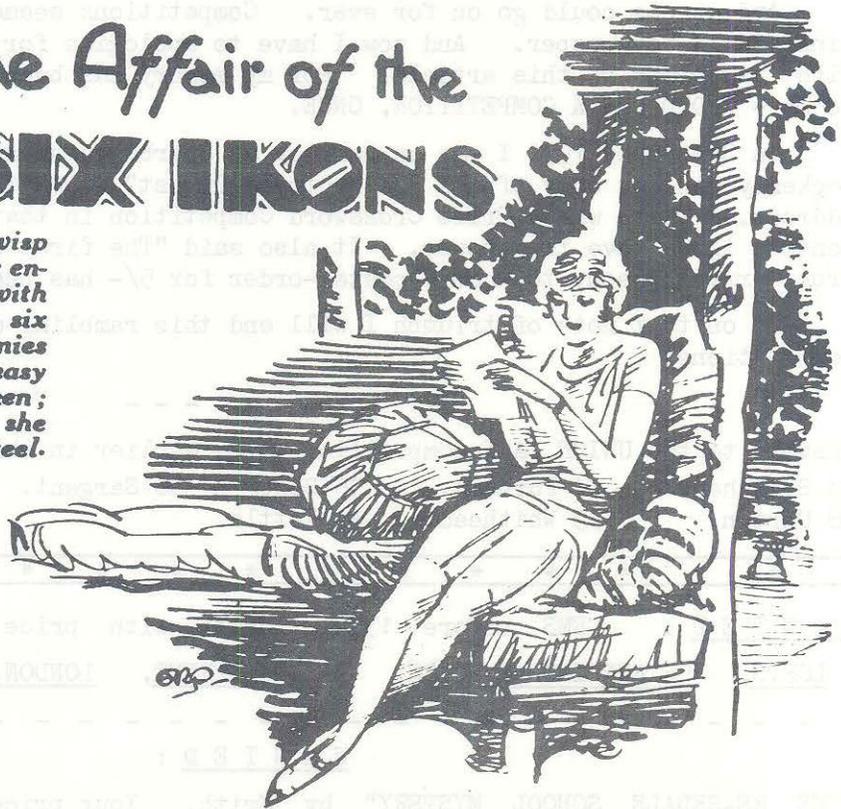
HUGHES, 25 VIEW STREET, WOOLOOWIN, BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA.

W A N T E D : CHUMS 1919; Exchange 1920, or buy; also HOLIDAY ANNUAL No. 1. Quote price.

BOX F. J. c/o C. D. ANNUAL

The Affair of the SIX IKONS

June Severance, a frail wisp of a girl, is the messenger entrusted by Sexton Blake with the guardianship of the six sacred ikons. Blake's enemies imagined she would be easy prey. They were mistaken; weak of body, June shows she has a spirit of pliant steel.



Introducing
Sexton Blake,
June Severance,
and a new
character—
The Orchid.



A Galaxy of Girls

By

S. GORDON SWAN

A CHARMING STUDY OF YVONNE BY "VAL"

September 13th, 1913.

LILLIE RAY was the first girl to capture the affections of Sexton Blake, as far as order of publication goes, but, chronologically speaking, Laïs Dowson must have been his first girl friend.

The list of these ladies is quite a formidable one, and enough to refute the contention of the modern chroniclers of Blake's adventures, who affirmed that the earlier Blake was austere and aloof, especially where women were concerned. It seems to me that these gentlemen had not studied the detective's career closely enough to justify such a statement.

Below I append a list of some of Blake's feminine friends, not venturing to assert that it is in any way complete, for among the earlier stories I have not yet been fortunate enough to read there may lurk some other amorous females worthy of inclusion.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Lillie Ray | Farina |
| Laïs Dowson | June Severance |
| Thirza Von Otto | Olga Nasmyth |
| Lady Marjorie Dorn | Jessica Slessor |
| Mdlle. Yvonne Cartier | Roxane Harfield |
| Marie Galante | Biwi |
| Ysabel de Ferre - the Black Duchess | Fay Lynder |
| Nhin Kee | Lady Emily Westomholme |

Lillie Ray appeared in what is regarded as the second story of Sexton Blake, "A Christmas Crime," in No. 7 of the 1st Marvel. Blake had never believed that he should ever seriously fall in love, especially at first sight, but he accounted himself the luckiest of mortals if he could win her affections. Eventually she gave him more than half a promise that she would some day reward his devotion to her in the way he most desired. Apparently the promise, though over the halfway mark, was never fulfilled.

About twelve years later we find Blake enamoured of Laïs Dowson, daughter of a solicitor for whom he worked. Strictly speaking, this young lady antedated Lillie Ray, for she made her appearance in "Sexton Blake's First Case," 1st U.J. No. 69. Blake was practically engaged to her at the finish, but once again the affair seems to have been inconclusive.

A German girl who made no bones about her feelings towards Blake was one Thirza Von Otto. I found this enterprising female in two Penny Populars, Nos. 120, 121; Jan. 23rd and 30th, 1915; but the stories derived from a U.J. of some years earlier, "The Kaiser's Mistake," by D. H. Parry (No. 271).

Thirza was none of your timid beauties, but had a firm, resolute cast of face and a high colour, that denoted courage. More than once she saved Blake's life; she told him that she loved him as few men have been loved since the world began. This was on the deck of a vessel bearing them to the Continent, and Blake must have been more than willing, for the girl had to hold him in check, not wishing him to act as other men.

Later, in Constantinople, when Thirza's treacherous uncle, Otto Von Otto, summoned a Nubian to attack Blake, Thirza shot the aggressor - "and as she turned her great eyes to her lover with a smile of triumph, he sprang forward and clasped her in his arms." I do not know if Blake ever met Thirza again in subsequent stories, but there seems little doubt that he was on excellent terms with her.

In putting Sexton Blake in conflict with George Marsden Plummer and Rupert Forbes, Michael Storm in the "Mervyn Mystery" (BFL. 96) provided Blake with a

charming companion in Lady Marjorie Dorn, a London society belle. There was a tacit understanding between these two; 'she glided insensibly into loving him without being aware of the fact.' What became of this association we do know, for it was dissolved by mutual agreement before the story ended.

Now we come to Mdlle. Yvonne Cartier, whose name may be more familiar than those of the foregoing females. Her career is pretty well known to Blake fans of long standing; what remains obscure is why an Australian girl should have a French name. The 'mademoiselle' seems to have been a favourite appellation for an adventuress forty or fifty years ago, but the French nomenclature would have been more appropriate to the later Roxane who was of Canadian origin.

Some may be surprised at the inclusion of Marie Galante in this collection, recalling that she bestowed her favours on Dr. Huxton Rymer and reserved her enmity for Blake. But in the solitary original U.J. story of her which G. H. Teed wrote prior to his departure for Southern India for some four years, Marie Galante was a half-caste who was under a Voodoo spell, and on emerging from the miasma of magic appeared to be thinking tender thoughts of the detective. When G. H. Teed returned, he metamorphosed Marie Galante into an ocoroon who was still devoted to evil.

Before the advent of John Fade, Ysabel de Ferre, Duchess of Jorsica, that pillar of the Criminals' Confederation, made advances to Blake, which he rejected. This renders her worthy of a place in the gallery of Blake's girls, although later she bestowed her attentions upon John Fade.

Now we come to Nhin Kee, a half-caste girl of questionable occupation whom Blake encountered in a dubious 'house' on the Cholon Road in Saigon. You will meet her in 'The Jade-Handled Knife,' S.B.L. 1st Series No. 360, by G. H. Teed. Quite a friendship developed between this girl and the detective, and before they parted Blake gave her several thousand ticals. (The spelling denoted coinage, as distinct from physical molestation.)

Eastern girls must have been popular with the Baker Street detective at this stage, for now we find a Circassian girl, Farina, exhibiting more than friendly interest in him. This high-stepper from a Turkish harem was of great assistance to Blake in an adventure in Constantinople - 'The Bogus Sheikh,' (S.B.L. 129) 2nd Series. Another of G. H. Teed's creations was June Severance, who flourished in several stories, disappearing with her adventures incomplete. Again the author had gone away, and during his absence Jack Lewis introduced us to Olga Nasmyth, a very engaging personality whose career of revenge was somewhat akin to Yvonne's. Olga became rather intimate with Blake, calling him 'Tony,' but vanished into the blue, her revenge still unsatisfied.

G. H. Teed returned to the field with Roxane, a Canadian adventuress, who was also blazing a trail of vengeance. Roxane was somewhat bolder than Yvonne; she lost her clothes on several occasions, and involved Blake in some compromising situations. Roxane persisted until the nineteen-thirties, into the pages of the Detective Weekly, when she came under the influence of some sinister personality whose name I forget. What happened to her after that is beyond my knowledge.

Somewhere about the time of Roxane's appearance a lesser luminary in the galaxy of girls appeared - an unusual one, a Jewess, and a married one to boot. Jessica Slesser figured in U.J.'s. 1288 and 1295, 'The Hunchback of Brotherhood Hall,' and 'The Bandit of the Bank,' the first two stories of Krock Kelk, by Arthur Paterson. In spite of her crooked husband, Jessica had a definite crush

on Blake, though he was not fully aware of it.

Two girls who each appeared in one story only were Biwi, a Hindu girl who manifested devotion to Blake in 'The Secret of the White Thug,' (S.B.L. 189 2nd Series) and Fay Lynder, known as the Bride of Death, because several men who associated with her died suddenly. She was featured in Anthony Skene's 'Death Trap,' (S.B.L. No. 261, 2nd Series). At the end of the story Fay Lynder left for New Zealand and was obviously reluctant to go without Blake. He assured her that he had his career to attend to, but implied that he might turn up in New Zealand at some later date if life became too strenuous.

It is now, from the mid-thirties onwards, that the incidence of girls who were attracted to Blake seems to diminish. Middle. de Braselieu does not appear to have shown any emotional reaction towards him, and during the World War I cannot recall any particular lady who displayed amorous tendencies. Anthony Parsons provided him with a new girl friend in Lady Emily Westonholme, ex-Wren, who assisted him in several cases, but she seems to have been the sole protagonist of feminine romance until the Berkeley Square era, when we find Blake surrounded by no less than three women.

But it is not of them I would speak, but of those who have added their grace and charm to the narratives of past eras. And before I close, I must pay a tribute to one girl I have omitted - Anthony Skene's Golden Girl - Julia Fortune, who was definitely pro-Blake.

May there be more to come in the future.

: + : + : + : + : + : + : + : + : + : + : + : + : + : +

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An Original Story

By W. O. G. Lofts

* * * * *

Foreword:

"An editor's job is far from being a bed of roses" used to be the late Herbert Leckenby's favourite expression when readers of C.D. Annual wrote to him complaining of the lack of their favourite character in articles. Likewise, our present editor probably many times has echoed the same sentiment. It is a sheer impossibility to please all readers with such a wide variation of tastes. I personally think he does a great job in giving the biggest variety of subjects possible.

The 1964 C.D. Annual was acclaimed by the majority of readers as being the best ever-packed with articles/stories/statistics to cover many tastes. There were, however, a few collectors who criticised the statistical articles. Probably penning more of this type of article than any other collector, I quite agree that unless the reader is interested in the particular subject, it can be boring, and, to him personally, a waste of good space.

For a change then from my usual type of article, this year I present my original story. Personally I shall always believe that story writers are born with the gift, but I do earnestly ask the reader not to take me seriously in "An Original Story."

* * * * *

Can you, dear reader, write a mystery, detective, or suspense story? Of course you can! It's so very simple. Just think up a plot, include hero, villain and beautiful girl; sit down and write the yarn, then send the completed story to the magazine of your choice. All you have to do then is sit back, await his letter of praise - which will also include date of publication, and look forward to the big fat cheque.

Having penned something approaching one thousand articles I do not feel it is presumptuous of me to consider myself a writer. I suppose I should add that the majority of my articles have been written purely for interest and not for payment; and in view of the fact that most of them were commissioned and consequently unlikely to be rejected by the magazine concerned, I came early to the conclusion that story writing would be easy.

Many enthusiastic readers of my articles suggested that I should try my hand at story writing. It would certainly be much more remunerative and, who knows? perhaps I should gain something of a reputation in the fiction market as well as on the factual side of writing. Yes, it was worth trying - in fact, it seemed a very good idea.

Without much difficulty I conjured up a plot and a set of characters and set to work. I was very pleased with the result - so pleased that I sent it off to an editor friend of mine in Fleet Street without bothering to enclose the usual stamped addressed envelope. It wasn't meanness which actuated me; merely the assumption that my story would be accepted unquestioningly. I was doubly certain

in view of the fact that I had one foot already in the door, so to speak; my editor friend being responsible for a popular monthly publication.

A week went by. Two weeks. Three. A month - two months. What had happened? The editor must be away on holiday; or perhaps he was away sick? Worse still, perhaps my manuscript had gone astray? Just as I was losing patience the postman brought me a letter.

I opened it hastily but carefully, to avoid tearing the cheque I felt certain must be inside. All it contained, however, was the following letter:

Dear Bill,

Sorry to have been so long in answering, but have been extremely busy. I have read your story with great interest, and although quite good, you must try to be more original. We are cluttered up almost to the ceiling with stories of a similar nature, and to accept it I would be failing in my duties as editor, plus being unfair to other contributors. Have another try, old sport - and remember, do try to be original!

Cheers, see you soon.

B.B.

Nothing daunted I returned to my writing desk, determined to give the public a mystery story the like of which had never been seen before - something like those of the late Gwyn Evans, whose stories in THE UNION JACK were sensational, to say the least. White coffins with white mourners; a woman crook by the name of Miss Death - yes, certainly Gwyn had been original!

I out-Gwynned Gwyn. I made my hero an undertaker with vivid red hair, who spoke with a lisp and wore, even at his funerals, bright yellow spats. Who ever heard of a red-haired undertaker who wore bright yellow spats? Come to that, who ever heard of a hero undertaker? Be original, indeed!

Still seeking originality I made my heroine a Duchess, who left a titled family in England to go on the stage. Actresses who have become titled ladies are common enough but who has ever heard of Duchesses leaving their Duchy to become an actress? I also gave her a speech impediment; she stuttered.

I called my hero Jasper and my villain Roger. My villain had flaxen hair, innocent blue eyes and was not in love with the heroine. Throughout the whole of his life, as he explained, he never hurt a fly. It was somebody else, completely out of the story, who committed the murder. (This had nothing to do with the plot and was only introduced to baffle the reader and give a pleasing air of mystery to the story.)

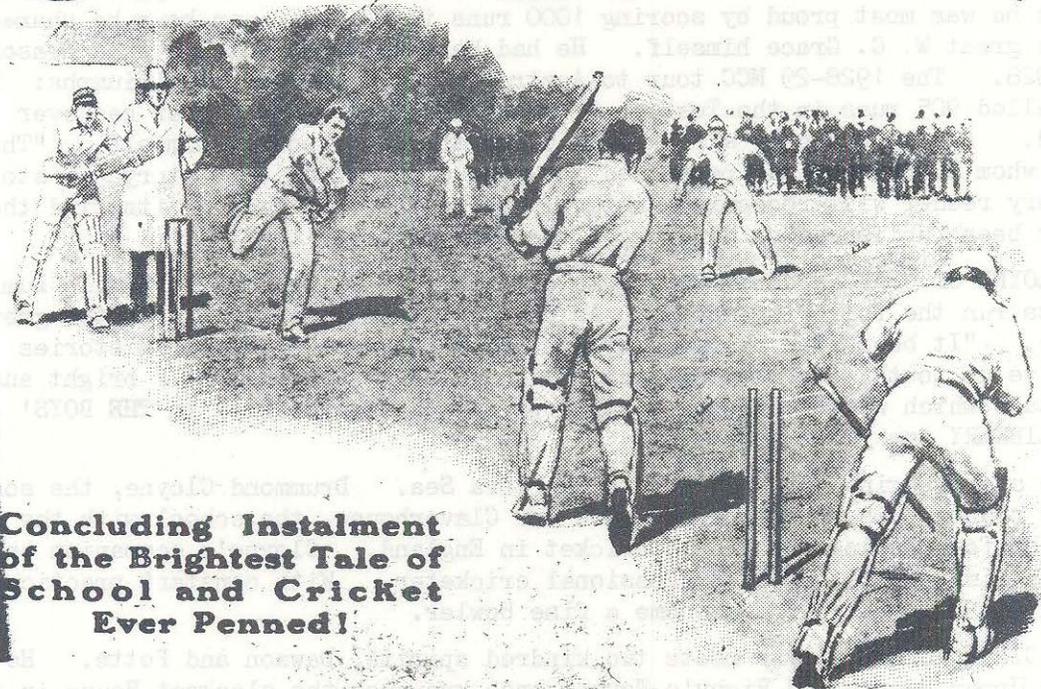
My story was mainly concerned with the murder of a certain Major Dogsbody and Jasper, being the hero, was naturally and strongly suspected of having killed him, especially as he was discovered in the act of burying the body. I set the scene in Fenny Stratford and if this isn't being original, I don't know what is. Did you ever read a murder story, come to that - set in Fenny Stratford? (P.S. For your information, it's in Buckinghamshire.)

I placed the second chapter (there were only three chapters) in the police-court; all reporters and the public were barred from the trial and the magistrate drank himself silly and finally fell asleep half-way through the proceedings. He woke up in time to pass sentence of death - and in the middle of his speech Major Dogsbody suddenly appeared to explain that he wasn't dead, and never had been, and never wanted to be.

WALLY HAMMOND - AND "CLOYNE"

By Derek Smith

CLOYNE of CLAVERHOUSE!



**Concluding Instalment
of the Brightest Tale of
School and Cricket
Ever Penned!**

By

Walter Hammond

England's Record-Breaking Batsman!

Lovers of the great game everywhere must have been saddened by the news of the recent passing of one of Cricket's giants, the incomparable Walter Hammond.

A brilliant all-rounder, he filled the record books with his exploits. A wonderful natural athlete, he played with an unflinching grace and power which was always a pleasure to watch. As a bowler, Sir Leonard Hutton recalls: "Hammond had the perfect seam-bowler's action," while as a fielder "he made slip fielding, the hardest position on the field, look ridiculously easy." But it was as a batsman of classical method and unique power that he really excelled.

The son of a British Army officer, he was born in Dover on the 19th June,

1903, but spent the early years of his life in India, China, and Malta. He was educated at Cirencester Grammar School in Gloucestershire and played for that County from 1920 until he retired in 1947, following the MCC tour of Australia and New Zealand. In his 1004 first class innings for Gloucestershire and England between 1920 and 1947 he made 50,493 runs - a total which included 36 double centuries. He played in 85 Test Matches and captained England in the years immediately before and after the War (1938 to 1947).

But it is a younger Wally Hammond, soon to be hailed as author as well as cricketer, that it is the main purpose of this article to recall. For though "Who's Who" records only two publications by Walter Hammond (Cricket my Destiny, 1946, and Cricket my World, 1947) the first story to be published over his name dates back to the summer of 1929.

By that time Hammond was riding high. In May 1927 he had bagged the record of which he was most proud by scoring 1000 runs in 22 days - an hour he shared with the great W. G. Grace himself. He had held the most catches in a season - 78 in 1928. The 1928-29 MCC tour to Australia had brought fresh triumphs: he had totalled 905 runs in the Tests - 171 more than any other player had ever obtained. And he was only a few years older than a schoolboy himself. "That is the man whom MODERN BOY has persuaded to write a school cricket story - a story that every reader will recognise instantly to be the very best of its kind that has ever been published!" So bragged the Editor in May 1929.

"CLOYNE OF CLAVERHOUSE," with some excellent illustrations by Savile Lumley, began its run the following month. As the serial progressed, the Editor grew ecstatic. "It bears the hallmark of Genius, this yarn!" Very few stories could live up to this sort of billing; but at least "CLOYNE" was a bright and lively tale which was considered worth reprinting (anonymously) in THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY ten years later.

The story begins on an island in the Java Sea. Drummond Cloyne, the son of a coffee planter, is preparing to leave for Claverhouse, the school with the reputation for playing the finest cricket in England. Cloyne's companion on the island is Jim Hawkins, an ex-professional cricketer. With constant practice and Jim's expert help Cloyne has become a fine bowler.

At Claverhouse, Cloyne meets two kindred spirits, Dawson and Potts. He goes into the Upper Fourth and Rigby's House, once known as the slackest House in the school. Mr. Rigby, however - like Jimmy McCann - has no time for slackers. D'Aubrey, the captain, is willing to back him; Scaife and Buller, his fellow prefects, are not.

Cloyne soon falls foul of Buller, a simple bully, but finds a much more dangerous and subtle enemy in Scaife. Scaife is a good fast bowler about to get his First Eleven colours - the first step to a cricketing career in which he later hopes to lead his County and then England. But Cloyne's arrival puts the whole project in danger.

Drummond soon shows his mettle in a Fourth Form pick-up game, in which he becomes known as "the youngster who introduced skittles on the Little Side." Howard, the School Captain, then gives Cloyne a chance to try his bowling against the First Eleven men. As a result Cloyne is picked for the School in the next important match and Scaife is dropped.

Determined to eliminate his rival, Scaife engineers a plot to get Drummond expelled. He persuades Cloyne to go to the Three Feathers Inn and pay off a debt

for him. Samuel Coper, the landlord, gives Drummond an unexpected reception. To a convenient witness: "This young cove," explained Mr. Coper heatedly, "comes walking in 'ere and asks for a glass of beer, cool as you please!"

Then the tavern-keeper calls upon the barman to throw Cloyne out. He leaps to the attack - "and the next moment a bewildered and half-dazed George was all mixed up with the fender and the fire-irons..."

"'E 'it you!" explained Mr. Coper.

"I know he did!" snarled George..."

That concludes the encounter; but on leaving the Inn Cloyne meets Buller and two other seniors who have been waiting for him.

Drummond has fallen into Scaife's trap, but he is saved from expulsion by D'Aubrey, the House Captain, who detects the plot and exposes it to Mr. Rigby.

So Scaife is expelled and Cloyne goes on to triumph on the cricket field. Still a schoolboy, he plays against the MCC and then for Gloucester. Finally he is picked for England in the last match of the Tests against South Africa.

"The last day of play with the end at hand... South Africa batting... Three to win and the last man in..."

"Last ball of the over.

"The silence is tense - palpitating. Can Cloyne stand the terrific strain? The eyes of England are on him - the hopes of England in the keeping of those firm brown fingers.

"He paces back from the wicket, swings, and runs in for the last delivery of the over. His hand whips up and again the ball flashes down the pitch. It is just wide of the off-stump. The batsman plays for the cut which it seems to invite.

"But as it pitches it swerves inwards with lightning-like break, shooting beneath his bat. His middle stump somersaults backwards and there comes the click of shattered bails.

"And from the frenzied and delirious crowd rises a deafening and mighty roar."

And the story ends with the confident prediction that one day Drummond Cloyne will lead England on to the field.

As did Wally Hammond, nine years later!

THE MODERN BOY Nos. 69 to 80 (June 1st to August 17th, 1929).

THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY No. 676 (1/6/39).

ERIC FAYNE adds: While it would be pleasant to think that Wally Hammond wrote "Cloyne of Claverhouse," there is very little doubt that he did not. The fact that the story was later published anonymously makes it a near certainty.

Between the wars large numbers of stories were published under the names of famous sportsmen. There can be no question that these sportsmen did nothing more than accept cheques for the use of their famous names. For some ten weeks, Ken

King was published under the name of Sir Alan Cobham, and it is indeed remarkable that the Amalgamated Press should have issued stories from their star writer in this fashion. One would assume that writers agreed that their work should be credited to somebody else, but Charles Hamilton expressed astonishment when I told him that Sir Alan Cobham had been named as the writer of the early King of the Islands instalments. According to Mr. Hamilton, this was the first he had heard of it, but it really seems unlikely that an author would not have wished to see in print at least the opening instalments concerning one who was to prove a long-staying and very popular character.

Many cricketers - too many - have written autobiographies and commentaries on the great game, but very rare have been any which showed much literary ability. All too obvious usually has been the fact that publishers were cashing in on famous names. I would wager that to write a story of any worth at all would be beyond the powers of the majority of Britain's great sportsmen.

In passing, Walter Hammond's nephew, John Hammond Crew, was one of my own pupils for many years. He was one of the mainstays of our school cricket for several years, and is still a steady exponent of the game. Always, at the commencement of our annual Cricket Week, we would receive a telegram from Uncle Wally himself, wishing us all the best of luck on the field.

* * * * *

W A N T E D

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MATHESON, AIRPORT, WICK, CAITHNESS.

MR. BUDDLE meets "The Magnet"

By
ERIC
FAYNE

A Story of Slade

It was not really Irony's fault to begin with. Even Mr. Buddle admitted that, later on, though when the fickle jade, Fate, set events in motion, the form-master was too exasperated to have time for that "sweet reasonableness" to which Matthew Arnold refers.

It all started early on Tuesday evening during the opening weeks of the summer term. Twice a week Mr. Buddle went into the village of Everslade to play bowls. He was keen on bowls, and was a reasonably good player. He found it a pleasant diversion after an exacting day in the classroom at Slade.

The afternoon of this particular Tuesday had been more than usually exacting. His English classes had seemed to be even less receptive of his tuition than was normal, and the result had been detention for Mr. Buddle's class. And, unfortunately for Mr. Buddle, when he detained his class for an extra half-hour at the end of the afternoon, it also meant an extra half-an-hour's detention for Mr. Buddle himself.

So Mr. Buddle sat down to a late tea that afternoon, and, when it was over, remembered a letter which it was essential he should write. Mr. Buddle wrote his letter as hastily as he could. Then, late for his appointment with his bowls club, with his hat in one hand and his letter in the other, he hurried from his study and sped down the corridor.

At the end of Masters' Corridor was a sharp, right-angled turn. It was here that Mr. Buddle met disaster.

Irony of the Sixth was coming in the opposite direction at high speed. Irony of the Sixth was a prefect, a blood, a soccer star, a regular member of the First Eleven at cricket, and very nearly as important as he thought he was. Furthermore, he was big and burly. He, too, was travelling very fast. Like Mr. Buddle, he was in a hurry.

Mr. Buddle and Irony met head on, like two trains travelling in opposite directions on the same single track. The collision was terrific.

Mr. Buddle let out a loud "Ouch!" Irony uttered a startled yell. Both staggered violently, but Mr. Buddle, being the lighter, staggered the most. His hat flew in one direction, his letter in another.

On the wall, close to the corridor corner, was affixed a fire-extinguisher and near the fire-extinguisher was suspended a bucket full of sand. As Mr. Buddle staggered, his shoulder hit the bucket of sand. It tilted on its bracket. A stream of fine sand shot down the side of Mr. Buddle's lightweight summer suit, and filled his trouser turn-ups to overflowing.

"Sorry, sir!" ejaculated Irony.

"Sorry!" gasped Mr. Buddle.

"Sorry! You hurtle round a corner like a mad bull and then you tell me you are sorry!"

Mr. Buddle breathed deeply, and Irony tried to look something in excess of "sorry."

Mr. Buddle, with a grunt of annoyance, looked for his hat. It had fallen

beneath the fire-extinguisher. He bent down to pick up his hat, and as he rose to straighten out, his head came into violent contact with the base of the fire-extinguisher. There was a dull thud.

"Damn!" said Mr. Buddle.

It came out involuntarily.

As he resumed the perpendicular, Mr. Buddle's eyes met those of Irony. Mr. Buddle blushed. Irony looked startled and embarrassed.

"Damn" is a fairly harmless and necessary expletive now and then, but it is a swear word, albeit a mild one. Masters never swore. It just wasn't done. True, Mr. Crayford, the games master, often made use of rather lurid language on the sports fields. But a games master was a thing apart from the teaching staff. Besides, Mr. Crayford had the idea that swearing made him look important and ultra-modern.

But the teaching staff was composed of men who did not swear. So Mr. Buddle, who had said "damn," blushed, and the prefect looked self-conscious.

Mr. Buddle glared at Irony for a moment. Then the master bent down and shot the sand out of his trouser turn-ups. As he straightened up yet again, he saw a smile lurking round Irony's mouth.

"This is no laughing matter, Irony!" snapped Mr. Buddle.

"Oh, sir, of course not! I wasn't laughing, sir!"

"You were grinning like a hyena! Why are you in Masters' Corridor at all, Irony?" demanded Mr. Buddle.

"We're at cricket practice, sir. Mr. Crayford asked me to pop up to his study and fetch an old ball for the slip cradle. I was in a hurry, sir. I'm sorry if I jolted you."

"Jolted me!" Mr. Buddle fairly snorted. "You are thoughtless and idiotic, Irony."

"Sir!"

Irony tried to speak with dignity as became a prefect.

"You came up to fetch an old ball!" yapped Mr. Buddle. "Pish! What nonsense, Irony! Why didn't you use your head?"

Irony jumped. For a dreadful moment he thought that Mr. Buddle was being facetious.

Mr. Buddle yapped on:

"Mr. Crayford's study is not on Masters' Corridor, Irony, as you would be well aware if you paused to think. His room adjoins the gymnasium."

Irony turned pink.

"Oh, yes, sir -- I didn't think. My mind was on something else, sir. I'm so sorry."

"Where is my letter? You caused me to drop my letter." Mr. Buddle scanned the floor. Then he gave a little yelp. "Irony, you stupid boy, you are standing on my letter."

Irony hopped to one side.

"Sorry, sir -- so sorry, sir --"

He picked up the letter and handed it to Mr. Buddle. Across the white envelope was the definite shade of a rubber sole.

"My goodness, this is too much!" Mr. Buddle was fairly quaking with annoyance. "Now I have to return and write out another envelope."

He whisked past Irony. To relieve his feelings, he turned again to deliver a Parthian shot.

"Irony, please make yourself scarce before you do more damage. The next thing we shall hear is that you have felled the Headmaster. You are a clumsy and thoughtless fellow, Irony. Were I the Headmaster of Slade, I should seriously consider depriving you of your prefectship."

Mr. Buddle disappeared from sight round the corner. A slam of a door rang out as the form-master went into

his study to provide a fresh envelope for his letter.

Irony stood red with fury. He made, to the desert air, a few remarks which would have jeopardised his prefectship had the Headmaster heard them.

That evening at the nets, Irony had many things to say about form-masters in general and Mr. Buddle in particular. He slammed balls at the slip cradle as though he could see Mr. Buddle sitting therein. To anyone who would listen he told and re-told the story of his unjust treatment at the hands of "that old fool Buddle." Later, in the Senior Day Room, Irony's resentment had not abated, but the initial sympathy with which his story had been heard gradually changed to amusement. By the time that Irony retired to bed, the whole Sixth Form was having a dignified chuckle at the prefect's misadventures.

And that was how it all started.

The next afternoon, immediately after lunch, Mr. Buddle made his way to the Slade playing fields. There was a half-holiday for the school on Wednesday, and later there would be at least one cricket match in progress on the Slade pitches.

Mr. Buddle took but little interest in sport. He certainly could not have told the difference between a leg bye and a wicket maiden. But masters were expected to put in an appearance occasionally to give dignified claps when school games were in progress. It encouraged the boys, or it should have done. And a day like this was ideal for Mr. Buddle to enjoy a quiet rest in a deck-chair, and to do his duty at the same time.

It was a glorious afternoon, warm and sunny, with just a light breeze to temper the heat. A few fleecy clouds moved slowly across the blue sky, and the playing fields of Slade were lush green in the early weeks of the summer term. The lovely brick pile of the Slade senior

pavilion looked charming, even to Mr. Buddle's non-sporting eyes.

That afternoon the Slade First Eleven was at home to visitors from Tiverton College, but the game was not due to commence until two-thirty. It was barely half-past one, and the visiting side was not expected until about two o'clock. Very few boys had yet come down to the ground.

Mr. Buddle sauntered across the soft turf to the pavilion. Fleet, the groundsman, had set up a couple of dozen deck-chairs on the grass before the pavilion for the use of the players or for any special guests who might arrive as spectators. Mr. Buddle, however, did not lay claim to one of these. He was a man who liked solitude. He would feel lost among a group of spectators who lived and breathed the spirit of the game. Besides, he hoped to snatch forty winks in the course of doing his duty.

Under the scoreboard was a little pile of folded deck-chairs. Mr. Buddle selected one of these and strolled away with it. It was cool and pleasant under the oak trees which bordered the ground beyond the boundary line. At a distance of about eighty yards from the pavilion, where he would be too far off to be disturbed by the cricket gossip yet still near enough to be seen to be giving that encouragement which was expected of him, he set up the deck-chair.

He tested it in several places before sitting down. Mr. Buddle did not trust deck-chairs. He had known them collapse for no good reason at all.

Satisfied at last that it was reasonably safe, Mr. Buddle gingerly lowered himself on to the canvas. He took off his hat and placed it beside him on the grass. He unfastened the buttons of his jacket. He stretched out his legs. Yes, it was undoubtedly very pleasant.

Mr. Buddle looked around him. Far beyond the senior ground, where the

Tiverton match was to be played, was the junior field, with its squat wooden structure which formed the junior pavilion. A few juniors were having a knockabout in the nets near the junior pavvy. From that direction Mr. Buddle could hear an occasional faint shout as somebody called out for the return of a ball which had eluded a bowler.

A tall fellow in white trousers and the Slade blazer of mauve, piped with white, was passing near Mr. Buddle. He was Carslake of the Fifth.

"Lovely day, Carslake!" called out Mr. Buddle.

"Grand, sir!"

"You are playing for the First Eleven, Carslake?"

"Oh, yes, sir," replied the senior. He paused for a moment and smiled condescendingly.

"I shall expect to see a fine innings, Carslake," said Mr. Buddle.

"I don't shine with the bat, sir. I'm the keeper."

"Excellent!" observed Mr. Buddle, wondering what on earth a keeper was.

Carslake passed on towards the pavilion.

Mr. Buddle turned his head, and looked towards the lane which separated the playing fields from the school quadrangle. Two boys were just entering the ground by the main gate. From their size Mr. Buddle knew that they were juniors, and as they drew nearer he recognized them as Meredith and Garmansway of his own form. Meredith had his cap on the back of his mop of golden hair. Garmansway, who was on the plump side, and felt the heat, carried his cap in his hand, and had his blazer over his arm.

"Is there a junior game on this afternoon, boys?" asked Mr. Buddle as they reached him.

Both boys stopped politely.

"Most of our fixtures are on Saturdays, sir," explained Meredith. "We're going to watch the First Eleven

game for a bit, and then go into the village for tea."

Mr. Buddle nodded graciously.

"I hope you have an enjoyable afternoon, boys."

The two juniors strolled on under the trees, and Mr. Buddle's eyes followed them. At a respectful distance from the pavilion stood a small marquee. It was the property of Mr. Parmint who, with his wife, lived in the lodge at the entrance gates to Slade. Apart from doing the normal gatekeeper's duties, the Parmints conducted the Slade tuckshop. The shop was strictly supervised by the school authorities, but the Parmints ran it well. On half-holidays the daughter of the Parmints - Miss Prue as she was known to all Slade boys - dispensed soft drinks and other light refreshments from the small marquee near the senior games pavilion. Business was brisk with those who came to watch the games, and a proportion of the profits from the marquee sales was handed over to the school's sports fund. It was a satisfactory arrangement for all concerned.

Mr. Buddle watched Meredith and Garmansway disappear into the refreshments marquee. A few moments later the two boys emerged from the tent, carrying large ice-cream cones, heaped high with the yellow concoction. Miss Prue was always liberal with the juniors. They sat down on the grass near the boundary line.

Mr. Buddle viewed the scene with mild disapproval. Slade boys were not expected to consume ice-cream, or any other form of food, in public, though the rule was relaxed on occasions like this. Mr. Buddle's disapproval was really due to the fact that he wondered how any boy could eat ice-cream less than half-an-hour after consuming a substantial lunch of steak and kidney pudding. If Mr. Buddle had ever had a penchant for ice-cream he had long forgotten it.

He looked around him again. Palmer of the Sixth, carrying a cricket bag, passed behind Mr. Buddle's chair and walked towards the pavilion.

Two more seniors had now entered the ground through the gate on the lane. From his deck-chair under the oak, Mr. Buddle recognized them. They were Irony and Vanderlyn, both of the Sixth Form.

"Hm!" murmured Mr. Buddle.

His conscience pricked him a little. Very soon after the contretemps of the previous evening, Mr. Buddle had felt just slightly guilty. He had been a trifle unfair to Irony. He had taken advantage of the fact that the senior could not answer back, and Mr. Buddle knew it. He made up his mind to be particularly charming to Irony as some recompense for his somewhat hasty words at the corner of Masters' Corridor.

The seniors were strolling along. For a while they did not see Mr. Buddle in his chair under the shade of the tree. When at last they caught sight of him, Irony's face darkened. He stared ahead, and would have passed without a further glance in the master's direction, but Mr. Buddle rose to his feet and moved into their path.

"Lovely afternoon, is it not?" said Mr. Buddle.

The seniors stopped. They could hardly do otherwise without walking over Mr. Buddle. Irony did not speak.

"Lovely day, sir!" agreed Vanderlyn. There was the trace of a grin on his rugged face. He knew of the little fracas of the previous evening. It would have been difficult for any Sixth Form man to be unaware of it, in view of the song and dance that Irony had made about it.

Mr. Buddle looked up at the blue sky.

"Perfect for cricket, I'm sure! King Cricket, don't you call it?" He smiled genially at Vanderlyn. "Is it

too much to expect that you are taking part in the game, my dear Vanderlyn?"

His dear Vanderlyn shook his head sadly.

"My slow left arm spin, diabolical though it is, is not appreciated at Slade," he said seriously.

"Well, well, you come to Slade to study, Vanderlyn, but sport should have its place. Games are a great character builder!" said Mr. Buddle chattily.

"So I'm told, sir," murmured Vanderlyn.

Mr. Buddle transferred his cordial attentions to Irony, who was looking across the ground with a bored expression on his face.

"With you, Irony, it's different," said Mr. Buddle, going out of his way to be friendly. "I'm sure we shall see you distinguishing yourself yet once again this afternoon."

Irony turned his head and gave Mr. Buddle a cold glare. Mr. Buddle sensed that he had said something wrong, but was puzzled as to what it could be. Irony looked far from friendly.

Vanderlyn coughed, and passed a hand over his mouth to conceal a grin. He saw something rather entertaining in Mr. Buddle's remark.

When in form, Irony was a good cricketer. When out of form, he was awful. The previous Saturday, playing for the First Eleven away at Exeter, he had put down two catches in the gully. They had not been difficult catches. Then, when Slade batted, Irony, calling Antrobus for an impossible single, had run out his skipper. He had then remained at the wicket just long enough to tip a catch to first slip. Altogether it had been a disastrous afternoon for Irony.

Antrobus was not the skipper to rag a man who struck a bad patch. All cricketers strike a bad patch occasionally. But the captain of Slade had no patience with slackness, and he believed that Irony's performance on Saturday had

been largely due to slackness. In consequence, Irony had been informed that he was dropped from the school matches until such time as slackness appeared to be eradicated from his play.

Mr. Buddle, of course, knew nothing of this. He only knew that Irony had performed with some success in the Slade games from time to time. So Mr. Buddle, anxious to show Irony that cordiality was restored between them, rattled on cheerily.

"I must confess that I am no authority on the grand old game, Irony. But even in Masters' Corridor we have heard rumours of your achievements on behalf of the First Eleven."

It was a kind remark. Under other circumstances, no doubt, Irony would have been pleased. He would have preened himself, and responded modestly. But as things were, he was far from pleased. He jumped to the conclusion that Mr. Buddle had heard of Saturday's disaster, and was taking the opportunity of rubbing it in.

Vanderlyn glanced at the prefect, while Mr. Buddle waited for the polite, grateful response which never came. Irony stood speechless, a sullen scowl on his angry face.

Mr. Buddle felt embarrassed. He was astonished at the effect of his kindly remarks. He just could not explain it. The only possible explanation was that the prefect was still resentful of Mr. Buddle's words to him in Masters' Corridor on the previous evening. It seemed evidence of a rather malicious character. Mr. Buddle felt saddened, disturbed, and, even more, indignant.

He stepped back.

"I must not detain either of you. I wish you a pleasant afternoon." His voice had lost every vestige of cordiality now.

Vanderlyn brushed his cap in salute.

"Thank you, sir. You're very kind."

Still Irony did not speak. The two seniors walked on towards the pavilion.

"Upon my word, a horrid youth!" murmured Mr. Buddle.

He sat down again in his deck-chair. There was a troubled groove in his brow as his gaze followed the two seniors.

"An unpleasant lout!" muttered Mr. Buddle.

At a distance, outside the refreshment tent, Irony and Vanderlyn had halted. They were speaking together. Irony was looking back towards Mr. Buddle.

After a few moments, Irony threw himself down on the grass beyond the boundary line. Vanderlyn, his hands in his pockets, stood looking down at him.

Mr. Buddle saw Meredith and Garmansway emerge from the refreshment tent for the second time that afternoon. Once again they were carrying giant ice-cream cones. Clearly, having finished their first, they had gone for more. Mentally Mr. Buddle decided that he would have a few words with them some time on the subject of gluttony.

And then suddenly something happened which caused Mr. Buddle, for a fleeting spell, to doubt the evidence of his own eyes.

Irony, resting on one elbow, had been looking up at Vanderlyn and making remarks to him. It seemed to Mr. Buddle that Meredith said something to Irony, for the prefect glanced in the junior's direction. Then, as the prefect returned his attention to Vanderlyn, Meredith stepped forward and deliberately slammed his ice-cream full into Irony's face. As Mr. Buddle sat petrified, he saw Irony clawing at his face. Meredith turned, seized the ice-cream cone which Garmansway was holding, and squashed that down on the top of the prefect's head.

Mr. Buddle had not been able to hear the conversation, but he clearly

heard the roar of rage which came from Irony.

"Calamity!" exclaimed Mr. Buddle.

He hastened to rise, twisted, and shot over sideways out of his deck-chair. Panting, he picked himself up from the grass.

At a run, Mr. Buddle made his way towards the scene of the outrage.

Irony, his face and hair smothered with sticky, melting ice-cream, was on his feet. He was rushing at Meredith. To Mr. Buddle's amazement and horror, he saw that the junior was not retreating. Meredith's fists were up, and in a moment there would have been a fight in progress between the heavy senior and the slim junior.

"Irony!" hooted Mr. Buddle.

"Irony! Cease! Cease!"

Irony swung round as Mr. Buddle pounded up.

"You saw what that little devil did!"

"I saw what happened, but do not use such language, Irony."

"Wouldn't you use such language if some little beast smothered you with filthy much?" shouted Irony. He jerked a handkerchief from the breast pocket of his blazer, and mopped his red, furious face.

"Control yourself, Irony!" snapped Mr. Buddle. "I understand your annoyance, but a Slade prefect is expected to exercise restraint."

"A Slade prefect doesn't expect to have to contend with ignorant little guttersnipes," retorted Irony bitterly.

A small crowd was collecting. Fellows who had been sauntering on to the ground to watch the cricket or who had been seated in small groups beneath the trees, now came sprinting to the scene as soon as they heard the disturbance.

Vanderlyn, his hands thrust into his blazer pockets, had a mocking smile playing over his lips. His glance strayed from Mr. Buddle to Irony and thence

to Meredith.

Meredith was pale. His golden hair had fallen across his forehead. His gaze was on the ground as he stirred the grass with the toe of his white shoe. It seemed that he had suddenly realised the enormity of what he had done.

Garmansway, his plumpish face bedewed with perspiration, looked the picture of woe.

Mr. Buddle spoke, his voice vibrating with anger.

"Meredith, you are a disgusting boy. I have never seen so revolting an action in all my years as a Slade schoolmaster. Have you anything to say?"

Meredith did not speak. He continued to stir the grass with his toe.

"Stand still when I address you!" boomed Mr. Buddle.

Meredith stood still. Raising his head slowly, he stared at Irony. A fleeting grin passed across his face and was gone.

Irony was rubbing his handkerchief into his thick hair. With a muttered imprecation, he rolled the piece of linen into a ball and threw it away.

"Caught, slip!" came a voice from the small crowd, and there was a titter.

"Clear away, boys!" ordered Mr. Buddle impatiently. "Be off with you at once!"

The small crowd scattered. Some fellows walked away laughing, others went into the refreshment tent.

Mr. Buddle turned to Irony.

"Have you any idea why this boy of my form behaved as he did, Irony?" he demanded. There was an intensely worried look on his face.

Irony shrugged his shoulders. His eyes were glittering with anger, but he had regained control of himself now.

"How should I know, sir? He's just an ill-mannered little hooligan. I'm taking him to the Head."

"You cannot take him to the Head!" said Mr. Buddle grimly. "Mr. Scarlet is away from the school this afternoon, and will not be returning to Slade till late this evening. You will leave the matter in my hands."

"The Head's going to know about it," hissed Irony.

"Certainly Mr. Scarlet is going to know about it." Mr. Buddle spoke coldly. He turned to Meredith. "Why did you attack a school prefect, Meredith?"

Meredith opened his lips to speak, and closed them again. His expression was sullen. Irony was watching him warily.

Mr. Buddle waited for a moment, and then spoke in a deep voice.

"In any case, nothing you can say will excuse your wanton attack on a prefect - an attack which I witnessed. How the Headmaster will deal with you I cannot imagine! You may well be expelled from Slade."

Still Meredith said nothing.

"Go to your formroom and stay there till I give you permission to leave. To-morrow morning you go before the Headmaster."

Meredith turned and walked away towards the gates. Garmansway was about to follow him, but Mr. Buddle checked him.

"You will not go with Meredith, Garmansway. He is to be alone. If you are planning to watch cricket, please go and find another friend with whom to watch."

Garmansway moved away to cross the ground towards the junior nets. He did not look happy.

Mr. Buddle turned again to Irony.

"I regret that this should have happened, Irony. It is a most

astonishing occurrence altogether." He regarded the prefect thoughtfully. "Once more I am bound to ask you whether you have any idea as to why Meredith acted as he did."

Irony's reply came at once.

"Of course not, sir. I don't suppose he had any reason. He's just an undisciplined little beast."

Mr. Buddle's brows knitted.

"The boys of my form are not undisciplined, Irony. Have you had occasion to punish him recently, in your office as school prefect? That might account --"

Irony drew a deep breath.

"So far as I know I haven't spoken to that junior for the past week, Mr. Buddle."

"I have the impression that he said something to you, and that you replied, just before he attacked you, Irony. Do you recollect if that was the case?"

Irony bit his lip. After a brief pause, he said:

"I think he made an abusive remark, and I told him to clear off. I was completely taken by surprise, otherwise he would never have got near me with that muck."

Mr. Buddle glanced at Vanderlyn.

"And you, Vanderlyn - can you account for Meredith's action?"

Vanderlyn smiled lazily.

"A mental aberration, sir. Isn't that what they call it?"

Mr. Buddle gazed fixedly at Vanderlyn. The lazy smile still played over the senior's lips. Mr. Buddle turned his keen scrutiny on Irony once again. Irony stared at him for a moment, and then half-turned and looked away.

"The whole thing is incredible," muttered Mr. Buddle. "It is clearly a

matter for the Headmaster."

There was the sound of animation from the distant gateway. A motor-coach had drawn up in the lane, and the visiting players were alighting. Antrobus and many of his eleven were there ready to welcome their visitors.

Mr. Buddle strode away towards his deck-chair. Irony and Vanderlyn watched him go.

"You could do with a wash," suggested Vanderlyn.

Irony scowled, and ran his fingers into his sticky hair.

"You coming with me?" he demanded.

"Lead the way!"

The two seniors left the ground. Irony was silent, two red spots glowing in his cheeks. Vanderlyn was whistling softly.

A few minutes later, in the senior cloak room, Irony washed at one ablution bowl while Vanderlyn leaned on another.

As Irony seized a towel, Vanderlyn said:

"If Buddle knew what you were saying when Meredith applied the brake ---"

Irony paused in his towelling.

"What was I saying?"

Vanderlyn smiled.

"Can't you remember?"

"Of course I can't - and neither can you." Irony threw down the towel. "Do you think that young Meredith is likely to make up some yarn about me?"

Vanderlyn was still smiling.

"Somehow I think it very unlikely," he said.

Mr. Buddle spent an hour watching the cricket. It was pleasant, but his peace of mind had been disturbed by the events of the early afternoon. At last

he left the playing fields and made his way back to the school buildings, almost deserted on a sunny summer afternoon.

For a while Mr. Buddle sat in meditation in his study. The astounding action of Meredith of his form provided a puzzle for him. Meredith had always been a troublesome boy. Indeed, there were times when Mr. Buddle regarded Meredith as his "hair shirt." The boy's attack on Irony really should not have surprised Mr. Buddle, for the form-master always thought Meredith capable of anything. Yet, somehow, Mr. Buddle was surprised.

Of late there had been a better understanding between Meredith and his form-master. Not so long ago Mr. Buddle had spent a couple of nights at the Meredith home, and during that brief stay Mr. Buddle and Meredith had found themselves partners in an exciting little adventure. Since then, though the change had been almost intangible, there was no doubt that Mr. Buddle now saw Meredith in rather a new light, while Meredith had acquired something like a new respect for his form-master.

Occasionally there still occurred the little battles of wits between them in the form-room. With a boy like Meredith such little things were bound to take place. The fact remained that Mr. Buddle was keenly distressed to see Meredith booked for serious trouble over his attack on Irony.

It was approaching five o'clock when Mr. Buddle made his way to the Lower Fourth formroom. He found Meredith sprawling on a chair against the window, staring out moodily over the deserted Mulberry Walk which led off the main quadrangle.

As Mr. Buddle crossed the room, Meredith turned his head. He rose to his feet, his fair hair bunching over his forehead.

"I am disappointed in you, Meredith," said Mr. Buddle.

The boy did not speak. Mr. Buddle

went on:

"The attack you made on a Slade prefect was disgusting in its nature, Meredith. You were guilty of gross bad form, apart from anything else." His voice became more gentle. "Would you like to tell me why you did it, Meredith?"

"No, thank you, sir," said Meredith.

The reply was ingenuous - characteristic of Meredith - yet Mr. Buddle sensed that there was determination behind it. The lad's blue eyes were troubled as they met Mr. Buddle's keen gaze.

Mr. Buddle's tone was harsher as he spoke again.

"Are you telling me, Meredith, that you attacked a Slade prefect for no reason at all?"

For a moment Meredith stood silent. Then he said:

"No, sir, I had a reason."

"What was that reason?"

Again that slight pause.

"He offended me," said Meredith.

Mr. Buddle almost gasped.

"Offended you? A Slade prefect, appointed by the Headmaster, offended you? Are you insane? You mean that, as a prefect, he had had cause to deal with you?"

"I don't mean that, sir. I never see much of Irony. He hadn't spoken to me all the term."

Mr. Buddle was losing patience.

"He hadn't spoken to you all the term - yet you attacked him. It was entirely unprovoked. Is that what you mean, Meredith? You have no excuse at all to offer. Is that what you mean?"

Meredith turned his head and looked through the window.

He said, wearily: "I haven't made any excuses. I don't want to make any excuses. I was only answering your question. I suppose it was what my

father calls the 'old Adam' in me."

Mr. Buddle compressed his lips.

"You know, of course, that the Headmaster will take a serious view of this matter. At the very least, you will receive severe corporal punishment. It is possible that you will not escape expulsion. I shall beg Mr. Scarlet not to expel you, but I cannot promise that he will agree with what I ask."

Meredith turned again. He rubbed his chin with the back of his hand. He said, in a low voice:

"I don't want to be turfed out, sir. I don't mind anything else."

Mr. Buddle walked across to his desk which stood on the low platform. For a while he stood drumming on the top of the desk with his fingers. He said, sternly:

"I have met your parents, Meredith. I have the highest respect for them both. I dread to envisage their distress and disappointment if you, their only son, are expelled from Slade."

Meredith clasped his hands behind his back. Mr. Buddle found himself puzzled by the expression on the boy's face.

"Is there nothing you can tell me, Meredith, which might lessen the seriousness of your offence in the eyes of the Headmaster?"

Mr. Buddle's tones were very soft. His words were almost an appeal. For several terms he had disliked this boy as a perpetual nuisance in class. Yet now the kind-hearted little form-master was deeply upset to see the boy in trouble.

As Meredith did not answer, Mr. Buddle spoke again.

"Is there nothing you can say, Meredith?"

Meredith shook his head, and Mr. Buddle suppressed a sigh.

"Very well. You may go and have

your tea. To-morrow morning I shall take you before Mr. Scarlet."

"Yes, sir."

With something akin to bravado, Meredith walked across the form-room. The door closed behind him.

Antrobus, captain of Slade, was engaged in cricket jaw with Scarlet of the Sixth. The two seniors were lounging in the window-seat of Scarlet's study.

The day's cricket was over. The visitors had long gone. There only remained the inevitable inquest on the game which had been lost by a handful of runs.

Michael Scarlet was the son of the Headmaster of Slade. The Headmaster was nicknamed "Pinky" by irreverent boys. It was natural, therefore, that the Headmaster's son should be known to all and sundry as "Pinky-Mi."

Pinky-Mi and Antrobus were firm friends. They had come up through the school together. Antrobus often turned to Pinky-Mi for advice in connection with his various duties as school captain. Sometimes Antrobus acted on that advice. Sometimes he didn't. But always there was a deep understanding between the two seniors.

A tap came at the door, and Vanderlyn entered. He glanced at the captain of Slade, but spoke to Pinky-Mi.

"Sorry! I didn't know you had company."

"We're only talking cricket. Take a pew and join in!" said Pinky-Mi.

Vanderlyn dropped on to a chair against the table.

"Alas! It's not in my line of business."

"Rubbish! That leg-break of yours is promising. You've spotted it, haven't you, skipper?"

Antrobus nodded.

"Yes, I watched you last night, Vanderlyn. I was glad to see you at nets. A bit of sport will do you good."

Vanderlyn clasped his chin, and spoke seriously.

"You're thinking of listing me with the First Eleven?"

The joke misfired. Antrobus never joked about the school games. He said:

"Not just yet! If you develop that leg-break, I may try you out with the Second. Trouble is you're so hopeless with the bat, and a bit weary in the field."

Vanderlyn smiled sardonically.

"Refreshing candour! I like outspoken people."

"With a bit of coaching, you might be a useful slow bowler," said Antrobus. "I'll ask Crayford to cast an eye on you."

"Crayford," said Vanderlyn, "would not lift his umpire's finger to save me being run over by a bus."

"He's a good coach!"

"He's a good coach, and he knows it. But he only bothers with material which is first-class already. He won't help the rabbits. I should never have taken the remotest interest in cricket if it hadn't been for the importunate Pinky-Mi. He thought there might be a hidden spark of genius in the old scarecrow. Hence my appearance at the nets." He changed the trend of the conversation. "You lost this afternoon."

"We did!" said Antrobus briefly.

Vanderlyn slid down on his chair, leaned back, and stretched out his long legs, showing rather loud socks and a strip of calf.

"You gave Restarick a show in place of Irony. Might you have won, if Irony had been number five?"

"It's possible! Irony is a better cricketer than Restarick. But Restarick is reliable. I'd rather have him in the eleven at present than Irony."

Vanderlyn nodded blandly.

"Neatly put!" He turned to Scarlet.
"Can I talk to you, Pinky-Mi?"

"Permission granted!" said Pinky-Mi.
"Go ahead!"

"In private!" murmured Vanderlyn.

Pinky-Mi grunted.

"I've no secrets from the skipper," he said.

"Ah, but I have!" observed Vanderlyn. He glanced at Antrobus.
"Sorry, skipper!"

Antrobus rose to his feet. He did not look pleased. He did not like Vanderlyn. There had, in fact, been a time when Antrobus had wondered whether the influence of the lackadaisical Vanderlyn was doing no good for Pinky-Mi.

He said, rather brusquely: "I've got to put in an hour's digging before bed, in any case. So should you, Pinky! These exams are a blot on school life. See you for a snack and a brew about half-past nine."

Pinky-Mi nodded, and Antrobus left the study.

As the door closed behind the captain of Slade, Pinky-Mi turned an indignant face to Vanderlyn.

"Why did you get rid of the skipper like that, Van? Darn cheek on your part!"

Vanderlyn smiled whimsically.

"Darn cheek is my long suit," he agreed. "I have a problem. I want your fatherly counsel."

He crossed to the window-seat, and sat down beside Pinky-Mi. Outside, the summer twilight was falling.

Pinky-Mi looked at him suspiciously.

"Not that lousy dance hall again?"

"Oh, no. Not a personal problem this time. Just my way of interfering in something which does not concern me at all. Another of my long suits." He passed a hand over his thick mop of

tow-coloured hair. "A little matter affecting the Gump, the wee Meredith, and Irony."

Pinky-Mi raised his eyebrows,

"What the dickens have you got to do with them?"

"Nothing, pal!" Irony waved a hand. "It's nothing to do with me, as I told you. It's my state of mind. Irony is my friend - I have a guilty feeling about the wee Meredith - and I'm sorry for the Gump."

"Will you come to the point?" demanded Pinky-Mi.

"I'm coming to it! Have you heard about Irony and the Gump?"

"I heard about what happened last night." Pinky-Mi gave a reminiscent chuckle. "Irony made sure that every man in Upper School knew about it. He made a complete fool of himself."

"How right you are! Then you haven't heard about Meredith slamming an ice cornet into Irony's kisser?"

"An accident, do you mean?"

"No accident! A wilful, pre-meditated piece of fiendish Lower-Fourth devilry! It was a sight for sore eyes." Vanderlyn clicked his tongue appreciatively.

"When did it happen?"

"Soon after tiffin. There was hardly anyone about. Just a few of the kids, and only one or two of them actually saw what happened. It was some time before Tiverton arrived. The Gump was there, and saw it all from a distance. Meredith goes before the Great Beak to-morrow morning. The old man's away to-day. Hence the delay."

Pinky-Mi gave a soft whistle. He folded his arms and gazed at Vanderlyn.

He said doubtfully: "Irony's kept it pretty quiet, Van. Last night he was all mouth about Buddle. This is the first I've heard about Meredith. I'm sure Antrobus knows nothing about it. What's made Irony so reticent all of a sudden?"

"Quite a change, isn't it?" remarked Vanderlyn.

He rose to his feet, and switched on the light. He turned and smiled down at Pinky-Mi. He went on:

"Last night Irony thought he had a real grievance. This time he's not so sure of his ground. Twig?"

"Of course I don't twig. I know nothing about it."

"You will in a minute, but first of all one thing's understood. As my friend, you're going to be told the grave, grim, inside story. As a prefect, you will know nothing about it. I want your advice - but I'm not carrying tales to a pre. Understood?"

Pinky-Mi gave him an old-fashioned look.

"If it doesn't concern you personally, why do you worry about telling it to a pre?"

"It doesn't concern me personally, but it does concern old Buddle. The Gump was pretty decent to us both, once upon a time."

Pinky-Mi gnawed his thumb-nail thoughtfully. He sat in silence for a few moments. Then he said:

"All right, Van. Go ahead. I'm listening as a friend, and not as a prefect. I won't spill the beans to anyone."

"Not even to Antrobus?"

"Not even to Antrobus, unless you give me permission."

"I shan't give you permission."

"All right! It's understood!" said Pinky-Mi irritably. "Get it off your chest."

Vanderlyn sat down again beside Pinky-Mi. Instinctively he lowered his voice a fraction.

"Irony and I went down to the ground immediately after tiffin. We weren't going to watch the cricket - you know how sore the man is at being dropped from the eleven! We'd planned to go over to Everslade, and have a motor-boat out on the river. But Irony wanted to go to the pavvy first to lock up his bat. He didn't relish the thought that Restarick might borrow it to hit skiers off the edge."

"Restarick has his own willow," said Pinky-Mi tersely.

"I daresay - but you know Irony! On the way down we came on the Gump squatting in a deckchair under one of the trees not far from the tuck tent. Irony wanted to dodge him, but the old boy button-holed us. I had the idea he was trying to be pleasant, but Irony didn't think so. I forget exactly what the Gump said, but something about expecting Irony would be doing big things as usual in the field. Irony took it as sarc."

"The Gump knows nothing about the cricket," said Pinky-Mi. "He's the last man in the world to take a rise out of Irony like that."

Vanderlyn nodded.

"My idea entirely. But Irony reckoned he was being funny after that affair yesterday. Irony was hopping mad. He snubbed the Gump effectively, and we wandered on, Irony blowing off steam all the time, about the Gump. Near the tuck tent, Irony plumped down on the grass, and he was calling Buddle everything unpleasant he could think of in his extensive vocabulary."

"We heard most of his vocabulary last night," said Pinky-Mi drily. "I shut him up once or twice."

"I heard you, with keen admiration," agreed Vanderlyn gracefully. "To cut a long story short, we were out of the Gump's hearing, of course. Even the fiery Irony wouldn't slam a beak in his hearing. But a diminutive St. George was in the offing to slay the dragon. Meredith suddenly came on the scene, licking ice-cream. I suppose he'd just come out of the tuck tent. He told Irony to stop abusing somebody whose boots he wasn't fit to black, or something dramatic like that."

"You might have told him the same thing," snapped Pinky-Mi.

"Dear bloke!" murmured Vanderlyn. He smiled. "Irony's bark is worse than his bite. He can't help his big mouth."

Pinky-Mi grunted.

"It was darn bad form to slam Buddle in front of his kids, and you know it."

"He didn't know Meredith was there," said Vanderlyn deprecatingly.

"Irony wouldn't bother a tink'er's cuss. What happened then? I suppose there was something else."

"How discerning you are! Yes, there was something else. Irony said 'take yourself off, you little squirt,' or something in that line. Then he turned to me and made some remark about 'that old fool Buddle.' That did it! Meredith squashed his ice-cream in the middle of Irony's aristocratic kisser."

"Ye gods!" gasped Pinky-Mi.

"Then Meredith grabbed another ice-cream from some kid who was with him and rammed that into Irony's permanent wave. It was the funniest thing I've seen since Mack Sennett. Irony was roaring like a bull, but the kid didn't scoot. He stood his ground. I was just expecting to see a pre punched on the nose by a junior when Buddle came blowing up. He had seen the lot."

"Good lord!" muttered Pinky Mi. He sat staring at Vanderlyn.

"Meredith goes before the Big Beak to-morrow morning," added Vanderlyn. "What do you bank on? A flogging - or the order of the long jump?"

Pinky-Mi stood up. He thrust his hands into his pockets.

After a short silence, he said:

"If things happened just like you say --"

"They did!"

"Then that kid wasn't to blame. He was just defending Buddle against abuse."

"Of course! Good little boy, wasn't he! Like Georgie who loved his kind teacher!"

Vanderlyn grinned engagingly.

"That kid was provoked!" said Pinky-Mi.

Vanderlyn took a comb from his blazer pocket, and tugged it through his thick hair.

"Of course he was provoked," he agreed, combing industriously. "Buddle doesn't know that."

"Irony must tell him."

Vanderlyn laughed.

"Irony won't tell him. It would

cost Irony his prefectship."

"Hasn't Meredith told Mr. Buddle?"

Vanderlyn replaced his comb in his pocket.

"Be your age, Pinky! Meredith won't tell the Gump. Kids can't go about saying they attacked a prefect in order to stick up for their form-masters. It would sound smug. They'd never live it down. I'm sure Meredith won't tell anybody why he went for Irony."

"Then somebody else must! You said there was another kid there --"

"There was! It was either Pilgrim or Garmansway. Those grubby little beasts all look alike to me. He may not have heard what Meredith heard. In any case, he won't say anything. I spoke to Meredith half-an-hour ago, and he told me plainly he doesn't want Buddle to know why he wasted ice-cream on Irony."

"Then you'll have to tell Buddle," said Pinky-Mi.

Vanderlyn shrugged his shoulders. He said:

"For heaven's sake, Pinky, I can't tell Buddle. I'm not a prefect. Irony's something of a friend of mine. I haven't got many, but he's one. I can't go telling tales about him like some greasy little tick in a prep school."

Pinky-Mi stared hard at Vanderlyn.

"It may be serious for that youngster, Van. My father's a stickler for discipline. Meredith might be turfed out of Slade. Do you really believe that Irony would stand by and see that kid bunked without telling the Head why it all happened?"

Vanderlyn gnawed his lower lip thoughtfully for a second or two. He said slowly:

"I don't know. Irony thinks that Meredith will get a Head's beating, and he's not going to chuck up his pre-ship to get the kid off that. Maybe, if Meredith got the boot, Irony would say something, but I wouldn't bank on it. You can't get away from one thing. That crazy little beast attacked a prefect. Would your Old Man accept any excuse for that?"

Pinky-Mi shook his head.

"He wouldn't - but Buddle would. If Irony told Buddle, it need never go before the Head."

"Irony won't tell Buddle," snapped Vanderlyn. "He hates Buddle like poison. He won't give the Gump a whip to beat him with."

"I'll have a word with Irony myself."

"Oh, no, you won't!" Vanderlyn jumped up, and crossed to the door.

"You promised me, comrade! What I've told you was confidential between us. You're not going chasing Irony."

Pinky-Mi raised his voice impatiently.

"You fool, if you don't want me to deal with the matter, why did you tell me at all?"

Vanderlyn turned, his hand on the door-knob. There was a glimmer in his eyes.

"I had an idea you might think of something. After all, you've got a powerful brain! I haven't. I'm sorry for old Buddle. It's a kind of reflection on a form-master if one of his kids goes on the carpet. Perhaps there's nothing we can do about it. It's no good appealing to Irony's better nature. He hasn't got one. And your Old Man won't accept any excuse for an attack on a prefect. He would cancel Irony's pre-ship if he knew all the facts, but he would still give Meredith the works."

Pinky-Mi looked worried.

"You've put me in a rotten position, Van," he said.

Vanderlyn laughed softly.

"Not a bit of it. You can forget it all. I didn't consult you as a prefect - only as a friend. Of course, I suppose you might think of something. Quien sabe?"

He went out of the study, but almost immediately his head came round the door. He put a finger to his lips. Then he said, in a sibilant, exaggerated whisper:

"You might think of a way of letting Buddle tumble to the facts without telling him anything at all."

He grinned.

The door closed, and Vanderlyn was gone.

Mr. Buddle was enjoying a cup of cocoa and a ham sandwich in his study. Earlier in the evening there had been cold roast duck followed by banana custard in the staff dining-room, had Mr. Buddle felt inclined for it. But it was only on rare occasions that he went to the staff dining-room for supper. He preferred a quiet snack in his own quarters. To-night, Mr. Buddle was more than usually averse to joining other members of the staff for supper. So far, no master had made mention to him of the affray between Irony and Meredith, but it seemed possible that by this time some gossip might have got round. Mr. Buddle would have writhed under the barbed sympathy of Mr. Drayne, or the open, spiteful enjoyment of Mr. Crayford.

The summer dusk had fallen, and the curtains were drawn in Mr. Buddle's study. He finished his hot cocoa, and stretched out his slippered feet.

There was a light tap on the door, and Mr. Buddle looked up in surprise as a tall senior entered.

"Scarlet!" ejaculated Mr. Buddle. "This is a late call. What is it?"

Pinky-Mi carefully closed the door, and faced Mr. Buddle.

"I'm sorry to trouble you so late, sir. I know it must be nearly ten. I only heard a little while ago about Meredith attacking Irony this afternoon."

The senior was standing easily, one hand slipped into his blazer pocket. Mr. Buddle's brows contracted a little.

"What of it, Scarlet?"

"Well, sir, I was sorry to hear about it. It must be a bit of a - a --" Pinky-Mi floundered, and reddened. "Well, a bit of a worry for you, sir."

"It is a matter of concern for me, naturally, Scarlet. No form-master

likes to know that one of his boys is to go before the Headmaster and that serious punishment is a certainty. So the matter is common talk in the school, is it?"

"Oh, no, sir," said Pinky-Mi hastily. "Vanderlyn mentioned it to me. I haven't heard it from anybody else. I don't think many fellows can have known what happened."

Mr. Buddle regarded Pinky-Mi curiously.

"Vanderlyn! Yes, he was with Irony, of course. Did Vanderlyn give you any idea as to why the outrage occurred?"

Pinky-Mi stirred uncomfortably.

"He told me what happened, sir. We were both wondering whether it was necessary for the matter to go before the Head. Couldn't you deal with it personally, sir?"

Mr. Buddle leaned back in his arm-chair. He scanned Pinky-Mi's troubled, open face before he spoke again.

"Have you and Vanderlyn any knowledge of anything which might lessen the seriousness of Meredith's offence, Scarlet?"

As Pinky-Mi did not answer at once, Mr. Buddle added:

"I need hardly remind you that you are a prefect, Scarlet."

Pinky-Mi coughed. It was clear that he was not happy.

He said: "Vanderlyn is not a prefect. He can't give information, even if he has it, without being a tale-bearer."

Mr. Buddle said, softly: "That odd schoolboy code which will see injustice done in the name of honour."

Pinky-Mi's flush deepened.

"It's not like that, sir. In attacking a prefect, Meredith has only himself to blame. I know my father, sir. He will see nothing in mitigation of a junior acting as Meredith did. If Vanderlyn - criticised - Irony, it still

wouldn't help Meredith."

Mr. Buddle gave a sour little smile.

"I think you are right, Scarlet."

Pinky-Mi stood silent for a few moments. He was searching for words, and found his task difficult.

He said at last:

"Must the matter go before the Head, sir?"

Mr. Buddle rose to his feet.

"You know it must, Scarlet. If Mr. Scarlet had not been away from the school, he would already have sentenced Meredith. I could, I suppose, have taken Meredith to the Housemaster, but it is certain that Mr. Fromo would still have referred me to the Headmaster. Irony demanded that Meredith should be dealt with by the Head. It was a reasonable demand. Meredith will go before Mr. Scarlet in the morning."

"If Irony should ask you to deal with the matter personally, sir --"

"Ah, that would be a different matter!" Mr. Buddle gave Pinky-Mi an old-fashioned look. "Have you any reason to believe that Irony might make such a request of me?"

Pinky-Mi shook his head.

"Well, no, sir."

"I thought not. Then that is all, Scarlet. Good-night!"

Pinky-Mi did not move. He stood in uncertainty. Mr. Buddle, who had been turning away, looked back at him.

"Is there anything else, Scarlet?"

"Yes, sir." Pinky-Mi fumbled under his blazer, and brought out a periodical. He held it out to Mr. Buddle. "Would you read this, sir? You might get an idea - I mean, I think you would enjoy it."

"Indeed, Scarlet?"

Mr. Buddle took the paper, placed it on the table, and bent over it. He scanned the yellow and black cover. He looked up at Pinky-Mi.

"The Magnet, Scarlet. This, I presume, is a paper published for

schoolboys. Why should you imagine that I would enjoy it?"

Pinky-Mi turned a bright shade of red.

"It's a companion paper to the Gem, sir."

"Is it?" Mr. Buddle looked down at the periodical, and then back again at Scarlet of the Sixth. "So the Magnet is a companion paper to the Gem? And you, Scarlet, are one of the few people who know that I occasionally look for a little welcome relaxation in reading the Gem."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Buddle smiled faintly.

"Well, well, Scarlet, it is a kindly thought, I'm sure. Certainly I will glance at it some time."

"I should like you to read it to-night, sir, if you would."

"To-night?" Mr. Buddle raised his eyebrows. "Wednesday is the one night in the week when I read for relaxation, but I already have my reading matter for to-night."

Pinky-Mi turned to the door. His lips twitched. He sensed that Mr. Buddle was interested, but Pinky-Mi was an artist. He would not belabour the point.

"You know best, of course, sir. Read it some time, sir. It was just that I should have liked you to read it through before you take young Meredith to the Head to-morrow. I don't suppose it's important. Good night, sir."

Pinky-Mi left the study. He wondered whether Mr. Buddle had taken the bait. And also, if he had taken the bait, whether Mr. Buddle would "tumble."

If Mr. Buddle had not taken the bait, at least he was nibbling. He was, in fact, slightly intrigued.

"It was just that I should have

liked you to read it through before you take Meredith to the Head to-morrow," Scarlet had said.

For what possible reason could Scarlet of the Sixth want Mr. Buddle to read a certain issue of a paper called the Magnet before he took Meredith to the Headmaster? It did not make sense to Mr. Buddle. Mr. Buddle's reading of the Magnet could not conceivably influence the Headmaster's decision with regard to Meredith. Nor, so far as Mr. Buddle could see, could it possibly influence Mr. Buddle. He would, in any case, appeal for clemency for Meredith - and Pinky-Mi knew that he would.

Nevertheless, when Mr. Buddle went to bed that night in the room adjoining his study, he took the Magnet with him. With his bedside lamp adjusted, his knees drawn up into a hillock, and his pillows propped up behind his head, Mr. Buddle opened the Magnet.

The story was entitled "Harry Wharton's Last Chance." Over the top of the title, as a kind of introduction, was the following:

'THE TURN OF THE TIDE.' Harry Wharton, the rebel of the Remove, has run his course - expulsion stares him in the face. He thinks of the shock this disgrace will bring to his guardian and with the reflection comes repentance - and a chance to make good.

Mr. Buddle grunted. Thoughtfully he stared away into the shadows cast by his bedside lamp. He wondered whether he was supposed to see Meredith in Harry Wharton. Was Scarlet of the Sixth naive enough to imagine that Mr. Buddle could impress Mr. Scarlet the next morning by saying something like "Meredith smothered a prefect with ice-cream - Meredith has now repented - Please give him a chance to make good"?

Mr. Buddle grunted again. He shook his head, and settled down to read. As he read, his puzzlement grew.

This was no complete story. It was clearly an instalment of what had



Harry Wharton's Last Chance!

been a very long tale, now drawing towards its end. Mr. Buddle's interest increased, but he wished that he had read the previous Magnets which had led up to the crisis which was at hand.

In the story Harry Wharton was in the punishment-room at Greyfriars School. He was visited there by the Headmaster, accompanied by a form-master named Quelch. The Headmaster spoke:

"Your Form-master, who once held a high opinion of you, tells me that you are the worst boy in his Form - indeed, in all the school."

"I'm not surprised at that, sir!" said Wharton bitterly. "I daresay Mr. Quelch thinks so."

"You were found one day at a place called the Cross Keys - a disreputable place, strictly out of school bounds. You were warned that if you repeated such conduct you would have to leave the school. Yet last night you broke bounds again. You were going to that disreputable resort, I have no doubt."

"I have none, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

With wrinkled brows, Mr. Buddle raised his eyes from the printed page, and gazed again into the shadows. Surely there could be no connection, in Pinky-Mi's mind, between the erring Harry Wharton of Greyfriars and Meredith of Slade. True, Mr. Buddle had often regarded Meredith as the worst boy at Slade. Indeed, there were times when Mr. Buddle would have called him the worst boy in Great Britain. But that Meredith would break bounds at night in order to visit the "Plough and Sail" in Everslade, Mr. Buddle just did not credit for a

moment.

Still, both boys were in trouble. Harry Wharton was on the brink of expulsion for visiting the "Cross Keys." Meredith might possibly face expulsion for his attack on a Slade prefect. Yes, there was just the slightest link.

Mr. Buddle nestled down, and read on.

Harry Wharton escaped from the punishment-room, by climbing down the ivy, intent

upon running away from school. He was captured and taken back.

"I will not descend to such an expedient as placing bonds on a Greyfriars boy," said the Head, and there was an accent of contempt in his voice that stung Wharton, in spite of his blind anger. "Either you will give me your word of honour to remain in this room until sent for, or I shall request a prefect to keep you company and watch you."

Wharton stared at him.

"My word of honour?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"You will take my word?" stammered Harry.

"Yes."

"I promise, sir," said Wharton in a low voice.

This, then, was the beginning of a change in Harry Wharton. He received a kindly letter from his uncle, who was unaware of the trouble into which his nephew had landed himself by his folly.

The Headmaster, acting against the wishes of the boy's form-master, decided to give Harry Wharton one more chance.

Mr. Buddle was finding it all most satisfying reading. He found the character of Harry Wharton a clever study. He liked the restraint with which the author skimmed over the more sentimental passages. It was all excellent entertainment, but at the back of his mind Mr. Buddle felt that he was expected to find something more than entertainment in "Harry Wharton's Last Chance."

He read on. Harry Wharton, back in his Form, was finding it uphill work to win a reasonably good reputation. Mr. Quelch was suspicious of him all the time, and impatient with him. Slowly Wharton regained the friendship of former comrades. He played football under the captaincy of Bob Cherry. He found it easier, in fact, to resume the old relationship with Bob Cherry & Co than to shake off the acquaintanceship of shady people like Mr. Banks of the "Cross Keys."

Mr. Buddle yawned. It was getting very late for him to be reading. It was some time since the clock over the school chapel had chimed midnight. Mr. Buddle's eyes were beginning to feel like

gooseberries.

The story was nearly finished now. Mr. Buddle had enjoyed it immensely, but the closing chapters would keep for another day. He closed the Magnet and placed it carefully on his bedside table.

Slipping down between the sheets, he stretched out a hand and switched off the light. He drove his feet down into the cool lower half of the bed, and before allowing the mists of sleep to envelop him, he thought over the school tale which he had just been reading.

Certainly there was nothing in it which could possibly guide him in his attitude when he took Meredith before Mr. Scarlet the next morning. Mr. Buddle wondered sleepily whether Pinky-Mi had readily expected that "Harry Wharton's Last Chance" would provide any inspiration. Harry Wharton was not akin in any way to Meredith of Slade. The Headmaster of Greyfriars was nothing like the Headmaster of Slade. There was no similarity between Mr. Quelch and Mr. Buddle.

Sleep was beginning to numb Mr. Buddle's brain. Thoughts rambled on, more and more inconsistent. Meredith was a stupid boy. Meredith was the worst boy at Greyfriars. Mr. Buddle stirred uneasily. Not Greyfriars. The worst boy at Slade. Mr. and Mrs. Meredith were kindly people. They would be sad if their son were expelled for attacking a prefect. The Headmaster of Greyfriars would not expel Meredith from Slade.

Mr. Buddle's breathing was growing slower, heavier.

Michael Scarlet was frank and sincere. Like his mother. Not a bit like his pompous and rather domineering father. A well-meaning youth. Not a very strong character, perhaps --

"It was just that I should have liked you to read it through before you take Meredith to the Head --"

"I've read it through. A fine

story. Why did Scarlet of the Sixth want me to read it through - read it through ---?"

Mr. Buddle opened his eyes. He had not read it through. He had been too tired for the final chapters.

Mr. Buddle grunted with annoyance. The final chapters - a couple or so of them - would merely wind up the story. They could not possibly contain any solution to the Meredith problem.

Mr. Buddle roused himself and sat up. He groped for his bedside lamp and switched it on. For a few moments he shut his eyes against the light.

He took up the Magnet. He put on his glasses, yawned, and turned to chapter twelve. With one eye closed, he peered at the smallish print. He expected to find nothing helpful, but he knew that he would sleep more contentedly after he had finished the story.

As he read, Mr. Buddle opened both eyes. He yawned again, and emitted a sigh.

In the story an unpleasant junior named Skinner was anxious to see Wharton in further trouble with his form-master. He was that kind of an unpleasant junior.

"I'd punch you," said Harry, "but you're not fit for a decent fellow to touch."

"Are you a decent fellow?" enquired Skinner. Wharton clenched his hands. But he unclenched them again. A "scrap" just outside his form-master's door was not the way to regain the good opinion of Mr. Quelch.

Skinner gave him a bitter look.

"So you're sucking up to the old fool. Blessed if I catch on. But there's no fool like an old fool - I suppose that's it."

"Are you calling Quelch a fool because he hasn't caned me for nothing?" said Harry contemptuously. "Well, I don't agree with you, - and, what's more, I won't let you talk like that, Skinner. Cheese it!"

And Skinner snapped his fingers in Wharton's face.

Smack.

Skinner reeled from an open hand that smote him in the face like a pistol-shot.

Mr. Buddle lowered the paper. He stared away into the shadows, a greenish glint in his eyes. A breeze stirred the curtains drawn across the dark

windows.

Mr. Buddle removed his glasses, polished them on an end of his sheet, and passed his handkerchief over his tired eyes. He replaced his glasses on his nose. He read on.

Mr. Quelch had come out from his study and found Wharton fighting with Skinner. He had no doubt where the blame lay. The "worst boy at Greyfriars" was taken into that study for punishment.

"Wharton! Of late I have had some hopes for you. I had even begun to think that Dr. Locke's leniency had not, after all, been misplaced. But you are determined to go on your own headstrong way. I shall punish you severely for attacking a boy in your own Form, and fighting outside my study door."

"I know!" said Harry. "I'm ready!"

Mr. Quelch paused.

"Why did you attack Skinner?" he demanded.

"I can't tell you. If I did, what difference would it make? Skinner wouldn't admit it, and you would believe him, not me."

Mr. Buddle pressed his head back into his pillows. For a brief spell his mind switched from Mr. Quelch's study at Greyfriars to his own form-room at Slade.

"Offended you? A Slade prefect offended you? You mean that, as a prefect, he had had cause to deal with you?"

"I don't mean that, sir. I never see much of Irony."

"You have no excuse at all to offer. Is that what you mean?"

"I haven't made any excuses. I don't want to make any excuses. I was only answering your question."

In his bed, Mr. Buddle drew a deep breath. He was wide awake now. Wider awake than he had been all day, or so it seemed to him. This passage in the penultimate chapter of "Harry Wharton's Last Chance" must be the link which Scarlet of the Sixth had wanted him to detect. Mr. Buddle felt certain now that he knew the reason for Meredith's amazing attack on a Slade prefect. He wondered that he had not known it before, yet something told him that without this

lead from the Magnet he would never have known it. Meredith would never, willingly, have let him know. Mr. Buddle was not an emotional man, but somehow he felt strangely moved.

He went back to the Magnet for the final chapter. Another master, a Mr. Prout, had intervened just as Wharton's punishment was about to commence.

"You are about to punish Wharton for fighting with another boy - the boy Skinner ---"

"Quite so, Mr. Prout - and really I do not see why you need to interest yourself in the matter," said the Remove master tartly.

"Doubtless you will see when I have explained, sir," said Mr. Prout, with a great deal of dignity. "I was a witness to the occurrence. I was about to leave my study, sir, and had opened the door, when I heard these two boys disputing, and I was shocked, sir - shocked and horrified at what I heard ---"

"If you would be so kind as to make your meaning clear, Mr. Prout ---" suggested the Remove master, almost at the end of his patience. His tone really seemed to imply that he doubted whether Mr. Prout had any meaning at all to make clear.

"The boy Skinner, sir, alluded to you by an approbrious epithet," said Mr. Prout ponderously.

"Indeed! That was not why Wharton struck him, I suppose?" said the Remove master sarcastically.

"He did not, I think, strike him. It was a slap," said Mr. Prout. "And certainly the boy deserved it. A boy who alludes to his Form-master as a fool ---"

"A - a what?"

"An old fool!"

"An old fool!" said Mr. Quelch dazedly.

"A confounded old fool, sir!" said Mr. Prout impressively.

"Bless my soul!"

"Perhaps it was not Wharton's business to check Skinner," said Mr. Prout. "Nevertheless ---"

Nevertheless! Mr. Buddle knew it all now. He was sure that he knew it all. A pulse was throbbing in his temple. There was not much further to go to the end. Mr. Buddle finished the story. Slowly he closed the Magnet and placed it on his table. He took off his glasses, and placed them on top of the Magnet.

He switched off his light, and black darkness fell.

He slid down into his bed and closed his eyes.

He had met the Magnet - and he had learned something from it. He was

quite sure that he now knew why Meredith of his form had attacked Irony of the Sixth.

Contentedly, Mr. Buddle went to sleep.

Normally, Irony had a hearty appetite. He had a large frame to sustain. This morning, however, he had only toyed with his breakfast. To any keen observer it would have been obvious that he was not entirely at ease.

As he was leaving the dining-hall, Pilgrim of the Lower Fourth approached him. Pilgrim was the Head Boy of Mr. Buddle's form.

"A minute, please, Irony," said the junior.

The prefect paused.

"Well?"

"Mr. Buddle would be glad if you would go to his study as soon as possible."

Irony nodded carelessly. He had been expecting the summons. Mr. Buddle would be taking Meredith before the Headmaster, and it would be necessary for Irony to be present.

The prefect hurried away towards Masters' Corridor. There was a slightly worried frown on his face. A severe punishment for Meredith would be a sop to Irony's pride, and that Meredith would receive a severe punishment was a sine qua non. So far so good. But Irony had a conscience of sorts. He did not want to have to defend himself against any accusation which the boy might make. Actually he thought it unlikely that Meredith would accuse him, but he could not be certain. If driven into a corner, Irony was prepared to lie, but he did not want to lie if he could help it. Two fellows at least, Meredith and Vanderlyn, would know that he had lied, which would be uncomfortable for Irony.

He tapped on the door of Mr.

Buddle's study and entered. Mr. Buddle spoke curtly:

"Good morning, Irony. Sit down, please."

Irony sat down on a chair against the table. Mr. Buddle stood with his back to the mantelpiece.

It was a courteous gesture to invite the prefect to be seated, but it was a gesture which also had a psychological angle. Mr. Buddle was on the short side. Irony was tall and muscular. To look down on Irony was an advantage which Mr. Buddle would have sacrificed, had the prefect remained standing.

"You wish me to accompany you to the Headmaster when you take Meredith to him," said Irony with cool assurance.

"Certainly you must be present," agreed Mr. Buddle. "Before we leave, I have something to say to you."

Irony gave Mr. Buddle a covert look - a look in which dislike, impatience, and wariness were mingled.

"That boy of your form --" began Irony.

"We will leave that boy of my form for a moment, Irony. First, let me speak - and then we will go to the Headmaster. On Tuesday evening, in Masters' Corridor, I was a little unfair to you. I made certain comments which were unjustified. I was exasperated, and I did not pause to consider that we were both equally to blame for what happened. Under the circumstances I beg your pardon, Irony."

Mr. Buddle gave Irony a benign little smile.

The prefect stared at the master. Irony's eyes narrowed a little, his lips twisting into a slight sneer. If old Buddle thought that by this type of soft-talk he would save taking Meredith to the Head he would find himself mistaken. Irony felt his confidence come flooding back.

He said:

"Thank you, sir. I didn't give the matter a second thought. With regard to

Meredith, the boy must be severely punished, but I shall appeal to the Head not to expel him. I should be uncomfortable if one of your boys were expelled on my account."

"I can - well believe - that!" murmured Mr. Buddle.

Irony made to rise, but Mr. Buddle waved a hand.

"Do not rise, Irony. I haven't finished yet." His voice was a shade sharper. "As I have said, I spoke to you with lack of consideration on Tuesday evening in Masters' Corridor. In my impatience, I said things I did not really mean. It occurs to me that elsewhere you may also have said things you did not really mean - that you may have uttered criticisms of me."

Irony's eyes gleamed.

"Certainly not!"

Mr. Buddle stood in silence. The ticking of the clock could be heard in the study.

"What I may say in private conversation is nobody's business!" said Irony.

Still Mr. Buddle stood silent, gazing at the prefect.

Irony breathed hard. He said impetuously:

"If that boy has been telling you lies about me --"

"That boy?" Mr. Buddle raised his brows. "Oh, you mean Meredith. Oh, no, Meredith has said nothing about you. What could he say about you, Irony?"

Irony bit on his lower lip for a moment.

"He might say anything to excuse his disgusting act. Any lies - any fabricated excuse --"

Mr. Buddle shook his head.

"No, Irony! Generally speaking, Meredith is not a liar."

"If he tells lies to the Head, Mr. Scarlet will soon shut him up. He won't allow your boys to slander a Slade prefect, Mr. Buddle."

Mr. Buddle detached himself from

the mantelpiece. He moved across to the door where his gown was hanging on a hook. He donned the gown, giving it a hitch over his shoulders. He turned and faced the prefect who was standing now, taut and bitter.

"You will listen to me for one minute more, Irony, and then, if you still wish me to take Meredith to Mr. Scarlet, we will proceed."

Irony's face was red with anger, but he controlled himself. He waited for Mr. Buddle to go on.

I do not believe for one moment that Meredith will wish to defend his conduct or to offer excuses for it. Boys are strange animals, Irony. They live by a code of sorts. They have a horror of being regarded as priggish. There are boys who would risk a severe punishment rather than have themselves set on a pedestal before their schoolfellows - and before their instructor. I believe that Meredith is just such a boy, Irony."

Irony shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't follow your meaning, sir," he said frigidly.

"No?" Mr. Buddle's gaze was unwavering. "Then let me explain. I think I know why Meredith attacked you, Irony. If I take him to the Headmaster, Meredith will not lie. On the contrary, he will tell the truth - for I already know what the truth is, and that fact will place the matter on entirely a different basis. I do not believe that it will take Mr. Scarlet long to ascertain the truth. I am sure that Meredith would not voluntarily have told the truth to Mr. Scarlet. But I am equally sure that he will not lie to hide the truth."

Irony fiddled with a blazer button. The redness had faded from his face, leaving him putty-coloured.

Mr. Buddle's voice softened a little as he spoke again.

"If you wish, I will send for Meredith now, and we will take him to the Headmaster at once. In that case, Meredith will assuredly be punished for

what he did. I cannot complain of that. At the same time, I can guarantee that Mr. Scarlet will make a most searching investigation as to why Meredith acted as he did. You, in your turn, will receive justice, Irony."

Irony did not speak. He was trying to muster his thoughts.

Mr. Buddle went on:

"Take your time, Irony, before you come to a decision. If you would prefer me to deal personally with the matter, you have only to ask me. In that case, I shall give Meredith what I consider an adequate punishment, and there will be no further enquiry. The decision rests with you."

A white dint showed in Irony's nostrils. He knew what he wanted to say, but the risk was too great. He threw his weight uneasily from one foot to the other.

Mr. Buddle waited patiently.

Irony said in a stifled voice:

"If juniors are allowed to get away with this sort of thing, there will be no authority left for the prefects."

"That is correct, Irony. But authority brings responsibility to masters and prefects alike. If we fail, then all authority is undermined."

Irony cleared his throat. He passed his tongue over dry lips. He drew a deep breath.

He said stiffly:

"I leave it to you, sir. I shall be glad if you will deal with the matter."

Mr. Buddle nodded. He opened the door, and stood on one side.

"Very well, Irony. Perhaps you will be good enough to find Meredith and send him to me. You may, if you wish, tell him that you have specially requested me to deal with him."

Without another word, Irony left the study.

It was some ten minutes later that Meredith presented himself before Mr. Buddle. He looked subdued.

"Irony sent me to you, sir."

"Yes, Meredith." Mr. Buddle was standing against the window through which the morning sun was shining. "Irony has seen fit to ask me to deal personally with you. Under the circumstances, you will not go before the Headmaster."

"He told me so, sir. I'm very grateful to Irony."

There was just the slightest inflection of sarcasm in the boy's voice. He looked beyond Mr. Buddle, through the window, over the distant playing fields.

"Look at me, Meredith," said Mr. Buddle.

The innocent blue eyes were turned towards him.

"Irony has been generous to you, Meredith." Mr. Buddle's tone was stern. "You know quite well that the Headmaster would have taken a serious view of what you did."

"Yes, sir."

"This must never happen again, Meredith."

"No, sir."

Meredith's hands were clasped behind his back. He looked through the window again.

"You will be detained on Saturday afternoon Meredith."

Meredith opened his lips as though to say something, but thought better of it.

Mr. Buddle added:

"I shall set you a lengthy English paper, which must be worked and handed to me by Monday morning next. That is all! You may go, Meredith!"

Meredith looked at him doubtfully. Mr. Buddle turned away. The interview was at an end.

Meredith moved to the door. In the doorway he paused.

He said, with some hesitation:

"There is a junior cricket fixture

at home on Saturday afternoon."

Mr. Buddle looked round. He squinted at Meredith over the top of his glasses.

"I am aware of that, Meredith. You may spend the half-holiday as you wish, so long as you do not go beyond the school precincts, which, of course, includes the playing fields. So long as your English paper is competently worked and handed to me by Monday morning, I do not mind when you do it."

Meredith's face lit up.

A moment more and Meredith was gone.

It was not until the evening of that day that Mr. Buddle was able to talk with Pinky-Mi. Mr. Buddle had been for a short walk in the evening sunshine, and had paused for a brief rest in the Mulberry Walk. Mulberry Walk was a concrete thoroughfare which ran between two of the school buildings. Half-way down the broad walk an old mulberry tree spread its branches, and a seat had been constructed, long ago, round the tree. Generations of Slade boys had carved their initials into the wood of the seating, but it had always been a point of honour that nobody should mar the trunk of the tree by carving into that.

Mr. Buddle sat down under the mulberry tree, and fanned himself with his Panama hat. He had only been resting for a few minutes when three seniors turned the corner, and came sauntering along the Mulberry Walk. They were Antrobus, Pinky-Mi, and Restarick, and all were wearing white shorts and vests. All saluted Mr. Buddle as they reached him. Pinky-Mi said something to his companions, detached himself from them, and approached the master under the mulberry tree. Antrobus and Restarick walked on.

Mr. Buddle looked up into Pinky-Mi's tanned, healthy face.

"You look warm, Scarlet," he said.

"We've been playing squash, sir. It was warm work."

"I suppose so." Mr. Buddle nodded. He gave a little cough. "You may have heard that Irony requested me to deal with Meredith. It was not necessary to trouble the Headmaster."

"Yes, sir. So Vanderlyn told me. I was glad to hear it." Pinky-Mi placed a plimsolled foot up on the seat. He slipped his thumbs carelessly into the waist-band of his shorts. His face crumpled into a smile. "I was pleased that Irony changed his mind, sir."

"Oh, certainly! Meredith had to be punished, of course, but I am glad that he did not go before Mr. Scarlet." Mr. Buddle brushed some imaginary dust from his jacket lapel. "That little book you left with me, Scarlet. I found time to read it last night."

"The Magnet!" Pinky-Mi reached up a hand, and picked a fresh green leaf from the tree. He twisted it between his fingers. "I hope you liked it, sir."

"Oh, yes!" Mr. Buddle placed his hat on his head, and stood up. "Very well written, I thought. I must say that I enjoyed it. One thing struck me, Scarlet --"

"Yes, sir?"

Pinky-Mi's expression was guileless.

"Yes, Scarlet! It seemed to be the end of what must have been quite a long story."

"Oh, it was sir! A very long story! I expect you found it like going into a cinema towards the end of the big picture."

Mr. Buddle's eyes were twinkling.

"I do not attend cinemas, Scarlet, but your simile is apt. Naturally you had no motive in giving me the end of a story to read. I should rather like to read the rest of it."

"Would you sir? I have all the other tales in the series, I think, sir. I'll drop them into your study."

Pinky-Mi smiled pleasantly.

"Well, I am obliged to you, Scarlet! Good night, my boy!"

"Good night, sir. Thank you very much, sir."

"Thank you, Scarlet."

"Pinky-Mi sprinted away in the wake of his companions who had long disappeared from sight."

Mr. Buddle gazed after the lissom figure of the senior.

"An intelligent boy!" he murmured. He turned away and strolled slowly back down the Mulberry Walk. He murmured again to himself: "A boy who is all there, as the saying goes!"

Mr. Buddle increased his pace.

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SEXTON BLAKE IN THE CHAMPION

By Victor Colby

The great detective, Sexton Blake, succeeded in gaining an entré into many publications in the early part of the century, and the "Champion" was not an exception, although, considering the number of issues of this paper that appeared, his appearances were rare indeed. Still, he did make an appearance in the very first issue.

It would appear that he quickly wore out his welcome. Perhaps his associations with Mademoiselle Yvonne, and Mademoiselle Roxane were regarded as not quite the thing for the hero of this boy's paper!

Perhaps, also, Blake doubted the wisdom of direct comparison in the pages of the Champion with such an array of men and supermen who made his own exploits appear rather colourless when compared with their own stupendous achievements!

Whatever the cause, I find to my regret that Sexton Blake appeared only twice in the first 182 issues of this paper, which are the only ones that I have been able to examine.

However, the Sexton Blake authors and artists were featured very regularly, and I propose to comment further on this after the following run through on the Blake stories:-

Champion Vol. 1 No. 1. Jan. 28th, 1922

"Paid to Lose!" A magnificent long complete story of the Football Field, introducing Sexton Blake, Detective, by Arthur S. Hardy.

Sexton Blake had been summoned to a meeting of sundry football team managers, trainers and directors, to help combat a scourge that was afflicting the various clubs. Players had been bribed to sell their side in important league matches.

"We must keep the game clean" said Talbot, manager of the Benton Rovers. "Mr. Blake, you have been, and are, a footballer, I believe, and I am sure you will not spare yourself on our behalf."

"I will do my best," Blake replied. "What's at the bottom of this ugly business? Football betting, I suppose?"

"Yes, bookmakers!" growled the manager.

This then, was the introduction of Sexton Blake into the Champion in the very first issue, and needless to say, after many misunderstandings and false accusations, Blake finally brought the case to a successful and dramatic conclusion.

Misunderstandings and false accusations? Listen to this little bit of dialogue between Mr. Creed, director of the team, and Blameless Blake the Beneficent.

"When we engaged you on this case," Creed stormed, "it was in the belief that

you would do something to earn the big fee we're paying you! Sexton Blake, you're a fool! I'm through with you, you shall have your fee, but I reckon we've been done."

He wrote out a cheque which he crossed, blotted, and handed to the Detective. "There's your fee, you need not turn up again, Mr. Blake."

Sexton Blake tore the cheque in half.

"Thanks," he retorted, "I prefer to receive my fee when I have earned it."

Later Creed realised his mistake.

"You have taught me a much needed lesson, Mr. Blake."

Together the dauntless Detective, and the deflated Director went to the stand to enjoy the game and each other's companionship.

Champion Vol. 1 No. 7, 11th March, 1922

This issue contained the second Sexton Blake story. The cover of this issue was a rather eye-catching advertisement of a new serial (non Blake, unfortunately). It went:-

"The War of Revenge! An amazing story of Germany's Vengeance in 1962!"

Inside the issue was the caption "Germany's Vengeance on Great Britain! For over forty years, Germany has watched and waited, schemed and plotted, for the Great Day - the day on which she intends to take her revenge for the great defeat of 1918 and now, in the year 1962, the time has come!

This reads very strangely in the present year, 1965!

And now to the Sexton Blake story. This was called "The Golden Wolf!" a gripping story of mystery and adventure, introducing Sexton Blake, Detective, by Hartley Tremayne.

Incidentally this author has yet to be positively identified, but it is thought to be Coutts Brisbane. After reading the first paragraph, I, personally, have no doubts. The introduction of Coutts Brisbane's Inspector Harker is significant, and who but the light-hearted Coutts Brisbane would pen - "The performance of 'Fun and Fancy,' the revue that had made the hit of the season was over, and the dispersing audience had begun to play the regular comedy of 'Growl and Grumble' or 'The fight for The Taxi.'"

Sexton Blake was there, waiting for the crowd to disperse. It was then he was drawn into the present case, which, in the best tradition of Sexton Blake, was a quick action tale of political kidnapping, pursuit of the kidnapers at sea, and, during the rescue bid, such talk as :-

"I'm going aboard that lop-sided tin ark if I have to claw a way through the plates. Got a gun, Blake?"

And board the vessel they did indeed, swarming up hand over hand. The pace quickened. Knives flashed, rifle butts swung, automatics cracked. The rescue party swung spanner and belaying pins, and the now released prisoner plied a chair-leg as if it had been a battle axe.

No sooner was this battle over, than the kidnap vessel ran into a mine, and was blown sky high, and Blake and Co. were very fortunate indeed to get back to the safety of their own small boat!

So much for the Blake appearances.

Almost as important as Sexton Blake, are the people who were responsible for his continuing existence. The authors and artists, who through the years have devoted effort and talent alike to the task of keeping Blake alive. These men deserve, in return, a little interest from the Blake enthusiast in the formers' other spheres of activity. Let us look, therefore, at the work of these people in the first few issues of the Champion.

The following Sexton Blake artists were represented:- Fred Bennett, Harry Lane, Arthur Jones, J. H. Valda, E. E. Briscoe, Val. Reading, H. M. Lewis.

The first Blake author to contribute to the Champion was F. Addington Symonds, and then, not to write a story, but to give his editorial, for he was the first, and most highly favoured editor.

"Sons of Steel," a new serial by Blake author Allan Blair, had the services of Blake artist H. Lane as illustrator of this grand story of ship building life on the Clyde.

The setting for this tale, and the fact that he was author of 'Every Inch a Scot' leaves little room for doubt that he himself, was of Scottish origin.

Henry St. John is reputed to have written of Blake. The opening chapters of his serial "The Outcast of St. Basil's" appeared in Champion No. 1, illustrated by Blake artist, R. Macdonald.

Issue No. 2 featured "Ships of the Desert" by Reid Whitley, alias Coutts Brisbane. Artist Arthur Jones, who has done so much for Blake, Nelson Lee Library and the good old Thriller, was responsible for the illustrations.

Another Blake author - artist combination was to be found in "The Boss of V-Bar-V Ranch" by Gordon Shaw, pictures by J. H. Valda. This was Champion No. 4. A further story of this Ranch is to be found in No. 12.

Whitley and Jones once more appeared together in the credits for "The Mammoth Hunters" in Champion No. 8.

No. 9 saw the commencement of a new series concerning one "Moreton Stowe - Special Correspondent" being "edited and arranged" by Stacey Blake, a chronicler of his namesake.

No. 11 saw a wonderful opportunity lost. A series of detective stories commenced, written by editor and Blake author, F. Addington Symonds using the pen-name Earle Danesford, and illustrated by Blake artist Arthur Jones, but, woe! No Blake! One Martin Quest, known as "Q, the Solver of Mysteries!" was featured instead. Alas!

A new serial commenced in No. 13, called - "The Secret of Lost River" by Sidney and Frances Warwick, (the latter a Blake man), and pictured by Valda. A vivid story of wild adventure in unknown lands.

In No. 14, John W. Wheway, writer of at least one Blake story, gave us "The Mystery Final!" A thrilling, great Cup Final story.

"Marooned in The Pacific" in No. 15 was by S. S. Gordon (Stanley Gordon Shaw) and is of additional interest because of the Blake artist VAL (Val Reading) illustrations.

"The Three Mosquitoes" (Boys of St. Basil's story) commenced its serial run in No. 16, provided by the worthy Henry St. John.

No. 19 had the start of "Strongbow of The Circus" serial. Author Martin Shaw (T. C. Bridges), Blake contributor.

I wonder if the author of "The Ghost Men of the Hills" (No. 21) by Frank Sydney is another combination of Francis and Sidney Warwick? This latter couplet was certainly responsible for the serial story "Sinister Island" starting in No. 22, and pictured by Valda.

No. 25 featured "Secrets of the Stable" by Blake author-artist combination Norman Taylor and H. M. Lewis "Tales of the Turf."

Of special interest in No. 25 was the biographical note and photo of J. H. Valda, Blake artist.

No. 27 provided a striking story of adventure in South Africa from the able pen of T. C. Bridges, called "Last Hope Larry."

The editor waxed enthusiastic in No. 30. "At Last! Here is the great Naval yarn you have been waiting for - it will set you tingling with excitement!" The name? "The Scarlet Anchor." The author? Stephen Hood (Lewis Jackson).

A potted biography with photo in No. 31 indicate that Sidney and Frances Warwick are father and son.

"Bargeon of the Buccaneers!" a thrilling new story of football adventures commenced in No. 32, written by John W. Wheway.

Also present in this issue - a potted biography, with photo of Earle Danesford (editor, F. Addington Symonds).

The famous Sidney Drew, of both Blake and Calcroft fame provided the opening chapters of "the finest school story ever written" in No. 34 with his "Val of St. Vincent's."

Here we will let the matter rest, for we have but scratched the surface of a subject as big as the earth, but we have paid tribute to the mighty Sexton Blake, and to his able and devoted chroniclers, using as a medium, those fondly remembered and zealously sought after, early issues of "The Champion."

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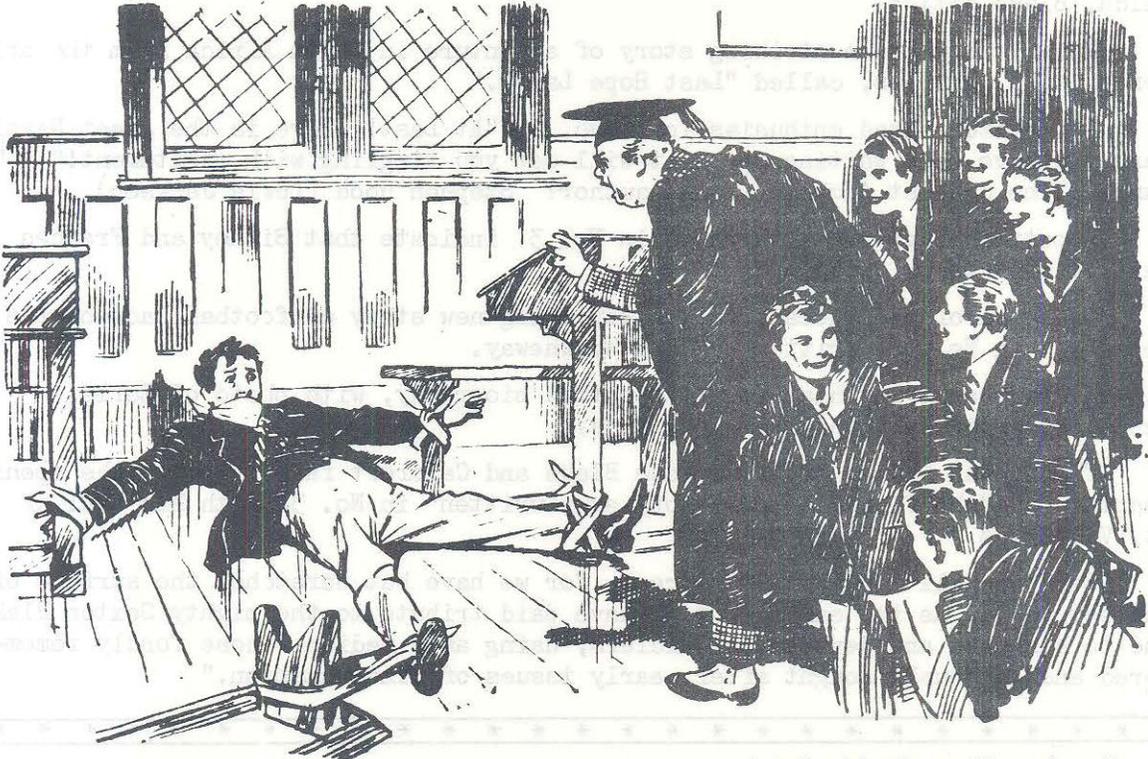
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PAUL PONTIFEX PROUT

By Les Rowley



Mr. Prout strode into the Form-room, followed by a swarm of juniors. A sound of almost frantic mumbling and gurgling guided him to the desks. He navigated among them, and almost stepped on Leder, stretched on his back, his wrists and ankles tied to the legs of the forms around him. "Leder!" gasped Prout. "What does this mean? Who has done this?"

Amongst the many character studies to be drawn by the prolific pen of Charles Hamilton there are many that are more outstanding than others; more finely drawn, and, because of that, more human and real to the reader. Undoubtedly, Henry Samuel Quelch has his rightful niche as being the most plausible schoolmaster to stride the Greyfriars stage; he just has to be true to life - or as true to life as fiction will allow - because he is one of the principal players. Among the supporting cast, however, was one who is more real, more human, probably because he has more failings than has the redoubtable Mr. Quelch. I refer to the pompous, pedantic and portly Prout.

"Prout," Coker would often exclaim, "will be famous as my form master." Coker, for possibly the first time in his life, has been proved right, although it is extremely doubtful whether Prout would agree. Indeed, we have a lot for which to thank Horace who is always good for a laugh on his own account, for it was he

that brought Prout into prominence. It is still claimed that, when Coker left the Shell for the Fifth, Hacker danced with joy and Prout danced with rage. Merely for the fact that he had Coker in his form, Prout is worthy of our sympathy. Coker made Prout feel that he really was earning his salary; what scant locks Prout still possesses have long since turned grey through trying to drum sense into the skull of the fool of the Fifth.....not that Prout has sufficient sense for his own good, let alone that of others! But if Prout lacks sense he doesn't lack colour.

If we are to believe the Fifth Form master and, in the absence of any more credible authority, we must accept Prout as speaking with some grain of truth, then Prout - in his youth - was a mighty hunter. At a drop of a hat Prout will proudly show his many trophies of the good old days when grizzly bears were not nimble enough to get out of the way of a Winchester. True, Stephen Price avers that 'Old Pompous' obtained both the guns and the trophies as a job lot from Mr. Lazarus's shop, but then Price is a fibber and a malicious one at that. Since Prout always keeps his faithful Winchester in good going condition he must have an affection for it that is based on something more than bragadacio. A little exaggeration perhaps.....but haven't all of us exaggerated on occasion? Unfortunately, even with gilded influence of exaggeration, Prout's stories of his earlier years lack appeal. There are the sounds of shuffling of feet and the pushing back of chairs in the Staff Common Room when Prout begins "I remember when I was in the Rockies in the winter of '88 - or was it '89?" or, "When I was up at Oxford...!" Hacker, Quelch, Capper and Twigg are soon off to imaginary meetings with the Head, to their studies where they may, or may not, have overdue papers for marking. They all know only too well that when Prout gets going the only pause in the proceedings will be for him to get his breath and not for them to reply. We are left to wonder exactly what the Fifth Form-master did get up to when he was at Oxford. Did the Proctors ever nail him for having a girl in his rooms? It may not have been so boring as we are led to think. Who knows? Allowed to run on, Prout's fruity boom may have revealed an even fruitier past.

Prout, of course, is not all gas though many of his contemporaries will tell us that he is. Dignity is his most precious possession and is reflected in polysyllabic speech and ponderous tread. Whatever happened when Plancus was Consul we may never know, but it has clad Prout with Dignity as with a garment. The passing of the years has added to that pride as it has also added to his circumference. At times Prout is even majestic or at least as near majesty as corpulence will allow. Whenever he was acting Headmaster his elephantine tread would change to a majestic roll. He thinks of himself as a master in the best Dr. Arnold tradition and has to be reminded that "man, vain man, dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep." In the year 1934 Prout took over the reins from Dr. Locke when the latter was in a nursing home. Aided by "his" Head Prefect, Gerald Loder, he certainly made a hash of things. It should be said to his credit that this was due to his assinine gullibility in appointing such a tyrant to lead "his" prefects. Quelch is described as "a beast, but a just beast;" Prout, who always tries to be just, is never beastly in his own right, not even in the schoolboy definition of the term. Although his dignity is dictated mainly by his conceit, Prout can unbend. Ask any members of his form. Those little visits to the Fifth Form Games Room where he will speak "not as master, but as friend" are one of the joys of Prout's existence. Whether anyone else enjoys these friendly chats is doubtful. But at least it goes to show that Prout takes a friendly interest in the members of his form. He often takes, much to the annoyance of the masters

concerned, an interest in Forms other than his own. Amongst the boys this interest is recognised as "barging in where he is not wanted," amongst the masters it is described as "an unwarrantable intrusion." In reality this trespass is born from Prout's happy belief that his own form, like Caesar's wife, is above suspicion and therefore all others are suspect. There is some justification in this appreciation for the Fifth contains only one rascal (Price) whereas the Remove has Skinner, Snoop and Stott, Hazeldene and the Bounder and in the Sixth we find Loder, Carne and Walker. On the whole the Fifth is a healthy form and rightly or wrongly Prout takes the credit for this happy state of affairs. Only Coker remains to give him cause for doubt - strong doubt - as to whether he is succeeding as a form master at a place of education!

Prout's interference in the affairs of another form, resented though it is by masters and boys alike, represents Prout at his most entertaining. A game of passage football in the Remove quarters will draw him like a magnet and even an acid comment from Hacker reminding him of Quelch's displeasure of such interference does not deter him. Neither a warning before the event, nor an acrimonious exchange after it, has ever stopped Prout from barging in on future occasions. It would be interesting to have Prout taking the Remove for a short period. Would the patience that has withstood Coker withstand the equal stupidity of William George Bunter - "such an uncleanly and an unmanly boy"? Quelch never had much success in making Bunter wash or behave; it could not be expected that Prout would be any luckier. The studied insolence of Herbert Vernon-Smith would be even more marked under a less Quelchillian eye - the Bounder would see to it that Prout was "drawn" to the maximum extent. Yes, in many and varied ways Prout would have his work cut out in exercising control over the Remove in the manner that he has so often advocated to the master of that form. Quelch would probably wish him joy of every impossible endeavour and doubtless Prout would emerge from his ordeal a wiser but unhappier man, and the reader of the chronicles of Greyfriars would have yet another laughable series to remember.

If Prout has courage to pace "where angels fear to tread" in academic matters, he also possesses courage for other, more creditable occasions. Prout will stand up manfully to any of the roaming footpads that seem to frequent Courtfield common, even though the odds are heavily against him. Fortunately, either Coker or the Famous Five are to hand to rescue him from severe injury, but Prout proves himself no coward when lesser men would turn and run.....not that running would be of any great use to Prout, he has too heavy a load to carry to manage any real turn of speed. But, undeniably, the spirit is there!

Many summers have passed since Prout first trod the dusky corridors of that ancient foundation of which we have read so much; the sands of Time are running out and soon a falter must be heard in the heavy tread and booming voice. The nightly prowls along the Elm Walk will be one more pleasure to be remembered; the creaking of a well-filled chair as its occupant settles back to toast his toes before the flickering flames on the study fire will cease. Masters will be able to pass a certain study without the fear of being invited in for a one-sided "chat." The favourite Winchester and the many trophies that it may, or may not, have procured will no longer ornament the oaken panels of walls mellowed with age. That this must come to pass is very true but there must be few - very few - who will not regret it when it does. We must appreciate Prout whilst we may, for faults that we may do well to avoid, but for kindness would certainly do well to emulate!

When the day finally comes for Prout to leave the scene of some of his - and

our - happiest years I hope that the Board of Governors, the Staff and the School will do him due honour. I am sure that they will, but as I am unlikely to come across a copy of the "Courtfield Gazette (with which is incorporated the Friar-dale, Hawkescliff and Pegg Chronicle)" containing a report of the event I shall never know but only imagine. It seems certain that for once in his life Prout will have to listen. Sir Hilton Popper will speak for the Governing Board; Dr. Locke will speak as the Chief that Prout has served; Mr. Quelch will speak for the Staff and Wingate for the School and some form of presentation will be made. Of course, to all this Prout will have to respond and it is a certainty that he will do himself proud.

I would give much to be present in Hall at that time, but would give much more to know that the majestic tread is to echo down the passages and corridors of Greyfriars for a long time to come!



JOHN W.
WHEWAY

This is a cartoon picture of J. W. Wheway to whom Frank Vernon Lay pays such glowing tribute elsewhere in this volume.

The picture was intended to be used in connection with the Pets' Annuals he edited in 1958-61; hence the surrounding pets. The artist shows him as being much younger than he actually is.

MEMORY LANE (An Editorial Item)

Every year in Collectors' Digest Annual we try to bring you something which may touch the chords of memory. This time it's a very, very old cinema playbill. You may like to know how I came by it - or rather, came by the photograph of it.

In Surbiton, where I live, there is a very, very old shopping centre, and in this very, very old shopping centre there is a very, very old shop. It was a shop for the sale of books, stationery, and printing, first established 100 years ago. Up till the start of this year it had been a concern of one certain family since the turn of the century. By early 1965, the only one left to run it was a lovely lady, well into her eighties. She sold out to a modern organisation.

They installed a new shop-front, painted it light blue and yellow. They scrapped the old, old counters. They swept away the thousands and thousands of old books. They removed the gas radiators which must have been giving out indifferent heat for sixty winters. They let in air and light, but, in the process, they lost the old magic.

The new proprietor, though a brisk business man, was not without a heart. He often went starry-eyed about the wonders of the dusky, dusty, cobwebby storerooms overhead. The old, old wooden printing press, out of use probably for fifty years. The thousands more old books, bought new, and long since relegated to the attics as unsaleable. The great heaps of account books, dating well back into the reign of the good queen Victoria.

They found a quantity of old picture post-cards of Surbiton, withdrawn from stock, as new pictures down the years took their place. They were originally bought, probably, for 2d a dozen, and sold at $\frac{1}{2}$ d each when the postage on them was also $\frac{1}{2}$ d. (Now those old cards are on sale in the shop at 1/- each, marked "Can Never Be Repeated.")

And among masses of old printing they found this cinema playbill. As soon as I saw it, I wanted it for the Annual. Naturally enough, the owner would not give it to me - but he did

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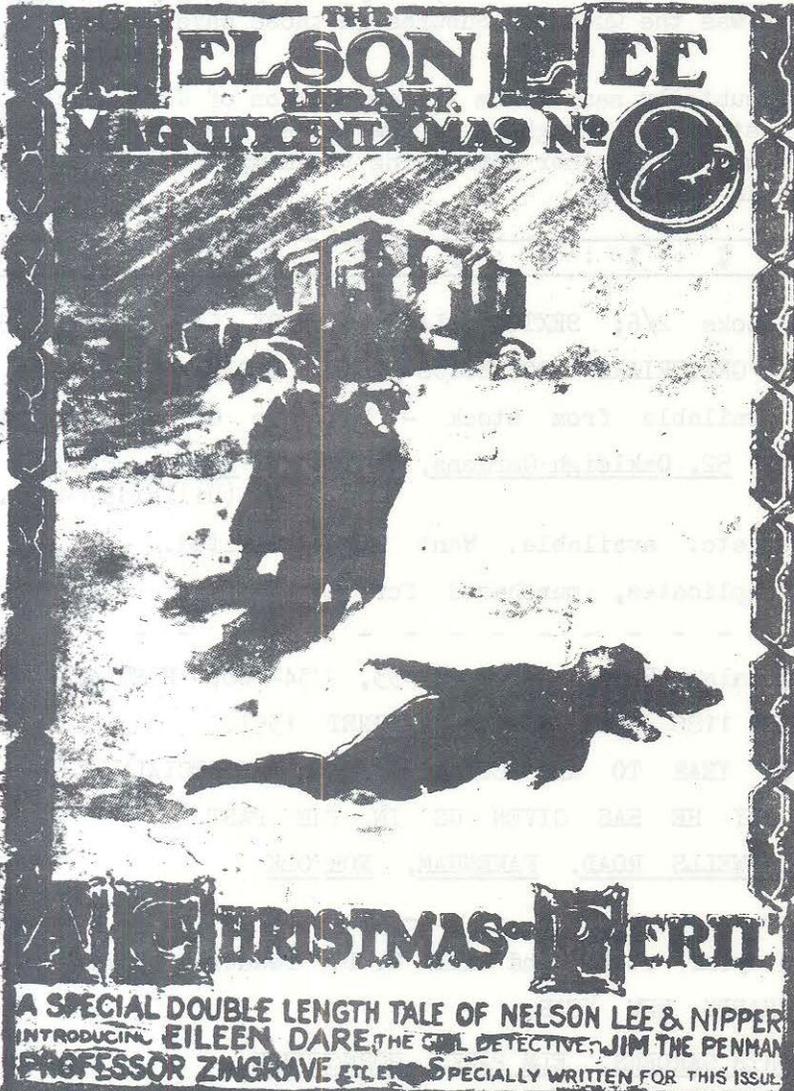
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YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER

By C. H. Churchill

No. 78.—OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS NUMBER.



CHRISTMAS-PERIL
A SPECIAL DOUBLE LENGTH TALE OF NELSON LEE & NIPPER
INTRODUCING EILEEN DARE, THE GIRL DETECTIVE, JIM THE PENMAN
PROFESSOR ZINGRAVE ETC. SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THIS ISSUE

INCORPORATING THE "BOYS' REALM."

ON December 2nd, 1916, the first Christmas number of the Nelson Lee Library appeared, No. 78. The price was 2d. and it consisted of 64 pages plus the covers. The whole of the 64 pages were used for the Nelson Lee story which was entitled "A Christmas of Peril." The serial "The Island of Gold" running at that time was confined to one chapter occupying the last two pages of the cover.

In case "you may not remember" or have not had the pleasure of ever seeing this number of the Nelson Lee I herewith offer a resume of the story.

The tale was much longer than the usual ones at this time and introduced a large cast - Nelson Lee and Nipper, of course, plus Eileen Dare, Jim the Penman, Professor Zingrave, Douglas Clifford and his wife as well as other minor characters. Vera Clifford was the step-daughter of Zingrave and with her husband had been leading character in the League of the Green Triangle series. This series had ended the previous June with the supposed death of Zingrave.

In this story he turns up again with the explanation that he had a miraculous escape and had only just managed to return to England. Very shortly he was to be the leading light in a new series about the "Circle of Terror" his latest criminal organisation. Jim the Penman and Eileen Dare each had their own series running

at this time and this Christmas number was the first occasion that they and Zingrave had all appeared together in one story.

The front cover of No. 78 was no doubt quite attractive when new. Unfortunately my copy has become a little soiled. Not much wonder really as it is nearly 49 years of age!! The drawing shews Eileen Dare lying in deep snow with two men who had left her in this predicament making their way back to a motor car in the distance. The snow was swirling down and poor Eileen appears to be in dire distress. The picture is framed with decorative blue and red designs down each side while the wording at the top and bottom is in ornamental lettering of red and blue.

The story commenced, as so many did in those days, with a prologue. In this we read of Clive Worthing and his wife, a young couple in difficulties. Victor Marcombe, a crooked stockbroker, had induced Clive to invest all his savings in certain speculations. As a result Clive's money had found its way into Marcombe's pocket. He had just discovered the truth of what had happened and being rather hot headed had told his wife that he was determined to visit Marcombe and have the matter out with him. Despite her pleadings he went off armed with a revolver, ready to try a game of bluff with Marcombe and endeavour to frighten him into returning the money.

There was a heavy snowstorm at the time but Clive reached his destination and decided to approach Marcombe via the library window. Unfortunately for Clive the local policeman happened to be sheltering in a nearby doorway and saw him enter through the window. While the constable was pondering what to do, a shot sounded and lifted the arm of the law out of his lethargy with remarkable abruptness. He ran to the window and found Clive, clutching the revolver, standing over Marcombe who lay dead at his feet. As the constable spoke, Clive panicked, flung the revolver at him and bolted. He managed to reach home, collected all the money he could and resumed his flight. He reached the station and boarded a train just as it was on the move. He had escaped - for the moment!

The tragic events of the night were not yet over, however. By a quirk of fate the train came into collision with another and several coaches were derailed. A number of people were killed and amongst these a body was identified as that of Clive Worthing. He had performed a terrible deed and had paid for it in full even within an hour of its execution. End of prologue!

Chapter one now opens with the time three years later. Nelson Lee, Nipper, Eileen Dare and her aunt, Miss Gilbey, are spending Christmas at the Derbyshire home of Douglas Clifford and his wife, Vera, step-daughter of the infamous Professor Zingrave, believed dead. Clifford had been of immense help to Lee when fighting the League of the Green Triangle and through this a firm friendship had sprung up between them.

While out walking one day, Lee, Nipper, Eileen and Clifford came upon a sad sight. They found some men in the act of evicting a young woman from a cottage. Clifford told Lee she was a Mrs. Lethbridge, a widow, lived alone with her child and appeared to be in poor circumstances. On making enquiries Clifford discovered from the men that the landlord, a certain Hector Desmond, had ordered them to evict the girl if she could not settle rent she owed. As she was unable to do this they were carrying out their orders. In spite of the girl's protests Clifford settled the debt and the men went away.

Chapter two explains why Desmond tried to evict Mrs. Lethbridge. Through

Sydney Bradford, a rascally solicitor (featured in the Eileen Dare series), he had learnt that she was in reality Mrs. Clive Worthing, widow of the murderer living under her maiden name. She had inherited a large fortune but had been kept in ignorance of this at Desmond's suggestion. The idea was that Desmond's son, Hubert, should persuade her to marry him so that he could obtain control of the fortune. The reason for her attempted eviction was that Hubert should come forward at the last moment and rescue her from her supposed predicament and so curry favour in her eyes. The plan had gone awry as Lee and the others turned up at the vital moment and interfered.

Chapter three describes how Vera Clifford was walking along a passage in her home that evening and passing a window was greatly startled to see a face pressed against the outside. As she stared, the face disappeared but she was positive that it was Zingrave's who was supposed to be dead. It was such a shock that she fainted but on recovery was positive in telling the others that it was her step-father who had looked through the window. Nelson Lee remembered that he had not actually seen Zingrave die nor had he seen the body. He had disappeared over a high ridge while a volcanic eruption was taking place. Less than a minute later the ridge had become a glowing mass of white hot lava. For Zingrave to have escaped seemed impossible, but had he? Lee wondered, and felt uneasy.

In chapter four, Sydney Bradford calls on the Desmonds with news of a further development. It appeared that just after the death of Clive Worthing he had received a sealed letter from a stranger which was not to be opened for three years. The time had just expired and on opening the letter found it contained another sealed one addressed to Mrs. Worthing and was to be delivered to her on this December 24th. The unscrupulous solicitor had opened this too and to his amazement found it was from Worthing himself and he was still alive. He had not died in the railway accident, it was mistaken identity, and he intended to call on his wife the next day, Christmas day, considering that he had atoned for his crime. He wanted her to know that he was alive the day before so that it would not be such a shock when he turned up.

Chapter five tells us of a pretty plot. Bradford had brought a companion with him, introduced as Henry Faversham, but in reality Jim the Penman. Bradford puts up the scheme that Worthing be intercepted the next day and "put out of the way." This would clear the deck for Hubert Desmond to continue the plan of persuading Mrs. Worthing to marry him. To this end Jim the Penman was to forge a letter to be put in the place of the real one from Worthing to his wife. This was to tell her that should anything happen to him he wished her to marry Hubert. After some discussion the four rogues agreed to carry out this murderous plan.

Chapter six. Lee and Nipper, while out walking one morning, are passing an inn when a man emerges. As Nipper catches his eye he retreats into the building but Nipper recognises him as Zingrave. Lee had not taken any particular notice but was intrigued to hear what Nipper had seen. As they were progressing along the road a car approached and went into a skid on the icy road. It hit a tree and threw the driver out unconscious. They got him into the car and managed to drive it back to Clifford's home. After a while he recovered and told them his name was Yorke. Actually he was Clive Worthing on his way to his wife to reveal himself to her. He had prospered somewhat in the three years he had been away and felt sure that she would welcome him and be prepared to go off with him under the name of Yorke. Lee and the others were in ignorance of this at that moment.

Chapter seven describes the historic meeting between two of the most villainous characters ever to appear in the Nelson Lee - Jim the Penman and

Zingrave. As described earlier, the former was already in league with the Desmonds who lived in the vicinity of the Cliffords. Jim had been to the village and was returning to the Desmonds house by a lane in which was the cottage of Mrs. Clive Worthing. He knew her husband was to call the next day to reveal himself to her. Just as he was approaching the cottage, another figure appeared through the snow and paused at the gate. Actually he intended to enter the gate to avoid Jim whom he had just seen. Jim, however, was struck by the idea that he was Worthing arrived earlier than intended. An alarming thought! If it was Clive all their plans were defeated. On the spur of the moment Jim flung himself at the stranger. However, it was no easy victory for Jim, for the man struggled furiously and Jim, getting a sight of his face realised that it was not Worthing. He did recognise him as Zingrave by his notable eyes. Jim released his hold, helped the other up, apologising for his error and saying he knew who he was. He was so persuasive that in a short time the two arch crooks went off arm in arm, deep in conversation. A pretty pair!

Chapter eight - Eileen on the track! Miss Eileen had been to the village post office and on her way back snow began to fall heavily. When near Mrs. Worthing's cottage she saw the meeting between Zingrave and Sutcliffe, the struggle and the explanations. They failed to see her because of the snowstorm. She heard Sutcliffe's amazed "Zingrave" and remembered Vera Clifford's certainty that he had looked in at her window. Her suspicions were aroused and she decided to follow the two rogues. She saw them reach Desmond's house and enter. Reconnoitring the house she found a small conservatory. Managing to open the glass door of this she entered and found French windows of an inner room. The curtains of this were not quite drawn so she could see inside where all the rogues were in conference. She could also hear faint voices. Sutcliffe was telling Zingrave all about the plot to kill Clive Worthing. Zingrave then said he had discovered Philip Yorke was the injured motorist now staying at the Clifford's. Eileen thus became aware of all the facts of the plot.

Chapter nine. - Poor Eileen! Just as she was about to leave to return and inform Nelson Lee of all this she was discovered. Hubert Desmond, passing, saw her and entered the conservatory. He called out and the others drew the curtains and so Eileen was captured. After some discussion they decided she must be "eliminated" and Sutcliffe and Hubert took her off in a car after she had been drugged by Zingrave. They motored some few miles and deposited her on some moorlands some way from the road, being sure that she would never survive the storm. She was left there to die! Things, however, were not as bad as they seemed. Nelson Lee had become anxious at the prolonged absence of Eileen and set out with Nipper for the village to make enquiries. Nearing the Desmond's house, they saw a car waiting at the drive entrance while a man was opening the gates. As they approached, unseen in the snow, Lee caught a few words between the man as he entered the car and the driver. He heard him say "the girl will never get off the moor in this so we're safe." Lee put two and two together and guessed the truth. He and Nipper then rushed back to Clifford who got out his car saying he knew where the moor was. They made their way there through the storm. On arrival they thought it was hopeless. Lee, however, had a brainwave. He had the car headlights unfastened and commenced flashing them in all directions spelling out Eileen's name in the Morse code. Just as they had almost given up all hope - success. Eileen came staggering out of the snow. She had been saved in the nick of time.

Chapter ten. After being conveyed to the Elms, Clifford's house, Eileen

recovered enough to tell Lee and the others all she had learned. Philip Yorke faced with this, admitted that he was Clive Worthing and said he could not understand how he had killed Marcombe as he had never intended to do so. They had had a row and Marcombe had thrown something at him. He fell dazed and when getting up later had found Marcombe dead and his own revolver in his hand with one shot having been fired. After some discussion Lee and the others decided to let matters stand until the proposed attack on Clive due to take place the following night. But a hitch occurred. That night Worthing's life was attempted. In the middle of the night Lee was aroused by a cry from Worthing's room. He found Clive in bed poisoned. The window was open so obviously an intruder had been at work. As is well known Lee was an expert on all poisons so after frenzied work for some time he was able to say that Clive would live. The conspirators no doubt were congratulating themselves. Worthing dead and Eileen lost on the snow. Or so they thought.

Chapter eleven. Finis and all's well. Christmas eve and the snow gone. Ethel Worthing has a call from Sydney Bradford. He brought the letter forged by Sutcliffe which urged her to receive the attentions of Hubert Desmond. So well composed was it that she was influenced enough to tell Bradford that she would consider the matter. After he had gone Eileen Dare arrived to break the news that Clive was outside. He entered and the reconciliation was complete. Later Lee, Eileen and Clive called to the Manor with Clifford and Nipper in the background in reserve. They forced their way in to the library and confronted the Desmonds. At the sight of Eileen alive and well they were flattened, so to speak. Clive, seeing Hector Desmond, strode forward and accused him of being in the room with Marcombe when he was shot. Desmond, half insane with shock and terror, babbled out that it was he who had shot Marcombe not Clive. The latter was thrilled to the core. He was proved innocent! A search of the house followed but Zingrave and Sutcliffe were missing having fled in alarm. And so all was over. Mr. and Mrs. Worthing and their little son spent Christmas at the Elms as guests of Douglas Clifford and his wife, and indeed it was a joyous Christmas for all concerned.

This, then, was the story of the first Christmas number of the Nelson Lee Library. It was a long story and I have condensed it as much as I can while trying to put in all the relevant facts, and hope I have succeeded in making it interesting. To anyone who has waded through all this I will wish the compliments of the season and health and prosperity for 1966.

+ + + + +
W A N T E D Late GEMS, MAGNETS, B.O.Ps.

YORKE-ROBINSON, HERNE BAY, KENT.

BESSIE BUNTER of Cliff House School. Post-war edition required.

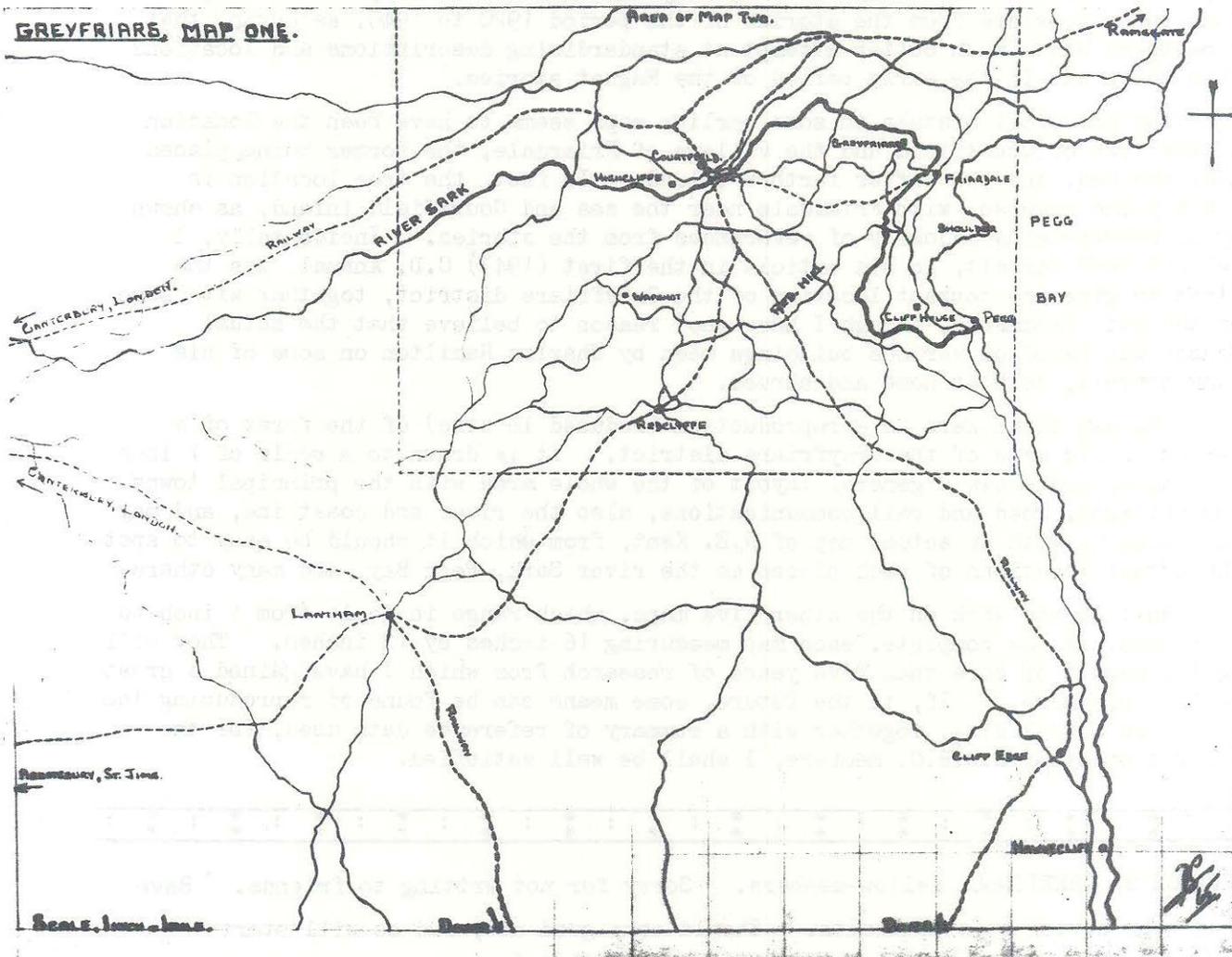
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W A N T E D O.S. LEES 12, 15/16, 73, 81, 86, 89, 92/3, 98, 323, 325, 372, 398/405, 407, 420.

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In Search of Greyfriars

By D. R. Spiers



In November, 1959, I had a sudden desire to browse through my small collection of Magnets, SOL's and Holiday Annuals, which had lain safely packed away in a large trunk since before the outbreak of World War II. My browsing occupied the best part of a month, and resulted in the start of an attempt to build up my collection, for the purpose of retracing the history of the Greyfriars story and the building-up of a really accurate and authentic map of the district. I little realised at the time what a task this would prove to be,

They Stole My Golden Hours

By Frank Shaw
* * * * *

MY SISTER is a thief and prognosticator who thinks I am half-daft. My son is a vandal to a slight degree; she is a complete one, with a slight tendency to arson. Other relations and some of my best friends are thieves and liars.

"Oh, if people would only play fair,
And return books I've lent here and there,
This collection would be, Really something to see, --
Plus the ones that I've borrowed somewhere."

These words are on the cover of my catalogue of books, many hundreds, in cupboards, under beds, on top of wardrobes, in five bookcases, in suitcases. And the last line shows that I'm not so honest myself.

I suppose everyone borrows books and forgets to return them (theft) promising faithfully, the liars, to do so. My sister not only burnt dozens of blue GEMS and red MAGNETS but much more. And she mislaid a song by Charles Hamilton, sung by his sister, title forgotten, the great man himself gave me, autographed. But, at forty, a widow, with a large family, she still has her doll's house and the teddy-bear she had in her cradle!

My best friend at school was named Moloney. He is now a schoolteacher in a leper colony and he and I have been together on T.V. shows and such giving talks in the Scouse dialect we both speak through our own noses. I like him.

Yet my mind goes back forty-five years to my twelfth birthday, the year we both went to what we called "College." The year before, as I recorded in the 1964 ANNUAL, an uncle had laid out the five bob for the first HOLIDAY ANNUAL; I had to talk him out of getting me a set of carpenter's tools. (As someone recalled in the same annual what a blissful year 1919 was to be alive, with new periodicals appearing almost weekly!)

Moloney borrowed it. He gave me as a temporary swap a volume of CHUMS, which was fair enough: it had a "gear" serial about a balloon's crew lost in the Sargasso Sea I still recall, though the author's name has fled. But it was not the wonderful H.A. Moloney never returned that and I gave the CHUMS to a nephew twenty years after.

With it I gave many more annuals, including - if you have tears to shed, ye collectors, H.A. 1920-1925. And he treasured them.

For a year or so. I asked him not so long ago where were they now, were they delighting his children now? "I've no flippin' idea," he said. His mother is of the opinion she gave them away years ago. Who to? Can't remember. With a lot of other junk probably to a church jumble sale. So my sister-in-law joins my sister in the chamber of horrors.

I am very fond of her and extremely fond of my sister, though the fondness always has to be tempered by recollections of that holocaust in the 'thirties.

And she is culpable in many ways.

Of my nephew's father, my eldest brother, and my brother John, his junior, my senior, I have no qualifications. When the eldest, Dick, went to the wars, in 1914, he left behind, for me hardly able to read, a bundle of pre-war MAGNETS and GEMS. John broke his leg in that annus mirabilis of 1919. He was in hospital a long time. Good. Well, I mean - my mother bought him all the boys' papers she could find and afford, with comics, and I read them first. My pocket money was twopence a week.

My father was a great reader of sports and other papers (including that excellent but short-lived "Cheerio," an adult comic, drawings mainly by Ridgwell) and I had those too. It's a wonder that I, like Meredith, had time to be an active athlete and footballer and, unlike the golden-haired lad, to be top in English, Latin and Religious Doctrine. (I still know a little about English.)

My early years were spent in Ireland where the papers did not circulate much. (My brother had his sent from England by a kind aunt.) But, in the 'twenties, in Liverpool, with more pocket-money I earned as a butcher's boy, I found, in certain Liverpool back-streets, second-hand bookshops with treasuries of pre-1914 and of wartime MAGNETS, GEMS etc. to augment what Dick had left and to complete (almost) a set 1910 to 1925, when I ceased to read the papers.

Tidying up, as she termed it, in the 'thirties, when I was in the South of England, my sister burnt these and much more as I've already recorded in a C.D. of Leckenby's day. But this did not satisfy her.

She is a skilled musician. So I brought the Hamilton song to hear her play it to her home. I have never had it back, she keeps saying she'll find it for me, but puts off the search, and, meanwhile, somewhere in that house of hers is a full set of Charlie Chaplin postcards given away c.1915 with the RED LETTER my father collected. And other potential nostalgia-makers. (Number One of my mother's PEG'S PAPER, I do believe.) She won't look. Keeping a house and running a business and looking after the kids she selfishly refuses to look. Indeed she says, "You must be half-daft, Frank, wanting that old rubbish!" I never could answer. Just look at the teddy-bear, earless and moulting.

Why, I'd a cousin named Gordon who at 11 was stealing my MAGNETS, CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPERS and such as quickly as I collected them and hid them in the attic. But, mind you, I found out the couch in his home under which he hid his UNION JACKS and KINEMA COMICS.

I stole from my mother to buy back-numbers in one of those back-street shops. (Many still there but full of saucy U.S. magazines.)

I was going, in 1924, to stay on a farm in North Wales, as my health was bad. My mother gave me a number of penny stamps to post letters. I did write letters. But half the stamps I spent on back numbers e.g. twopence for "The Race to the Tuckshop."

I could expand this record of villainy, even add to the confessions, but I must have a look now at my son's collection of football programmes.

"And, Mike," I solemnly warn him, "don't let your Aunt Pauleen" (my sister) "anywhere near them."

Mike not only got rid of some Frank Richard stiff-backs I bought him but of wartime Carcroft stories the Master himself gave me.

(continued on page 123)...

Good Evening.

Sir Bernard

A Pen Picture of a Famous C.D.
Contributor

By James R. Swan

One of the most prolific contributors to Collectors' Digest and the Annual over the last ten years has been W. O. G. Lofts. Eric Fayne, our editor, once called him "The Sir Bernard Spilsbury of Old Boys' Books," and no description could be more apt.

When I asked Bill Lofts, some time back, what his contribution would be for this year's Annual he passed it off lightly, saying "Probably a lot of statistical stuff," though I know he spends hundreds of hours every year getting information together for our interest. Then he asked me, rather slyly I thought, for he knows I write but very little: "What about an article for Eric from your own nimble pen, Jim?" I said: "I'll write about you!"

He replied: "That's a good idea - but I shall have my solicitor alerted in case I wish to bring a libel action."

Of course, it hasn't been so easy as I imagined. Having known a fellow for over 12 years, you think you know all his good points and all his bad ones. Yet if you set down all his good ones, you make him look like a saint in shining armour. If you wrote all his bad ones, he would have you standing in the dock at the Old Bailey.

Bill has the knack of making friends easily. Among his close acquaintances one can list John Hunter, George E. Rochester, C. M. Down (editor of the Gem and Magnet), G. R. Samways, Leslie Charteris, and crowds of other authors, artists, and editors.

I first met Bill Lofts about 1952. A collector named George Highton told me that a Mr. Lofts had some Magnets and Gems for sale. I contacted this Mr. Lofts, and he arranged to call on me in the evening at 7.30. He did! A big chap with a fresh complexion like Bob Cherry's.

I said "Mr. Lofts?" He said "Mr. Swan?" First words of a long friendship. There followed a pleasant evening, with a long chat on the hobby in general. At that time, he had no interest in facts and figures. He just read the Sexton Blake Library - and sometimes got hold of a Magnet which revived pre-war memories for him. I don't think he had read the pre-war Blake, but had first enjoyed stories of the great detective in Burma, where he served against the Japs.

Later on I showed him a copy of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d Vanguard Library which contained stories of Billy Bunter of Blackminster School - written by a mysterious H. Phillpot Wright, and published by Trapps Holmes and Co in 1907.

Bill thought that must be a pen-name of Charles Hamilton, but I said it certainly was not. Probably this may have started him off on the articles we now know so well, though I don't believe he has ever found out anything about Phillpot Wright.

Other enthusiasts had been discovering facts and figures long before Bill

came on the scene - particularly the late Herbert Leckenby and Harry Dowler - but the painstaking way Bill set about the job was quite astonishing in its thoroughness.

Bill came to see me twice a week, and often met other collectors at my home. He was always in great form, and would disclose his latest discoveries. For such gatherings I would make a pot of tea, extra strong, and Bill often remarked that it would be a best-seller on the market to cure all ills.

When he arrived, Bill would invariably say "Shant's stop long!" to which I would answer, with heavy sarcasm "It was hardly worth your coming, was it?"

He is a tremendous sports enthusiast, and is keenly interested in boxing, wrestling, racing, athletics, football, and cricket. Opposite my house is "Droop Street," where his favourite football team, Queens Park Rangers, was founded. His family have supported it for over 70 years, and are shareholders.

Bill was born in St. Marylebone, and he is a local supporter of the greatest cricket club in the world - the M.C.C. As a boy he went to school in St. John's Wood, just behind the famous Lords Cricket Ground. Maybe even in those days there was an early touch of wishing to get to the root of things, for he made friends with the son of the head groundsman, and was able to watch all the Test Matches - free - from the roof of the groundsman's flat at Lords.

Bill, unfortunately, suffers from deafness. This was caused by gunfire in the last war. At times he spurns the use of his hearing-aid, preferring to lip-read. Often my sister used to shout up to us instructions to stop arguing when we were not. I know now how poor Billy Bunter and Peter Todd felt, in those amusing stories by Frank Richards. But don't get the impression that Bill is as bad as Dutton. Far from it.

When I had the telephone installed, Bill was delighted. He coined a favourite stock phrase: "Do you mind if I ring up Basil Reynolds (nephew of the famous Warwick Reynolds) or Bill Baker (editor of the Sexton Blake Library)" or any other personality he wanted to speak to. "I'll put the money in the box," said Bill. Any toll calls on the bill are paid by Bill. (Excuse the pun.) He's a great lad, and we've had many a laugh over that phoning lark.

One of his failings is his jokes. He has such a wide circle of friends that often, with a pained expression on his face, he says: "Oh, have I told you that one before?"

Many collectors are under the impression that W. O. G. Lofts must work in Fleet Street. Not so. His work is carburettor engineering, and has been for over twenty years.

Does Bill accept criticism of his articles in good part? Usually, yes, though he is annoyed when people do not trouble to read the Digest properly, and jump to conclusions. Bill often quotes Voltaire: "I strongly disapprove of what you say, but I will defend with my life your right to say it!" I suppose it is galling for him to spend months in solving a mystery, and then somebody writes in to Collectors' Digest to ask for information on the very same mystery which he has recently explained.

Bill is dead against theories in the hobby. His motto is that the only way to get to the root of any matter is by producing concrete evidence. I hope I don't tread on any corns when I say that I prefer the evidence of a man who visits the British Museum or Fleetway Publications and who meets editors and

authors who wrote for the old papers, and who sorts, sifts, and signifies evidence, and who asks experts' advice (such as Eric Fayne on Hamiltoniana data) before committing himself to print, rather than the theory of some collector who sits in his armchair, reads a story, and theorises that some person or other wrote it.

Bill would be the first person to admit that he can be wrong and has been many times. I remember him having an argument with a certain editor on the phone, saying that he would buy him a dinner and drinks all the evening if so-and-so did not write a certain story. Later, to his dismay, Bill found that he was wrong. It must have cost him a packet that evening, but he is lucky at almost everything, so he probably got it back the next day through a four-legged animal in the 3.30.

Apart from his prolific output for Collectors' Digest and the Annual, he does a considerable amount of other writing. Recently he completed 15 consecutive 2,000-word articles for Fleetway Publications' Record, and, on the advice of Leslie Charteris has decided to write articles for large-circulation magazines, though he regards himself more as a fact-finder than a prose writer.

Final point. His favourite paper is the Magnet, and his favourite character dear old Ponsonby of Highcliffe. Goodness knows why.

The next time you pick up C.D. from your mat (if you've got one and haven't blued all your money on old boys' books), and you see the name of W. O. G. Lofts heading an article, you will know a bit more about him. I will write a sequel to this article in another dozen years' time.

* * * * *

THEY STOLE MY GOLDEN HOURS (continued from page 120)..

We never learn. I gave No. 3 of the penny GEM on loan recently to a Club member. He solemnly promised ----. Anyhow, I still have some BOYS' FRIENDS of the 1890s any genuine collector can have free. Or will exchange etc.

By the way, when Bill Martin died I was in London. I did not know he was dead. I rang his shop; his brother-in-law, speaking for the widow, said, "Come over and have a look and see what you'd like!" I didn't go. Move over, youse, in that chamber.

* * * * *

WANTED: Pre-war Christmas number of any of the old Comics, particularly Comic Life.

PAT CREIGHAN
25, BELGIUM SQ.,
MONAGHAN, EIRE

WANTED to purchase Buffalo Bill 4d. No. 66 Boys' Friend (new series) Nos. 12, 30, 36, 37.

R. W. STORY,
34, ABERDEEN CRES.,
BRAMALEA via BRAMPTON, ONTARIO, CANADA.

Christmas & New Year Greetings to all Collectors. May the C.D. go from strength to strength in 1966. Special Best Wishes to Eric Fayne, Len and Josie Packman and Vernon Lay for help and encouragement in 1965.

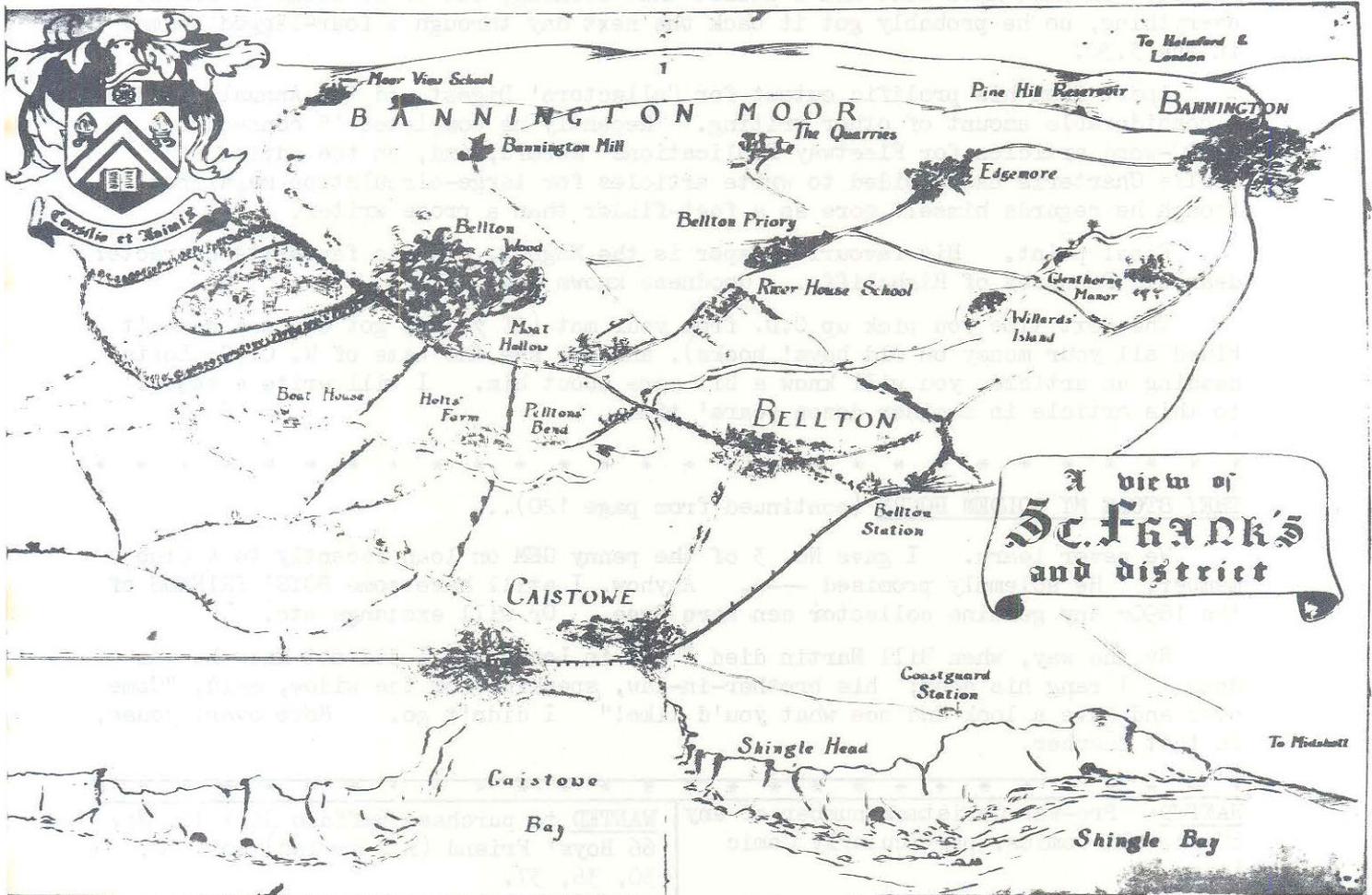
JOHN STEELE

FOR SALE: Sexton Blake Third Series from No. 200. Offers please. WANTED: Detective Weekly Nos. three to twenty six.

S. PERRY,
27, THE MEADWAY,
CUFFLEY, HERTS.

A Map of the St. Frank's district

By Robert Blythe



Those of you who attend the London club's meetings will be quite familiar with this map of St. Frank's for it is always in evidence when the meetings are held at Neasden. Likewise, those of you who possess the Collectors' Digest for August 1952 will have seen it in that issue. However, as it was so long ago and was such an awful reproduction, our editor suggested that perhaps present day readers would like to see it, only this time reproduced by the most modern methods.

I drew this map originally as a background to a talk I gave at one of the meetings. Although some of the details are based on descriptions given in the Nelson Lee at various times, and others are purely my own idea as to where certain

landmarks should be, it is based on two maps that appeared in the N.L. i.e. in "The College House Martyrs" (O.S. 196) and "The Rival House Captains" (O.S. 538).

I well remember the correspondence that followed the first reproduction, especially from Les Allan, who pointed out that certain features were not strictly according to certain of the stories.

To forestall this same criticism this time I may point out that I combined the situation as it was in the very early stories with later alterations.

For instance, Willards Island and the River Stowe. During the first ten years of the N.L.'s existence the River Stowe ran its course approximately where I've put it, but with the advent of the new houses and the map which appeared at that time, the Stowe is made to flow from Bannington, by the Moor View School, passing Willards Island at the bottom of the playing fields, through Bellton and so on to Caistowe.

I think you'll agree that it was a bit of a facer to anyone trying to reconstruct a map of the district. So I did the only thing possible. I combined the old with the new. The School, for instance, as I have drawn it, didn't exist in the early stories as there were only two houses, not five. Incidentally, I've used a bit of artists license with the school. As I've drawn it, the School and playing fields cover more ground than Caistowe and Bellton put together! An obvious impossibility. However, if I drew it to scale, St. Frank's would have been a mere blob, which wouldn't have been much use, would it? This also applies, of course, to most of the other features I've given a name to.

Looking over the map, I wonder how many events you can call to mind. Holt's Farm, for instance, was the scene for many of the stories, but it is particularly memorable for the events which led to the discovery of a Roman tomb as described in "The Fresh Air Fiends" - a wonderful yarn.

Again, do you remember the adventures of the St. Frank's Scouts whilst they were camping at Shingle Head?

The River Stowe itself meandering between lush meadowland between Bannington and Caistowe was described in countless stories, but who would forget the occasion when the Pine Hill Reservoir burst and caused the great flood. As an indirect result Handforth's Ark and its exciting journey when it was swept out to sea.

Moat Hollow. The original site of the River House School. What memories that grim house conjures up. Mr. Grimsby Creepe (what a delightful name!) and his modern version of Dotheboys Hall.

Bannington Mill, the Old Quarries, Bellton Priory, what dark and dirty deeds were perpetrated here!

Willards Island, scene of more than one exciting adventure! Even the surrounding fields occupied by William K. Smith's horde of foreign labourers will always be remembered for the truly rousing events which took place on these fields.

And so I could go on, but doubtless some other spot will claim your attention. Some other story will be recalled with affection. Each of you will have his or her favourite story and if it was set in the vicinity of St. Frank's then you will be able to picture it for yourselves - even if you can prove that Willards Island was just below the playing fields and that Shingle Head was on the West side of Caistowe Bay and not the East!!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Mr. Blythe has suggested to us that some readers might like to have photographic copies of the map for framing. We have therefore made arrangements with our photographers, and photographs of the map (whole plate size) will be obtainable from the Digest office at 5/- each plus postage.)

DANNY - and the Exploits of ELAINE

"Elaine, Elaine, I love you all
in vain,

Elaine, Elaine, you've set my
heart aflame.

Of all the girls, you're the
sweetest I've seen,

Always to me as sweet as sweet
sixteen.

I dream of you all thro' the
live-long day

And then when I see you, you fade
away,

Elaine, Elaine, please come down from
the screen,

And be my moving-picture queen."

* * *

Everybody is singing the Elaine song. It's a lovely catchy tune, and it has nice words. It is to celebrate a new Pathe serial "The Exploits of Elaine" which has started in the cinemas. The stars in it are Pearl White, Arnold Daly, and Sheldon Lewis. Pearl White is wonderful. Doug says he would like to marry her, but so would I, so I wonder who will get her. The serial is in ten episodes, and it's a fearfully exciting story, all about a criminal called



Dedicated to
Miss PEARL WHITE

Music by
CHARLES ELBERT

Words by
HOWARD WESLEY

ELAINE MY MOVING PICTURE QUEEN

This Song was specially written to be played with the great serial film.
THE EXPLOITS OF ELAINE,

Published by Pathé Frères Cinema Limited, London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle, Glasgow & Cardiff.

The Music Hall singing Rights of this Song are reserved. Application for Theatre singing Rights should be made to the Publishers.

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NEW YORK: LEO FEIST (INC.)
PRINTED IN ENGLAND.

See That Your Chum Round the Corner Sees This Copy.

THE VANGUARD LIBRARY.

1
2



No. 61.

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY.

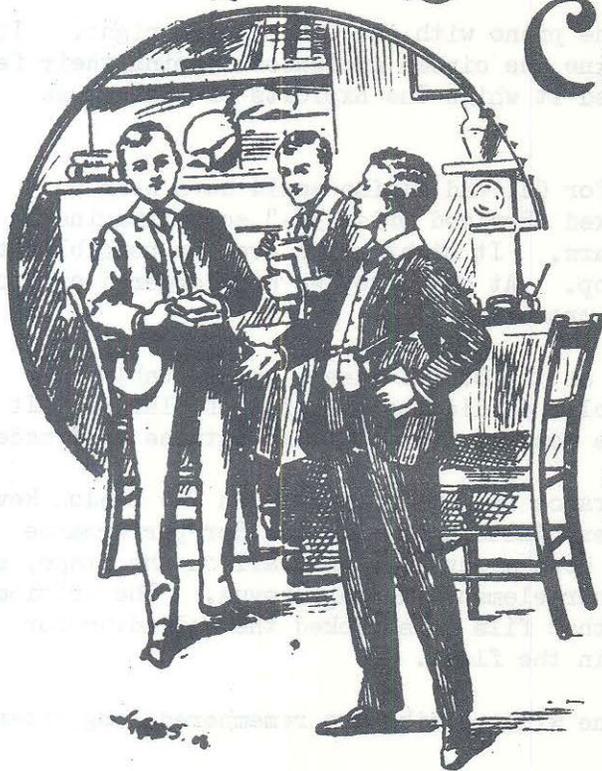
1d.

Billy Bunter's Celebration.

A Story of

Taffy Llewellyn's Schooldays,

By H. PHILPOTT WRIGHT.



CHAPTER I.

BILLY BUNTER'S GREAT IDEA—PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT EVENT—TROUBLE IN THE KITCHEN.

"HAVEN'T I told you all about it already?" cried Jack Hardwick. "Billy, I never saw such a silly jossler as you in my life!"

"What's the matter?" demanded Billy Bunter, mildly. "I don't remember you saying anything about anything."

"That's just what I was saying. Whatever a fellow says to you goes in at one ear and out at the other," rejoined Jack.

"That's because there's nothing inside to stop it going out. I guess," remarked Jonathan B. Pankick genially.

"You dry up, Jiggsburg! What's the racket, Jack? What was it you said you told me?"

"I told you that as next week is the last of the term, we are going to celebrate the breaking up in ripping style."

"Oh! I don't remember you speaking about it; but all the same I know we go for our holidays next week. What are we going to do?"

"That's the point; we've got to consider it. Taffy suggests that every member of the Society puts on his thinking cap right away."

"Yes supplemented Pankick, "and the celebration has got to be a regular howler."

"I see," said Billy brightly. "You're looking for ideas. Well, I've got one already."

"Shakes! have you now?" grinned Pankick. "Waal, take my tip. If its worth anything, hang on to it like grim death, for its the only one you'll ever have."

"Rats, Jiggsburg!"

"Out with it, Billy; a fellow can learn something from every addlepate," remarked Jack, encouragingly.

"If you're going to talk like that I'll keep my idea to myself."

"There you are! Told you he hadn't one," cried Pankick, who, by the way, had said nothing of the sort.

"Rot! I have got one, and its a regular ripper."

"Out with it then, Billy," said Jack, in his most insinuating manner.

"Shan't I'll wait till we go out and then I'll tell the others about it. I believe it will do first rate."

"All right, old fellow, so long as you don't forget it," returned Jack with a wink at Jonathan.

Tell Your Friends What a Grand Paper This Is!

THE MYSTERIES OF YESTERDAY

Editorial Feature

In Collectors' Digest Annual, for several years past, we have highlighted some of the mysteries of the old papers. Side by side, we placed those two Magnet covers, drawn respectively by Arthur Clarke and Leonard Shields, and it was clear that Shields, for some unknown reason, had copied the 25-years old work of Clarke.

Another time we showed a picture, originally used in Pluck to illustrate a "Specs" story, and then the same picture used again, eleven years later, to illustrate a Rookwood story.

On yet another occasion we showed that the "early adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co" published in the Penny Popular were not the early Rookwood adventures at all.

This year we turn our attention to that Billy Bunter - NOT the famous fat owl of Greyfriars - but the other one who preceded him, in a paper called the Vanguard Library. This paper was put out by the firm of Trapps Holmes & Co, and Mr. W. O. G. Lofts stated some years ago that Charles Hamilton wrote several hundred stories for this firm. In fact, Charles Hamilton himself has referred to writing for Trapps Holmes, though there is but little record of what he wrote.

Normally, we are not too keen on statistics, but we are printing the first 64 titles, with their authors, because we believe that readers may find them a fascinating study.

It will be noted that Charles Hamilton wrote the first story in the Vanguard. The first story of Blackminster School appeared in Vanguard No. 9. One of the leading characters was Billy Bunter, who was not a fat boy. The fat boy at Blackminster was named Fatty Benbow. The stories of Blackminster are credited to H. Phillpott Wright.

Writing elsewhere in this Annual, Mr. James Swan says that details concerning Phillpott Wright, creator of the first Billy Bunter, have never become available. He adds that Phillpott Wright was certainly not Charles Hamilton.

So far as I know, it has never been officially suggested that Phillpott Wright was Charles Hamilton, and to be quite candid, I do not believe that he was. All the same, there are one or two oddities which it may be well to consider.

Vanguard started its run during the Spring of 1907, the same year that the Gem commenced. In the early Gem, there was a tramp named Bill Bunter. The Magnet, with the Greyfriars Billy Bunter, started in February 1908 - but the Blackminster Billy Bunter was still going strong in Vanguard in August 1908, six months after our Billy put in an appearance in the Magnet.

It was astonishing, to say the least, that Charles Hamilton should have taken as the name of one of his leading Greyfriars characters the same name that had been given to a leading character in another school series appearing in a magazine in which he shared the writing of the stories. Astonishing and remarkable.

Is it possible that Charles Hamilton could have made an arrangement with Phillpott Wright to use the name of Billy Bunter? Yes, it is possible - but it

seems very unlikely. Names of characters are easy enough to invent.

Is it possible that Charles Hamilton and Philpott Wright were one and the same? Note the title of No. 15: "Strange Happenings at Highcliffe School," by Philpott Wright. Note No. 37: "A Fight for a Fortune," a story of the South Seas, by Philpott Wright. Charles Hamilton wrote plenty of tales about the South Seas.

It is possible, but once again it seems unlikely. The Blackminster stories are by no means badly written. They read easily and pleasantly. Nevertheless, the style is not quite the restrained, fluent style of Charles Hamilton, and there are many expressions used which seem away from his normal practice, even though we must allow for the fact that we are talking of as long ago as 1908.

The following is a brief extract from a Philpott Wright tale:

"I say, fellows, I'm jolly peckish," interposed Billy Bunter. "What do you say if we cross over and have some refreshments?"

"Agweed," said Vernon, evidently thinking himself included.

"All right," grinned Billy. "Your cousins have told you the rules of our school, I suppose?"

"What wules?"

"Why, that a new chap pays the damage."

"Damage! Damage to what? I don't think I understand, doncherknow."

"I mean a new boy pays for the grub, the tuck, the food, the cakes, the biscuits, the drinks, and so on," said Billy Bunter, determined there should be no mistake. "In short, a new boy must pay the bill."

"Oh, aw, of course I always pay my bills, doncherknow. What made you think I didn't?"

"Now then, young gents! Outside, please!" bawled the station-master. "The express is doo in two minutes an' it won't do for you to be here when she goes through. Outside, please!"

Aided by the porter, he proceeded to drive the boisterous juveniles towards the gates.

Could any of us swear to it that Charles Hamilton did not write that passage in 1908? But would he have been writing of a Billy Bunter at Blackminster while, at the very same time, a Billy Bunter was waddling in the close at Greyfriars?

Mrs. Hamilton Wright, Charles Hamilton's niece, wrote me recently as follows: "I know the Magnet first appeared in 1908 - but had the Greyfriars characters or school appeared in another publication before then? I was thinking of uncle's statement that Billy Bunter was in his mind about 1899 but that no editor would have him until he slipped him into the Magnet. So I wondered where he originally tried him out."

Well, we know that Hurree Singh had appeared in another Hamilton series before Magnet days - but that was rather a different matter. Candidly I do not believe that Charles Hamilton wrote of Billy Bunter before he featured in the Magnet. I do not believe that Charles Hamilton wrote the Blackminster tales.

But the mystery remains - and it is an astounding mystery. The last Billy Bunter story I have in the Vanguard is dated August 1908, when the Magnet was six months old. He was then appearing frequently in Vanguard. But the Vanguard continued till September 1909! Was there a second Billy Bunter going strong until that time?

I can't explain it. But here is the list of Vanguard tales up till August

1908, with their authors. I think you may find them fascinating, and well worth the space I am giving to them.

Finally, note No. 33: "The Chums of St. Kates" by Charles Hamilton; No. 49: "The Captain of St. Kate's" by Charles Hamilton; and No. 58 "Pong" or "The New Boy at St. Kate's" by Frank Drake. Intriguing, isn't it? The artist for the Vanguard - and a very good one - was V. F. Coles.

1. THE NEW BOY AT NORTHCOTE, school story by Charles Hamilton.
2. PAUL PINKERTON (The Case that Made his Name) by Lucas O'Neill.
3. SAVED FROM RUIN, school story by Roland Rodway.
4. DARRELL YORKE: DETECTIVE, by Arthur St. John.
5. STAR OF THE RING, circus story by Cecil Herbert.
6. BOYS OF FELLINGHAM, school story by John G. Rowe.
7. PLUCKY JACK STANHOPE, the adventures of a Board School boy, by Charles Hamilton.
8. MIDSHIPMAN DICK, sea story by Eric Stanhope.
9. TAFFY LLEWELLYN'S SCHOOLDAYS, (first Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
10. FIGHTING THE FLAMES, fireman story, by John G. Rowe.
11. DARRELL YORKE'S DILEMMA, detective story by Arthur St. John.
12. COMRADES OF THE CIRCUS (story of Star of the Ring) by Cecil Herbert.
13. HIGH JINKS AT LARKSHALL, school story by Gordon Conway.
14. SIEGE OF THE LIGHTHOUSE, by John G. Rowe.
15. STRANGE HAPPENINGS AT HIGHCLIFF SCHOOL by Philpott Wright.
16. THE HOUSE BY THE SCHOOL, school story by A. M. Burrage.
17. FROM CLUE TO CAPTURE, story of Darrell Yorke, detective, by Arthur St. John.
18. THE SECRET SIX (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
19. THE FOURTH FORM AT NORTHCOTE, school story by Charles Hamilton.
20. THE BROADMERE SCHOOL MYSTERY, by Albert W. Bradley.
21. DARRELL YORKE IN DANGER, detective story by Arthur St. John.
22. THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY (story of the Anchor Cross) by Philpott Wright.
23. TWO MERRY MIDDIES, sea story, by Eric Stanhope.
24. THE BOY FROM COLORADO (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
25. TRACKED IN THE BUSH, story of Australia, by Cecil Herbert.
26. BOWLED OUT, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
27. THE LION KING'S SECRET, circus story by John G. Rowe.
28. BILLY BUNTER'S HAMPER by Philpott Wright.
29. 'TWEEN EARTH AND SKY, Steeple Jack tale by John G. Rowe.
30. BANBURY OF THE SIXTH (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
31. Christmas Double Number containing:
CHRISTMAS AT ST. FREDA'S, school story by Charles Hamilton - and
SECRET FOES by Philpott Wright.
32. TAFFY LLEWELLYN'S CHRISTMAS, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
33. THE CHUMS OF ST. KATE'S, school story by Charles Hamilton.
34. THE CASTLE VAULTS, school story by A. M. Burrage.
35. THE AERIAL WAR, (airship story) by John G. Rowe.
36. THE BARRING-OUT AT BLACKMINSTER, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
37. A FIGHT FOR A FORTUNE, South Seas story by Philpott Wright.
38. A BULLY'S REVENGE (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
39. THE PREFECT'S SECRET, school story by Charles Hamilton.
40. THE BLACK TIGER TAMER, circus story by John G. Rowe.
41. THE BLACKS OF BLACKMINSTER (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.

42. WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN? school story by Charles Hamilton.
43. THE SCHOOLBOY PROFESSIONALS, football story by A. M. Burrage.
44. THE COLLEGE GAZETTE, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
45. THE ROCK-BOUND ISLAND, modern-pirate story by Philpott Wright.
46. THE RIVAL SOCIETIES, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
47. THE NEW BOY AT TOMKINSON'S, school story by Stephen H. Agnew.
48. PANKICK'S MOTOR-CAR, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
49. THE CAPTAIN OF ST. KATE'S, school story by Charles Hamilton.
50. DICKENSON'S DIARY, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
51. COLLEGE AND TOWN, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
52. THE SECRET OF THE SCHOOLHOUSE, school story by Stephen H. Agnew.
53. UP THE RIVER, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
54. THE CHUMS OF HAWKESLEY HALL, (school, field, and road story) Anonymous.
55. A FORTNIGHT'S HOLIDAY, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
56. PLUMMY'S PLAY, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
57. DEXTER'S DOUBLE, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
58. PONG or THE NEW BOY AT ST. KATE'S, school story by Frank Drake.
59. WHO DID IT? (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
60. THE MATCH OF THE SEASON, cricket story by A. M. Burrage.
61. BILLY BUNTER'S CELEBRATION by Philpott Wright.
62. THE TERROR OF TOMKINSON'S, school story by Stephen H. Agnew.
63. THE ARRIVAL OF PAT, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.
64. UP IN A BALLOON, (Billy Bunter story) by Philpott Wright.

Well, as I said before, that list carries us up till August 1908, and the Vanguard still had more than a year to run. We don't know whether the Billy Bunter of Blackminster stories continued till the end, of course, but there is no reason to think that they did not.

Did Charles Hamilton know that, while he wrote of Billy Bunter for the Magnet, another Billy Bunter, and an older one, was going strong in Vanguard? To my mind it is impossible that Charles Hamilton did not know.

Was it an attempt to aim a blow at a series of stories put out by a rival firm? Or is it possible that there was a feud between the authors? Charles Hamilton had been writing of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy since late 1906. Philpott Wright introduced a very similar character, with an eyeglass and some "Yaas" and "Weally, you know" into Blackminster. Did Charles Hamilton take the name Billy Bunter from Philpott Wright in a little bit of getting his own back?

Probably the most likely solution is that Charles Hamilton used the name by accident. He had come on it when browsing over a Vanguard, and it had lingered in his memory. He used it automatically without realising that he was "lifting" a name from another series. One can only assume that apologies occurred later on between the authors, and there was probably a financial agreement of some sort. We shall never know for certain. It is certainly amazing that the world's most famous schoolboy came about in this way.

Vanguard Library always advertised (at least, up till August 1908) that every title in the Vanguard series could be obtained from any newsagent or bookseller. In my view, that was the essence of a "Library." It did not, however, apply to the Amalgamated Press "Libraries" like the Gem, Magnet, or Nelson Lee. They made it clear that back numbers more than twelve weeks old were unobtainable.

Now leave that mystery of 1908 and glance at this picture.



"Hallo, Gussy! Feel tired?" The swell of the School House started, and, looking up, perceived three grinning faces.

Having examined the picture and the caption beneath it, you might reasonably suppose that it is taken from a very early blue Gem. The boy with the eyeglass is called Gussy, he is the swell of the School House, and one of his pals is Digby. He says things like "Bai jove! That was jollay funnay, you know, deah boys!"

Actually his name is Augustus Algernon De Caucey, which makes him sound like a hybrid of D'Arcy of St. Jim's and De Courcy of Highcliffe. He belongs to a series of school yarns about the "Chums of Greylands" which were featuring in the Pluck Library in 1915. The stories were anonymous, but the writer evidently was conscious that Martin Clifford had hit on a successful formula.

The mystery is that any editor or publisher allowed some writer to get away with what looks like barefaced plagiarism. Unless, of course, some editor instigated it.

* * * * *

W A N T E D

Mapleton Rovers (Dick Dare) Football Yarns by Randolph Ryle. Marvels or Boys Friend Libraries.

BROSTER, PRIMROSE COTTAGE, KINVER, STOURBRIDGE, WORCS.

MUSINGS OF A NEW ZEALANDER

By O. W. Wadham

MASTHEAD MIRTH

A regular feature of "Chips" in its truly golden years (around 1912 to 1920) was the amusing panel at the left side of the paper's title on page one.

Weary Willie and Tired Tim always supplied the humour, and one of the funniest I can recall appeared on August 26, 1916.

The famous pair are shown greeting a rustic-looking, twig-chewing, character with the following words:

"We've come to till the land gov'nor. Show us the till!"

Herewith the drawing is recreated by New Zealand collector, 17-year-old Geoff Harrison of Wairoa.

* * * * *

A MISPLACED COMIC

CHIPS 1/2D
THE CHAMPION COMIC



"We've come to till the land, gov'nor. Show us the till!"

In their excellent and interesting "Catalogue of Comic Papers" in Collectors' Digest Annual for 1963, W. O. G. Lofts and D. J. Adley list one that does not come in the "comic" category at all.

The paper in question is WONDERLAND TALES, published from 1919 to 1921 by the Amalgamated Press, and afterwards incorporated with YOUNG FOLKS TALES.

I have No. 27 of WONDERLAND TALES dated January 17, 1920, and in all its 12 pages there is not one comic strip, either in the style of other comics of the day, or like those appearing in the modern comics of this atom age. In fact WONDERLAND TALES is a most unusual effort for a 1920 children's paper. Pages are the same size as in the post-war TIGER or KNOCKOUT, and it is printed in red, black and white.

Apparently WONDERLAND TALES was an effort to steal some of the thunder from the better-known YOUNG FOLKS TALES, for it followed closely in the footsteps of that fairy tale publication.

Lilian M. Parsons occupies most of the issue I possess with a fantastic story "Magician of the Tree-Tops." Front page illustrations show four knobs of the bed posts being changed into cats, and a Prime Minister being changed into a Rocking Horse. Then comes "Boys of St. Ives," by Jack Lewis, in "The Skating Carnival." A Billy Bunter like character, Tubby Wiggins, plays a big part in a school story

that certainly lacks all the Charles Hamilton magic.

The third yarn is a wild west effort "The Word of A Redskin," by Basil Baldwin and Gordon Hearne completes the issue with the very childish adventures of Peter and Daffy and Blimp the Doggie in a serial called "Little Brown Man."

Priced at 1½d. WONDERLAND TALES could never have been a very popular publication, and it would certainly have not been regarded as a "comic" by the youngsters of the 1919-21 period.

* * * * *

RINGING A BELL

In the May issue of "Collectors' Digest" L. S. Elliott mentions that the famous story of council school boys "The School Bell," first appeared in "Chips" prior to the first world war.

I have the complete run of "Chips" containing that well-remembered serial. It began on January 1, 1916, and concluded in the issue of October 28 of the same year.

Author of "The School Bell" was J. E. Fordwich, and most of the instalments published were longer than other serial yarns in the famous old pink paper.

On November 4 "School Bell" was replaced by "The Great Unknown," a story of scientific marvels and mystery. The writer was Hubert Trelawney. It only ran half the length of Mr. Fordwich's excellent effort.

* * * * *

GLEANINGS FROM GOLDEN GEMS

In the period 1921-23 the Gem was printing some of the best school stories of its long career. They were, for the most part, far more interesting and amusing than Greyfriars' yarns in the Magnet of those days.

Perhaps the most impressive, and certainly the most tragic of the St. Jim's stories appear in the issue of March 19, 1921.

It was entitled "Through A Terrible Ordeal," and told of George Figgins of the New House at St. Jim's who struck a fatal blow while defending the honour of Arthur Augustus and Wally D'Arcy's cousin, Ethel Cleveland. The story is easily one of the most dramatic and unusual ever to appear in the Gem.

In an Editorial in the same issue the Editor made a brief confession: " 'Through A Terrible Ordeal' is founded upon fact," he wrote, "and it was this that influenced me most of all, and made me decide to publish the story."

In 1922 the famous series of stories about Ernest Levison appeared. One of the most appealing being "Down and Out!" in the issue of September 22. It told how young Frank Levison in an attempt to clear his brother's name, only brought fresh trouble upon him.

The same year had a rather more amusing series. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy eluded capture as "the run-away from St. Jim's." Perhaps the most amusing yarn of five or six was "Gussy Among the Girls!" in the issue of August 22. In that

yarn Gussy was forced to "hide out" in the grounds of Cliff House, being finally frog-marched out of the gate by that battle-axe, Miss Bullivant.

In 1923 some of the best Gem yarns concerned Ralph Reckness Cardew's campaign against Tom Merry. Cardew succeeded in becoming junior skipper of St. Jim's, but his reign was not long.

If the years mentioned were golden as far as the St. Jim's stories were concerned there was certainly nothing golden about the staples that bound the issues.

In over one hundred copies - and in 90 more Magnets of the same period - the staples have rusted right away. They were certainly not up to the quality of those binding the Union Jack of those days most of which, in copies I have, are still holding the pages together today.

Certainly an unusual number of Australian and New Zealand readers managed to achieve publication in the Gem's weekly "Readers' Own Corner" in the 1922-23 period. Half-a-crown was paid for every item published, and for a time a tuck hamper was a first prize offering as well.

At least one New Zealand boy whose name featured in those early twenties in the Gem became well-known as a free-lance journalist in this country in after years. His name was Mr. C. H. Fortune.

On June 9, 1923 the Gem celebrated its eight hundredth issue with a first class, extra long, story entitled "Levison's Return." "Eight hundred weeks is something very like sixteen years," the Editor wrote. "And the Gem remains at the top of the poll. Its popularity has never stood higher."

Little did he dream that another sixteen years were to pass before the Gem's gaiety and glitter would fade in the dark clouds of war!

* * * * *

PERIOD PIECE

How very right J. R. Swan is in summing up successive generations of boys and the books they read (October Collectors' Digest).

One of my main regrets nowadays is that I never got to know and appreciate Tom Merry and the boys of St. Jim's, as I did the Famous Five.

There was one reason why I did not get around to buying the Gem: I fell in love. True, I was around the tender age of ten at the time, but, no matter, I was truly thrilled, and 3d. of the 6d. I got a week for pocket money I religiously devoted to one I considered a fair and brave lady.

I guess thousands of other boys fell for the same female. Her name, of course, was Miss Pearl White, and she was packing in the public at picture palaces everywhere in serials like "Perils of Pauline," "Exploits of Elaine," and many others.

Nowadays when a boy does not get around to reading Boys' World, Valiant, Lion or Eagle the blame is often put on T.V. Well, I've got to confess that silent

films weaned me away from the Gem. But I must say, too, that I always had 2d for the Magnet, come what may. The other penny bought a lot of "chews" those days to devour at the 3d movie.matinee.

It was a pity boys' publications could not be purchased for a penny in New Zealand at that time, or I am sure I would have forsaken lollies for a little further fill of literary nourishment per medium of the then thriving Gem Library.

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HIDDEN HOARDS

A newspaper pal once told me: "If you want to locate anything advertise in a woman's paper - they do all the general reading nowadays."

Those words came to mind recently when I noticed that the "New Zealand Home Journal," a widely-circulated seven-penny monthly, had a free advertisement service for readers. Only hard to secure items and out of print books being acceptable for the free service column.

In the May issue of the magazine I inquired for Magnets, Gems and Union Jacks. By a coincidence well-known collector Albert Watkin of Greymouth also asked for similar publications on the same page. Between us, before half May had passed, we had located and secured the following long hidden papers: 120 Gems, 1920 to 1924, all in good order. 80 Magnets, same years, in excellent condition. 16 Populars, 1922-23, in reasonable order. 81 Nelson Lees, 1927-33, almost mint appearance. 250 Film Funs 1951-1960, mostly in good condition. 25 Startler. 12 Thrillers. 10 Union Jacks.

Besides those items listed we were offered eight or nine volumes of Chums and the Boys' Own Annual.

Not one of the people who answered the advertisements was a collector. They had simply tucked away the favourite papers of their youthful days - some for as long as 45 years.

Only one disappointment resulted from this very fruitful quest. Albert Watkin secured two volumes from a Wanganui lady only to discover them to be publications never discussed in Collectors' Digest. They were, sad to say, simply controversial religious documents!

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A RARE COLLECTOR

It would certainly be difficult to name a boys' or girls' paper of, at least, seventy years ago, up to the present time, that has not had some brief mention in the pages of "Collectors' Digest."

Just recently, however, I chanced upon a request from a collector of children's books that have certainly played no part in divers discussions in "Digest" pages.

In "Personal Requests" section of "New Zealand Home Journal" this item appeared:-

" 'Collector' (Ashburton) is anxious to hear from anyone who may have any primer readers like 'Pacific,' 'Blackies' or 'Crown' series, that were used in schools in the 1910-20 decade.

Will pay fair price for any in readable condition, plus postage. "

Maybe sentimental memories can be recaptured by gazing again on old school text books, but most collectors would prefer to get such nostalgia from the old story papers. Unless of course those old primer readers were unusually entertaining. Someone who was at school in the 1910-20 period might be able to elucidate.

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CADS AND A KANGAROO

In the "Schoolboys' Own Library," No. 194, published on April 6, 1933, there appeared a story by Charles Hamilton entitled "The Captain's Enemy."

In that yarn the old master introduced Arthur Redfern, new captain of St. Dolly's, a school that it is safe to assume most "Magnet" and "Gem" readers have not heard of before.

The plot of the story tells how Redfern decides to put down the "smart set" at the school, despite the fact that Redfern himself was once a member. His best friend, a character called Ransome, is leader of the school's sporting bloods, but Redfern is determined to fight to the last to remove his bad influence to St. Dolly's. "The Captain's Enemy" tells of the great struggle between Redfern and Ransome.

It would be interesting to learn if St. Dolly's and its pupils ever made the grade again in the public prints of that period.

Apparently April 1933 found Charles Hamilton full of ideas for new characters. In the "Gem" of April 5 he introduced to St. Jim's Harry Noble from Australia. "The Coming of 'Kangaroo'" is the title of the yarn, and the cover picture is so striking it must surely have sold many copies. Noble, in a top hat (a type of head-dress he would not dare to wear in Australia) is shown coming out of the railway station arm-in-arm with a larger-than-life kangaroo, who is also carrying the new boy's suitcase. That 'roo, one of the biggest I've ever seen, could surely have played havoc with life and limb if he had turned nasty, as old men kangaroos so often do.

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A "GALLERY" WRITER'S GROUNDLESS FEARS

In the Magnet of Feb. 24, 1917 "Greyfriars Gallery" No. 8 was a full page, and the subject was William George Bunter.

The writer opened a most entertaining discourse on the famous fat Owl by claiming that "Billy Bunter's name has penetrated wherever the English language is spoken. Those who doubt should see the letters which pour into our office. They come from Morocco, Jamaica, Singapore, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, U.S.A., the Argentine, China and Japan - all pay tribute to Bunter."

The writer goes on to declare that W.G.B. "must be ranked with Sherlock Holmes, Captain Kettle, Sexton Blake, Don Q. and other characters who have captured the popular imagination."

It is possible that the writer had some doubts about Bunter outliving the now almost forgotten 'other characters' he mentions for the article concludes with these lines: "He will come to a bad end, one fears. But not for a long while yet, one hopes. It is easier to despise Billy Bunter than to do without him!"

How elated that scribe would have been could he have known that 47 years later Charles Hamilton's best known creation would still be going strong in the new medium of television, and in comic strips in juvenile weeklies. Not to mention, of course, the memories of many Magnet collectors all over the English speaking world, who have been privileged to know William George just as the great Greyfriars writer created him!

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MORE MAGNET MUSINGS

Way back in April 1921, Magnet readers were becoming curious about the Famous Five and their female friends. Here are two answers from "Replies In Brief" in the issue of April 2.

" 'Kath and Alby' - The Famous Five have always been great friends with the girls at Cliff House School. I will see Mr. Richards about a story dealing with a dance at Greyfriars."

And a few lines below:

" 'Two Lovers of Bob' (Dundee): Bob Cherry has never told us anything about being in love with any particular girl at Cliff House. We think he loves them all!"

Looking back on a large number of Magnets and Gems of the 1921-22 period it seems plain that females featured more frequently in Gem school yarns than in the Magnet stories. Maybe many Magnet readers wanted the score to be more even.

. . .

Who was "Famous Victor Nelson" who in Magnet dated October 2, 1920, commenced a serial story dealing with Nero and his Gladiators entitled, "Marcus the Brave"? It was a striking contrast to the very modern Greyfriars yarn in the same issue. This was called "The Schoolboy Cinema Stars," and a full half-page illustration on page 11 showed the Famous Five surrounded by a bunch of really fetching looking film females.

. . .

An announcement was made in the Magnet of March 12, 1921, that should certainly have been of interest to those who were new readers at that time. It concerned The Popular for Friday, March 16. The Greyfriars story in that issue told of the early days of Harry Wharton and Co. at the old school, and introduced the coming of different boys who later became world famous in schoolboy literature. Surely an issue to treasure!

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(EDITORIAL COMMENT: The story "Through a Terrible Ordeal," of which our contributor speaks so highly, was actually written by J. N. Pentelow. It is not a badly constructed story, but it is heavy with sentiment. It is, in fact, typical Pentelow, and it contrasts vividly with the other story, a genuine one, which Mr. Wadham mentions - "Down and Out."

When "Through a Terrible Ordeal" appeared, the Gem was on the verge of its Indian Summer. 1922, with only four substitute stories during the whole twelvemonth, and with Charles Hamilton at his very best, was the Gem's finest year since the blue cover era. It was a year of such quality as was not to be seen again during the roaring twenties.)

OUR BOYHOOD HEROES

What future -- if any ?

* * *

By Frank Hancock

It is probably true to say that nowadays the needs of most people for light entertainment are satisfied by two media; firstly, some kind of weekly publication, consisting largely of pictures and advertisements, and secondly by films, cinema or television. The latter intrude into practically every home in the land, thus making even the journey to the cinema unnecessary. This being the case, what future, if any, lies ahead for the schoolboy and detective heroes whose adventures we all followed with such enjoyment when we were young?

Taking the film first, are we ever going to see a worth-while portrayal of, say, Greyfriars, on the screen? The B.B.C.'s efforts on T.V. had their good points, but fell down as far as I was concerned because I had my own mental image, based on Chapman and Shields, of what the characters looked like. Bunter was fairly easy to impersonate, but the others----! Let me be fair and recognise the great difficulty of finding young actors who resemble the Greyfriars characters we all know so well. Query; does it matter much what we old-timers feel about this? Answer; probably not, since most viewers will have little or no recollection of the days when the Magnet could be purchased for twopence a week twenty-five years ago.

Twenty-five years! It only dawned on me the other day that, now we are in 1965, it is a quarter of a century since the Magnet and Gem ceased publication. It sounds a world away. Of course it is, with the enormous upheaval of the Second World War, and the great changes it wrought. Maybe that is the trouble; the old settled standards which made the world of Greyfriars and St. Jim's possible, already weakened by World War I, were still further shaken by World War II, and the schoolboy ethics which bound Harry Wharton, Tom Merry & Co., do not appeal so much to-day.

However, presuming that somebody will have another shot at it, there is another way in which these characters could be portrayed on the screen, and that is in cartoon form. Now this would be ideal, for all the familiar characters would be instantly recognisable if based on the drawings of Chapman, Shields & Co. The Bounder, with his fancy waistcoat and hard features; Johnny Bull, dark-haired and more thick-set than the others; Peter Todd, tall and skinny, with his long fair hair and sharp, yet humorous expression; Fisher T. Fish, thin and bony, with his horn-rims; and Coker, big and burly with a dark unruly mop and rugged features. No casting difficulties here! And why stop at that? Why not cartoons of Weary Willie and Tired Tim, Uncle Tom, Marzipan, Butterly Bill and the rest? And think of a cartoon by Walt Disney, in full colour, of the Bruin Boys, based on Foxwell! All identical with the beloved characters once to be found every week in the old boys books and comics.

All this, of course, is pure fantasy. It will never happen. Still, it's

nice to indulge in a pipe dream occasionally.

Apart from schoolboys, another immortal character who has now happily been restored to the contemporary scene, Sexton Blake, is a possible candidate for attention from the television people. I think the prospects here are rather brighter. "Sexton Blake. First appeared in 1893, and written about more or less continuously ever since. Thousands of stories, millions of words. Survived both world wars. This guy must have something to have lasted so long. There must be material for a good many television programmes here. . ." Who knows, one day some bright lad at the B.B.C. or I.T.V. might start thinking on these lines, and then we may have Blake every week on television. Another pipe dream? Maybe, but let's keep on hoping.

Turning to the printed page, the solid weekly 'read' we used to buy for 2d. a time is now, alas, extremely rare at any price, the majority of juvenile publications being of the type which keeps reading matter down to the minimum. This being the case, it follows that they can publish only the shortest stories, or drastically prune the longer ones. Let's be honest with ourselves about this. Do we want to see Greyfriars and the other schools treated as Knock-Out, Film Fun and Look and Learn treated them? Suppose we say no, we'd rather not, is there any other way in which they could conceivably see the light of day again?

I bought a couple of Thomson papers the other week, Rover and Wizard (it seems Rover, Wizard and Adventure are now all one), and Hotspur. Both are 32 pages for 5d, and Hotspur consists mostly of pictures. I took Wizard for a few months from No. 1, chiefly because of some very attractive coloured cards they were giving away, and remember some of the stories clearly -- The Battling Twins, Colt Lee the young Gipsy and his dog, Kalgar the Tracker -- and they were pretty good tales for boys, although they did not rival for long the Hamilton stories in my fancy. I was pleased to see it is still mostly reading; in fact about 24 pages of the 32, which is very good by present-day standards. Twenty-four pages of reading. Not bad. Not bad at all. Compares quite favourably with the old Magnet, Gem and Popular. If our boyhood heroes are ever to get a fair crack of the whip again it would obviously have to be in a predominantly-reading paper of this type. Now, if Thomsons could, somehow or other, acquire the copyright of the Hamilton and Brooks stories from the Fleetway Press, which doesn't seem to have much use for them anyway. . . What an intriguing thought!

I'd better lay off that opium pipe. It's giving me strange ideas. . .

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Bound Volume No. 1 Boys' Own Paper FOR SALE. Offers please. Urgently wanted to complete set: Nelson Lees old series; Nos. 105; 130; 237; 388; 357.

McPHERSON, 1, ST. JOHN STREET, WELLS, SOM.

W A N T E D : Thriller 588, Sexton Blake Libraries by Edwy Searles Brooks, Barry Perowne, Modern Boy 242 to 244.

SMITH, 14 CRESCENT LANE, CLAPHAM, LONDON, S.W.4.

A VERY EARLY MAGAZINE

By Brian Doyle

W. O. G. Lofts has stated that between the last issue of "The Young Gentleman's Magazine" in 1777, and the first issue of "The Young Gentleman's and Ladies' Magazine" in 1799, there was 'a very large gap of 22 years.'

I have recently discovered that this is not the case. I have before me as I write a small bound volume containing the first twelve monthly issues of "THE JUVENILE MAGAZINE" (or 'An Instructive and Entertaining Miscellany for Youth of Both Sexes'). The first is dated January 1788 and the last issue December 1788. The magazine was printed and published by T. Marshall and Co., of Aldermay Church-Yard, Bow-Lane, Cheapside, London. At the foot of the title-page is added: "To whom communications (post-paid) are requested to be addressed and by whom any Hints for the Improvement of the Publication will be thankfully received."

"The Juvenile Magazine" was quite small (6½" x 4") and could easily have been slipped inside school-books to read during lessons - had a schoolboy wished to. But the chances are pretty high that he didn't. He would almost certainly have found the lesson far more interesting, for the magazine was packed with highly 'moral' stories, sermons and playlets.

The Contents List for the first issue was as follows:

- The Editor's Address to Her Young Readers.
- An Early Introduction to Geography.
- The Schoolboy's Letter.
- Fireside Dialogues: 'The Silly Boy.'
- Familiar Letters on Various Subjects.
- The Young Miser.
- The Little Boy Who Behaved Like a Man.
- An Instructive Puzzle.
- The Little Foreigner (playlet)
- Poetry.
- Monthly Occurrences.

The one item out of this self-explanatory collection most likely to interest and amuse readers of the "C.D." is 'The Schoolboy's Letter.' Here it is, exactly as it was written 177 years ago:

To the Editor

I am among many schoolboys who have been extremely rejoiced at the thought of having a magazine which we young folk might call our own.

At our school it is the custom after supper on Wednesday and Friday evenings during Winter for Mr. Shepherd, our Master, to come in and read some useful and entertaining book to us and to explain any passages which he thinks may be above the understanding of the younger scholars. Many boys who have less esteem for their instructors than we have for ours would think such custom a great encroachment on that time which is usually allowed for relaxation from study; but when they know the amiable character of our Master, the obedient behaviour of the boys, and the excellent rules of our school, all which, if you give encouragement, may

possibly be enlarged upon in a future letter, they will then cease to wonder and long to be among us.

"Well, my boys," said Mr. Shepherd last Friday evening, seating himself at the head of our long table and looking around him with a smile, "I have just received a packet from London which, as it gave me great pleasure, I will not defer communicating to you; especially as Mr. Newton, the Latin master, tells me you have all been very orderly."

Mr. Shepherd then drew from his pocket the Proposals for your New Magazine, which he read aloud. "There, young gentlemen" said he, "shall you not like to have a magazine of your own? And, as I am a little in the secret, I can tell you it will not be the Editor's fault if some of your own writings do not appear in it too. The Editor, that is the person who prepares the work for publication, intends admitting the productions of young people..."

Here, Mr. Shepherd, pausing, looked full at me. I believe my eyes sparkled and I could perceive that Mr. Shepherd himself was in the best good temper in the world. He went on: "Well, Doctor (for so he frequently in good humour calls me), will you, in conjunction with some of your school-fellows, undertake to provide a few pages for this Magazine? Mr. Newton will correct it for you and I myself will undertake to convey them safely to the Editor."

The proposition pleased me so much that my heart was quite full and I could not speak. I bowed consent.

"Good boy! Good boy!" continued Mr. Shepherd, "you with the four next may form a little society for that purpose and, as you are my Head Scholar, I appoint you President. There (laying down a Crown piece) is my subscription towards purchasing the numbers of the Magazine as they come out, and for paper, pens, and so forth. Fix on a proper plan and, if you happen to be at a loss, apply to Mr. Newton who, I am sure, will very readily assist you. So, Doctor, goodnight! Goodnight to you all, my boys! Come Mr. Newton, come Monsieur Paroles, let us leave the young gentlemen to themselves!"

Saying this, Mr. Shepherd withdrew and the ushers followed him. When the door was shut we resumed our seats for, whenever our Master enters or leaves the room, we always rise in respect to him. The first thing done after the society was formed was to make a subscription among ourselves to add to Mr. Shepherd's generous beginning. We collected just five shillings and sevenpence halfpenny. Many of the boys who were not of our society cheerfully threw their pence and halfpence into the hat. This business we had just time to finish before the bell rang to bed.

The next evening we drew up the foregoing account as a first essay and shall wait in the hope that you will so far favour us young authors as to admit it into your very first number; that is if our labours deserve such an honour, and you will allow of the signature which I am desired to use, that of,

THE SCHOOLBOY

All of which goes a long way to picturing a sort of James-Robertson-Justice-in-the-film-of- "Vice-Versa"-Headmaster swishing a cane threateningly over the heads of his terrified pupils as he warns them to write a good account of himself, or if they can't, Mr. Newton over there will take it down at his dictation! As for the 'Doctor,' Mr. Shepherd's 'Head Scholar'...! Shades of Mr. Quelch and Harry Wharton..

The Editor, by the way, expressed herself delighted with this epistle and said she looked forward to many more.

Not that she would have had any opportunity, apparently, for many more. "The Juvenile Magazine" seemed to be running into circulation trouble at the end of the year. In the December issue ran a brief but blunt message to readers: "The

Publishers of 'The Juvenile Magazine' beg leave to acquaint the public that finding the returns not sufficient to compensate for the trouble attending a monthly publication of this kind their design is, if the work be called for, to publish it in Volumes."

And, according to Geoffrey Trease in his entertaining book on juvenile reading "Tales Out of School," the publication only ran for that one year.

Today it's a curiosity - 60 small pages of thick, rough paper, with brown, slightly smudged print (and all those 'f's' that are really 's's'!) are virtually unreadable sermons and moral tales.

I nearly forgot to mention that those 'Monthly Occurrences' listed at the end of the Contents List consisted entirely of 'awful warnings,' telling about recent cases where small boys had been drowned, shot, suffocated, scalded, kidnapped, etc. and advising readers how they could avoid meeting the same fates. There was nothing to beat ending on a cheerful note way back in 1788...



SEBASTIAN GINGER WRITES ~

Dear Mr. Editor,

Mi friend Philpot Bottles menshuned in SE.DE. as I wud rite too yu abart our vissit too the Midland Klub. Ere goas. That nice chap Arry Broster (I kan spell his naim rite if that Philpot carnt) met us at Noo Strete Stashun and tuk us rahnd a bit. Cor. Werent we glad to get art of Bhirmingham!! We had a luvly tyme on Dudley Zoo thro their was sum trubble beetwen Mister Broster and sum blokes in unyform wen we came off. Thay wer pinting at us but Mr. Broster toled them "I tell yu they came on with me. Go and count your hone lot. Sides thay are difrrent. Yu aint got none like 'em,anyways." We got away orlright and after a luvly jerny on a dobbles dekker bus (bi the way the stares are awfly funny - Sharlot came a cropper cumming down them - Cor! Yu shud have sean the krowd witch collected. Had a nice tyme at Kinver. Crikey! Wat a place. The church rite on top of a grate cliff lukking rite down on to the 1 main streat. That ther Horatio Pimple wanted to pich a stoan down on to the peeples heds. Luvly church. And luvly grub at Primroes Cottidge. Gud job we had a tuck in ther. Ther wernt mutch going at the Harden Howtel. Wy that Norman Gregory even arsked us for nine pense apeece for the coffy. Thay wos alrite, better than the Mirsyside lot in a way. Thay wos torking abart a plaice called Blackfriars or sumfink (not our Blackfriars, not so gud). Too tall chaps did most of the torking. Mr. Broster tuk sum notes. He never sed mutch - he dint hav mutch chance. Ther was sum nice laydies ther tho Philpot Bottles dint like Sharlot sitting tween a chap with a pipe and one named Gorge. I got on orlrite with one they called Winnie Parting or sumfink. Its a posh plaice orlrite. Only the corfey wernt so good, and not menny biskets (wen thay came our way). Still thay wer a frendly lot of folkes and wont us to go agen. Mr. Broster had to go erly so one of the tall blokes and one thay called Johntee (nice chap but carnt he tork) tuk us down to the stashun. Anyway thats mi reeport of our visit to the Middland Sektion and we hope to do it agen (speshly the run rownd Dudley Zoo and Kinver). On beeharf of Horatio Pimple (Funny Wunder), Philpot Bottles (Chips), Sharlot Skroggins (unattatched, I doant fink)

Yors verry sinsearly

SEBASTIAN GINGER

(Comic Cuts)