

STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

JULY 1970

You can start reading the splendid new serial story.

“DEAR OLD PIGGY,”

To-day. It is one of the finest School Years ever written. It will grip you and make you eager for the next instalment. See page 12.



Vol. 24

No. 86. Vol. 2.

(Every Wednesday.)

May 14, 1921.

The Playful FATTY  **Pranks of ARBUCKLE**
 The Famous - Lasky Star
 This Week's Film: "A COMICAL EGG-SPERIENCE!"



1. "Oh, you nasty, unkind old man!" said Fatty, when he saw the grocer give his young lad a slam on the shell like he'd dropped an egg. Not a young egg, either, mark you. A seventeen-a-shilling egg. A very common or garden sort of egg. So said Fatty - "I'll get even with that egg!" Certainly not old ease! "I'll teach him, I will!" Quite cross was Fatty.



2. Now, outside the egg-monger's a joint placed a large box of eggs. Just been sent up from the country. And Fatty said to himself: "Good! I'll turn that lot upside down, and then bring about near it, and wait till that old man asks me to give him a hand with it." So he carefully turned the box over, and then he, equally carefully, loosened the lid.



3. Right ho! Before long, out comes the old customer, and says to Fatty: "Ho, you! Come and give me a lift with this!" "Certainly, sir!" says Fatty. "Only too pleased to help such a nice, kind old gentleman as yourself, sir. What a nice, fat you've got, sir!" says he. "I've seen something like it in a museum somewhere! Shall we lift the box now, sir, or at once?"



4. "Not so much, that!" says the little old man. "Common! My own respectable!" says he. "Right!" says Fatty. "Hup! Hup! Hup!" And up came the box. But the lid did not come up, and the eggs were scattered all about. And old Fatty headed it, leaving the grocer as a state and carrying on most emphatically. "See you right!"

No 283

2/6

TOM PORTER

1 TIMBERTREE ROAD, CRADLEY HEATH, WARLEY, WORCS.

(Cradley Heath 69630)

REQUIRES

BOYS' FRIEND (Green 'un) 762, 764, 1042, 1257, 1294

B.F.L. (1st S.) 237 King Cricket

B.F.L. (2nd S.) 213 Grit
253 The Golden Goalie
257 The Cad of the Crusaders
601 The Rio Kid's Return

BOYS' REALM (1919) 31 to 44

BOYS' REALM (1927) 1 to 6, 18, 21, 31, 34 to 80

DETECTIVE LIBRARY (1920) 39

EMPIRE LIBRARY 3, 5, 6, 7, 17

N.L.L. (O.S.) 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, 52, 61, 73, 77, 79, 81

PLUCK (ST. JIM'S) 108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 125, 129

POPULAR (N.S.) 34 to 39, 49, 52, 55 to 59, 64 to 67, 70, 73, 76 to 80, 83, 85, 88 to 91, 95, 97, 100, 103 to 108, 110 to 126, 130 to 134, 136 to 139, 142, 146, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154, 156, 158 to 163, 191, 196 to 199, 202, 203, 206, 207, 209, 210, 216, 217, 218, 230 to 241, 244, 245, 266, 269, 271, 277, 280, 284, 285, 295, 296, 299, 300, 353, 358, 364, 374 to 378, 380, 384, 386 to 396, 399 to 410, 414 to 418, 421, 422, 530, 531, 541, 546 to 587, 589, 595, 598, 602, 609, 628

UNION JACK 777 The Flashlight Clue
and any others featuring Nelson Lee, Nipper and St. Frank's.

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

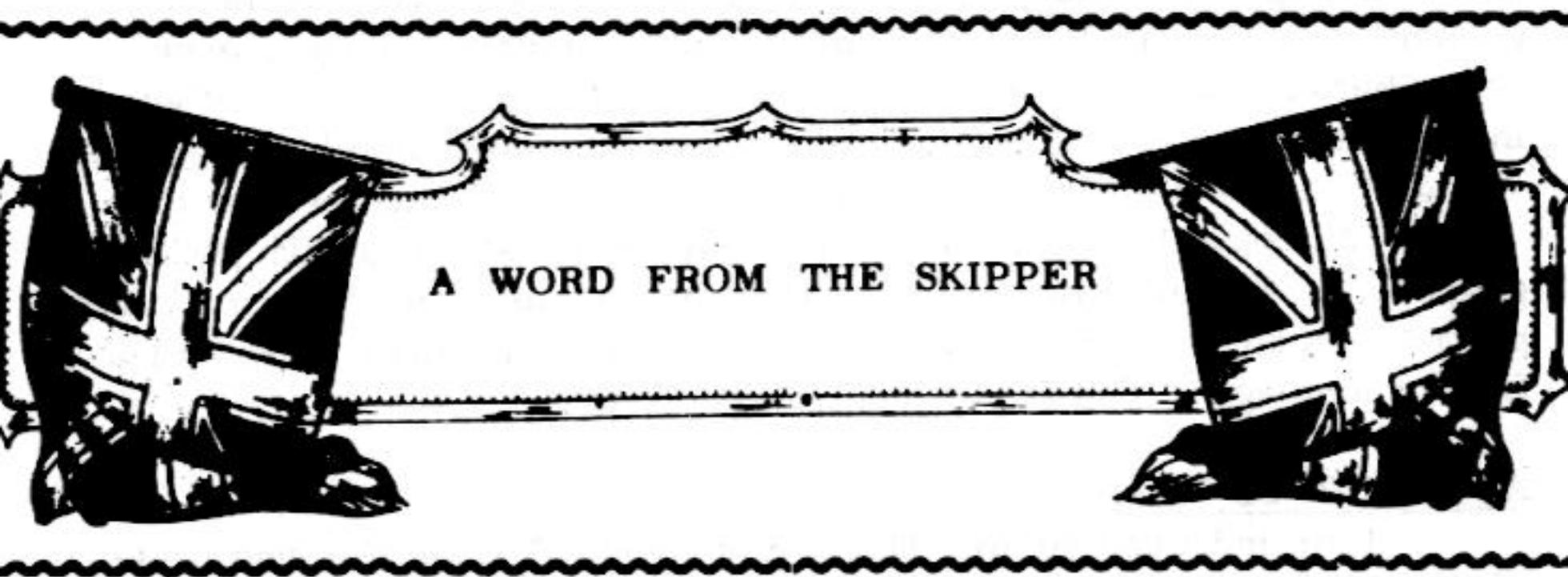
Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

Vol. 24

No. 283

JULY 1970

Price 2s.6d.



A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER

HORRIFIC!

A reader, whose letter featured in last month's "The Postman Called," referring to that controversial old Magnet story "A Very Gallant Gentleman," commented: "As a child I would have **been** really horrified by the story."

Were we really so easily horrified when we were children? I think not - and Gerry Allison, whose comments on the matter appear elsewhere in this issue - thinks not, too. I remember being scared stiff, as a small boy, by "The Hidden Horror," and even now I get the jumps when I read Pierre Quiroule's superb story "The Living Shadow."

But I found nothing horrifying in "Gallant Gentleman," so far as I found it readable at all.

In recent years - and old enough to know better - I have read several works which have horrified me. I am thankful that, as a youngster, I did not come in contact with anything more horrifying than the

Magnet - even a sub-written one.

PRESENT TENSE

I have just read Helen Mathers' charming novel "Comin' Thro' The Rye." It is most unusual in being written throughout in the present tense, as well as in the first person. Years ago I detested first person stories, but have grown to like them very much indeed. The present tense, however, is distracting, though one settles down to it after finding the opening chapters difficult to read. This is the only present tense story I ever remember coming across, though, many years back, some writers dropped into the present tense, for effect, in the last chapter. It is certainly a rare phenomenon in boys' stories, though Charles Hamilton did it in "King Cricket" towards the end.

My copy of "Comin' Thro' The Rye" is illustrated with photographs, presumably film stills. I think it was never made into a talking picture, but I seem to recall reading about it as a silent Hepworth film of long ago. Did Danny mention it once?

ANOTHER OF 'EM

I am indebted to Mr. Thurbon of Cambridge for the June issue of "Books and Bookmen" containing an article on Frank Richards. The article, by Alan Gibson, contains nothing factually new, but Mr. Gibson draws a conclusion which I find most interesting. It is that Charles Hamilton owed his post-war success and world-wide fame indirectly to George Orwell. Orwell's article in "Horizon," and the resulting correspondence, brought a rally of the old faithfuls - us, dear readers - when Orwell caused it to be obvious that the original Frank was still very much alive.

"This," says Mr. Gibson, "was not what Orwell intended, but it was what he achieved."

I fancy that Mr. Gibson is right without a doubt. Of course, Charles Hamilton never acknowledged his debt to the old faithfuls, so it is pretty certain that he never recognized that he owed anything to Mr. Orwell who wrote with only a very limited grasp of his subject.

THE ANNUAL

Just a reminder that the new Annual is in preparation. If you are planning an article, please send it along soon.

A NAME FOR THE HOBBY?

From time to time somebody comes along with the proposal that we should find and adopt an overall name for our hobby. Mr. Victor Giles of Barking is an enthusiast to that end, and he suggests that we should run a competition to find the most suitable name.

I really cannot see any outstanding need for such a name, mainly, perhaps, because it seems such a difficult proposition. Our hobby falls into two sections, and only a very small proportion of C.D. readers are actually collectors.

"Magnetology" would displease plenty; "Juvenilia" would sound quite wrong; "Gemmania" would have drawbacks; and "Yesterdahlia" would be quite inadequate. Or perhaps I'm merely being awkward. One thing is certain. If a name were chosen, it would have to be agreed upon by all, and enthusiasts of all types would need to use it constantly so that it would come as naturally as metrication and decimalisation are expected to become soon.

In passing, some stranger rang me recently to ask me what the official name is for collectors of spoons. Regretfully, I had to confess that I had no idea.

OUR LEN.

Readers will be deeply sorry to know that Len Packman, the co-founder of our clubs and one of the world's experts on Sexton Blake lore, is gravely ill at his home in East Dulwich. Len is unable to receive visitors at the present time, but we can all remember Len and Josie, two of the finest people in the clubs, in our prayers. May God bless them both.

THE EDITOR

WANTED ANY MAGNETS. Please state numbers and prices required. Write to — M. R. A. JACKSON, 19a AYLMER PARADE, LONDON, N.2.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN
27, Archdale Road, London, S.E. 22

THE PENNY PICTORIAL

by Frank Vernon Lay

The Penny Pictorial was not a boys' paper but definitely an adult production, but its chief interest to us was the publication in it, between the years 1907 and 1914 of some hundreds of short stories of Sexton Blake, Detective. These were, of course, adult stories and, generally speaking, the emphasis was more on deduction than brawn.

It is difficult to write a short detective story and immensely difficult to write a good one. There is so little room for manoeuvre, development of plot and character being cut to bare essentials, and it is to the credit of the authors of these stories that several of them are of high quality and well worth preserving, and worth the hard work entailed in searching for them. Unfortunately whilst one fairly frequently comes across bound volumes of the very early issues (it was first called, I believe, the Pictorial Magazine) bound volumes of the years 1906 onwards become increasingly difficult to locate, and loose issues even more difficult.

All the stories were anonymous and, on more than one occasion, the editor stated they were all the work of one author. As usual editors' statements have to be taken with a great deal of caution but, thanks to the work of our own team of researchers, Messrs. Lofts and Adley, it has been established that many of them were written by Cecil Hayter. This is further corroborated, if corroboration is needed, by the fact that when the Sexton Blake stories ceased they were replaced by a series entitled The Adventures of Derwent Duff, Detective, with Cecil Hayter being named as the author. The quality of these stories was exactly the same and there is no doubt they were popular as they continued for years and maintained a high standard. As I have had requests for these stories over the years it cannot be said that Derwent Duff is a forgotten detective but, as far as I know, his adventures did not appear in any other magazine.

Another very interesting practice of the Penny Pictorial was to publish at intervals articles about, and interviews with, their authors. For instance in No. 969, December 22nd, 1917, appeared a three and a half page article, illustrated with photographs on Cecil Hayter, the Creator of "Derwent Duff." An unusual twist to this article is that no location of Hayter's home is given but sufficient clues to its whereabouts are in the article. As details of Hayter's life have been given elsewhere already I will not quote from this article but it is worth having for the photograph of Hayter working in his study.

Another article in No. 770, February 28th, 1914, was on Stacey Blake who was a very regular contributor for many years. From it we learn that whilst still a youth he cycled across France and Spain in company with Tom Browne, the famous artist, Blake writing their experiences en route and Browne illustrating them for a monthly journal. There followed 14 days in Holland on a tandem and then he went solo to Turkey and Greece. He was an expert on skis and something more than an expert on skates, having won the 900 yards open skating race at Wengen (Switzerland). As he also painted pictures for public exhibition, appeared successfully in public as a musical entertainer and undertook lecture tours on the subject of his many adventurous journeys, then added a spell of political cartooning for a general election, he would seem to have been, in common with many of our old-time authors, quite a man. Again, the many photos make this issue quite a collectors' piece.

In December 7th, 1907 (No. 445) is a fascinating article on Sexton Blake on the Stage, which informs us that Mr. Charles A. Carlile, the manager of a travelling company, is one of the most talented playwrights of the day! He himself has written every one of the sketches with which he is now touring, each being founded on a published story of Sexton Blake. In each sketch he plays a part, so it will be readily understood that as actor-manager-playwright he is one of the busiest men in the theatrical world. One sketch is named "The Case of the Coiners" which, it says, proved to be a huge success at the Surrey Theatre, London. Again there are fine photographs of Mr. C. Douglas Carlile as Sexton Blake, Lee Gilbert as Tinker and an excellent one of Pedro.

There is not space to deal more fully with the Blake stories themselves. Most were singles but occasionally an attempt was made at a series such as those featuring Lady Molly and Blake versus Marston Hume, the Master Criminal, obviously inspired by Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty. An interesting story is 'The Locked Door' in No. 757, November 29th, 1913, a clever version of the locked-room mystery made so popular by Gaston Leroux's *The Mystery of the Yellow Room*, and I. Zangwill's *Big Bow Mystery* and still pursued with zeal by that master of macabre mystery John Dickson Carr. The solution is ingenious if a trifle ingenuous. Maybe one day it will be possible to find a long collection of these tales, extract the best of them and issue a memorial volume to the greatest fictional detective that ever appeared.

#

THE VOODOO QUEEN

by S. G. Swan

IT IS SAFE to assert that G. H. Teed was responsible for more female characters in the Sexton Blake Saga than any other author. Offhand one can call to mind Yvonne, June Severance, Roxane, Nirvana, Marie Galante, Vali Mata-Vali and Murial Marl — to name the most prominent stars in the galaxy of feminine pulchritude he created.

Of them all, the most fascinating is Marie Galante, that seductive woman from Haiti. The name itself derives from an island in the Caribbean. If you look at a map of this area, you will find among the Leeward Islands a dot marked "Marie Galante." I understand this place was named after the wife of a French colonial governor.

We were first introduced to Marie Galante in a Union Jack story entitled "At the Full of the Moon." I have not seen a copy of this issue for half a century but, if memory serves me correctly, Marie Galante was the half-caste daughter of a white man in Port-au-Prince, called Bob Kidd, and of a native woman. Marie appeared to be under some kind of a spell — possibly the influence of her mother — which led her into the jungle to participate in the pagan rituals of Voodoo. I cannot remember the details of the story, but at the end the spell was broken and Marie was left thinking wistfully of Sexton

Blake, who had intervened in the Voodoo ceremonies.

From this point there is a hiatus in the career of this remarkable woman, due to the four-year absence of G. H. Teed from the pages of the Union Jack. When he returned he resuscitated this character, but there was a notable difference in Marie Galante. Now she was an octoroon instead of a half-caste, and her ambition was to create a black empire, combining the coloured population of the Caribbean with that of the United States. In one story she went to New York to meet the leader of the negroes in the U.S.A.

It is probable that G. H. Teed thought she would provide more dramatic possibilities as an adversary of Blake rather than as a friend, and in this he was correct. But why he reduced the proportion of black blood in her veins is not readily apparent. At any rate, he did, and an octoroon she remained throughout the series of stories which he wrote about her.

Marie Galante never met Yvonne, but she had two encounters with Mdlle. Roxane. In several of her adventures she was linked with that notorious character, Dr. Huxton Rymer, whom she almost lured to destruction in the jungles of Haiti. By this time Rymer had a lady partner, Mary Trent, who was utterly loyal to him but whom he nearly always left behind when he embarked on his exploits with the Voodoo Queen. The two women were destined to meet, however; the Fates had arranged it.

Rymer and Mary Trent were in the republic of Santa Marta engaged on a scheme to instal a certain individual as president when Rymer met Marie Galante again. She was involved in the plot, and the adventurer had to use all his wits to keep the two women apart, knowing that there would be fireworks if they ever met, for each was intensely jealous of the other.

Nevertheless, they did meet. Marie Galante saw Rymer with Mary Trent and, all her primitive instincts aroused, the octoroon threw a knife at Mary, which the adventurer gallantly intercepted with his own body. The wound was only a slight one, though, and Rymer was able to continue his criminal career. It did not prevent him from undertaking other enterprises with Marie Galante, but not in company with Mary Trent!

As a point of interest, there was a film called Marie Galante some thirty years ago, featuring the late Spencer Tracy, but disappointingly it had no connection with the High Priestess of Voodoo.

As far as I can trace, there were eleven stories of Marie Galante, six in the Union Jack and five in the Sexton Blake Library. They are listed below:

Union Jack	710	At the Full of the Moon	
"	"	984	The Voodoo Curse
"	"	1050	The Case of the Six Rubber Balls
"	"	1110	The Treasure of Tortoise Island
"	"	1421	Voodoo Vengeance
"	"	1432	Black Spaniard Creek
Sexton Blake Library			
(Second Series)	52	The Black Emperor	
"	"	85	The Rogues' Republic
"	"	152	The Adventure of the Voodoo Queen
"	"	265	The Secret of the Thieves' Kitchen
"	"	376	The Isle of Horror

It seems to me that this is a character which could be revived appropriately in this era of racial strife. Marie Galante would not be an anachronism in these days; rather are the basic elements of her cause more pronounced. One can picture her as an exponent of Black Power, still striving to create her black empire. Is there a modern author capable of assuming the mantle of G. H. Teed and bringing to life again the High Priestess of Voodoo with her ambitious schemes?

Several copies of the School Squadron by Eric Roche (Geo. Rochester) mentioned in last month's C.D. available. 10/- post free. Large numbers of other S.O.L's and B.F.L's also available. "Wants" lists please. — NORMAN SHAW, 84 BELVEDERE ROAD, LONDON, S.E. 19.

XX

WANTED — S.P.C. No. 95. I will give 30 consecutive S.P.C's for this one. Write to — W. SETFORD, 24 COLWYN AVENUE, DERBY.

Danny's Diary

JULY 1920

In the United States the American Cup races are being held, and Tommy Lipton's "Shamrock Four" has been doing well. Mum says it is time Tommy Lipton won for England. He has tried so hard with his Shamrocks, and is a great sportsman.

Mum took me up to Drury Lane one evening, and we saw "The Garden of Allah." It is a nice play, but not quite exciting enough for me. Mum liked it, though.

There is a new paper out called the Nugget Weekly. It has complete stories about Sexton Blake, Robin Hood, Buffalo Bill and a Nelson Lee serial. It is quite good, but I should not want it regularly.

It has been a passable month in the Magnet with two stories by the old writer of the stories. I have not cared much for the series about Archie Howell, which has now wound up with two tales entitled "The Remove's Recruit" and "Her Brother's Honour."

The first tale by the real Frank Richards was "Chumming With Loder," and it was good. Bunter managed to get a hold over the prefect, until Harry Wharton took a hand and stopped Billy's blackmail. Then came a rather tedious little affair named "A Third Form Mystery" with Stott in the chief role.

Finally, another tale by the real Frank Richards, entitled "Bunter's Bluff." Bunter, in order to bag a feed, disguised himself as his sister Bessie. It was funny in parts, but a bit silly.

There has been a train smash near Bolton, and 3 people were killed.

It has been a poor month in the Gem, with most of the illustrations coming from E. E. Briscoe.

"Dick Brooke's Trial" was a bit goody-goody and mixed-up. Brooke got misunderstood because he was doing bit parts for a film producer, his lovely sister backed him up, and Racke plotted. Rather mushy.

Two Talbot-Marie Rivers tales plus Jim Dawlish were "Troubled Waters" and "The Final Reckoning." The Scotland Yard detective, John

Rivers, put everything right. "Grundy's Great Raid" was a tale about rivalry with the Grammar School, and, in "The St. Jim's Overall Club," Gussy persuaded the juniors to wear overalls as a protest against the high cost of clothes. Too silly to be very funny.

There have been some really grand tales in the Boys' Friend Library and the Sexton Blake Library. "Nipper of St. Frank's" provided plenty of good reading, and "Under Sealed Orders" was a splendid story from the old blue-covered Gem.

In the S.B.L. "The Only Son" was a fine story, and an exceptionally good detective tale was "The Mystery of the Turkish Agreement" which featured Granite Grant and Mademoiselle Julie and was set partly in Turkey. So everything is tip-top in the Libraries this month.

The Boys' Friend has been wonderful all the month. The long Mornington series goes on. Morny has been sacked from Rookwood, his uncle, Sir Rupert Stacpoole wants nothing to do with him, and Morny takes jobs near Rookwood and is a thorn in the flesh of Dr. Chisholm. Not so many tales are really original these days, but these are. Must be the best of all time at Rookwood. The titles this month: "In Hiding," "Sacked," "From School to Shop," "Mr. Bandy's New Boy" and "Hard Times."

Cedar Creek, too, has been fine. First the last of the new series about the outlaw 500-dollar Jones. This was called "Run to Earth." Then a single story in which Mr. Penrose tried to boost the circulation of his newspaper by a scheme which finished with his office being wrecked. Called "The Hidden Hundred."

Then a 3-story series in which Frank Richards & Co. find themselves up against a gang which is carrying booze to the Indians. The titles: "The Fire-Water Smuggler," "Among the Redskins," and "Rounding Up The Boot-Legger."

Some good pictures at the cinemas. Douglas McLean in "23½ Hours Leave" was exciting. Billie Burke is very sweet in "Sadie Love." Bryant Washburn in "Very Good Young Man." Mary Pickford in "Esmeralda" - Mary seems always to be a waif of some sort. A fine film is "Raffles" with John Barrymore starring. Finally a new serial named "Barabbas." Serials are very popular. All our cinemas show

TOM MERRY was waiting in the wings when Lucas Sleath was carrying on his rascally practices in the New House at St. Jim's. But Jack Blake, the hero of St. Jim's - and Figgins - both knew Sleath only too well, in this old story from 65 years ago.

STAUNCH CHUMS AT ST. JIM'S

Mr. Lathom was a gentleman afflicted with short sight, and he wore a large pair of spectacles, which, however, did not make his vision at all normal. When he caught sight of Mellish, he started back in horror.

"Boy, what has happened? How came you in that dreadful state?"

Percy stammered. He could not sneak without incurring the wrath of every junior in the house, and he could not explain.

"Dear me, how terribly you must be injured! Come with me at once, my poor lad. Lean on my arm. Don't speak if you do not feel strong enough."

"I - I -"

"Dear me, he must be suffering intensely when he can only express himself in inarticulate monosyllables!" murmured Mr. Lathom. "What a quantity of blood! He is drenched with it. The wound must be a terrible one."

He hurried Percy to his room, willy-nilly, and made him sit down, and rang for a maid, and ordered hot water. The maid stared at Percy, and giggled as she left the room.

"What a heartless girl!" said Mr. Lathom. "Are you suffering great pain, my poor boy? As soon as I have washed the wound --"

"There is no wound," broke out Percy.

"No wound! Then where does this vast quantity of blood proceed from?"

"It's red ink."

"Red ink!" repeated Mr. Lathom faintly. "You dare to tell me that you have deceived me and played a foolish trick upon your Form master?"

"I didn't mean to --"

"Yes, I perceive now that it is indeed red ink, as you say. Thank you, Mary, I shall not require the warm water. Mellish,

how dare you deceive me in this inexcusable manner?"

"I didn't --"

"Why did you not explain at once?"

"You didn't give me a chance."

"This is mere subterfuge. If there is anything I specially detest in a boy it is subterfuge. I have, on many occasions, detected you in prevarication. Now you have played a most absurd trick and caused me much needless anxiety."

"I -"

"Not a word. You cannot escape punishment by further prevarication," said Mr. Lathom severely. He took down a cane from the wall. "Hold out your hand, sir!"

Percy reluctantly obeyed. The incensed Form master gave him six cuts, three on each hand, and Percy, who never could bear pain, was almost doubled up with anguish.

"Now go, and let that be a lesson to you never to play a ridiculous trick again," said Mr. Lathom sternly; and Percy went, with feelings too deep for words.

* * * * *

Eleven strokes had sounded from the clock tower at St. Jim's. The vast pile of the school buildings was hushed in silence.

From one or two study windows lights still gleamed, but most of the inmates of St. Jim's were wrapped in slumber.

As the eleventh stroke died away there was a faint sound in the rear of the New House as a window was softly opened and a dim form dropped lightly to the ground outside. The form stood for a moment still, and then hurried away into the gloom. The sash of the window was left raised about an inch.

A couple of minutes later the sash was cautiously raised from within. A head was thrust out, and a keen pair of eyes

peered into the gloomy night.

"It's all right," said the voice of Figgins. "He's gone."

"It was Sleath," murmured Wynn.

"Yes, him right enough. We saw him come out of his study, and that was enough. He's gone to see the crew at the Rylcombe Arms."

"Same old game."

"The question is, where do we come in?" said Figgy. "We could fasten the window, and keep him out all night. But that would only prove that he was a giddy goat. It wouldn't prove enough for us. I'm going after him, Fatty."

"He'll half kill you, if he finds you."

"He won't find me. We've got to follow it up. I'm going after him, and you'll have to remain up to let me in. It's no good two going."

"All right. Then you'd better buzz off before he disappears."

"I shall spot him in the lane all right."

Figgins crawled out on the sill, hung there by his hands, and dropped lightly to the ground.

Wynn closed the window, so that it appeared as Sleath had left it. Figgy started off in the gloom, and quickly vanished from his chum's sight. He heard a scraping sound ahead of him, and knew what it meant. He came in sight of Sleath as the latter crossed the top of a wall and disappeared on the other side.

Figgins waited for a minute or two to give him time to get clear, and then climbed the wall. He dropped on the other side into Rylcombe Lane, and caught a glimpse of the senior passing in the circle of light cast by a roadside lamp.

Sleath was hurrying towards Rylcombe.

Taking great care to keep his pursuit concealed from his quarry, Figgins hung on the track of the senior, keeping him always in sight or hearing. Sleath did not once glance behind. Doubtless he was too accustomed to these nightly expeditions to have any uneasiness about discovery.

A light gleamed ahead; it came from a window of the Rylcombe Arms. Sleath turned into the lane beside the inn, and strode on through the dark like one who well knew the way. Figgins followed him.

The shadower stopped as he heard the sound of voices ahead.

"Come in, sir. Mr. Joliffe's in the back room; he's waiting for you."

A door closed. Figgins went quietly forward. From a back window the light streamed out into the inn garden. There was no blind to the window, only common muslin curtains, and Figgins, standing in the dark outside, could easily see through them into the room.

Mr. Joliffe, the landlord of the Rylcombe Arms, was seated in an easy-chair before the fire. Figgins knew him by sight. He was a fat, red-faced man, with a square jaw, a low forehead, and a cunning expression. He had a pipe in his mouth, and a glass of brandy at his elbow. Sleath had just come into the room, and Figgins saw him clearly. The New House senior looked white and worried.

Figgins had a struggle with his conscience. They were talking now, and the window was cracked, the two speakers so near to him that if he chose he would have no difficulty in overhearing what they were saying. The idea of playing the eavesdropper was naturally revolting to a decent lad. His cheeks burned at the thought of listening. But, on the other hand, this was probably his only chance of discovering the truth. He might now learn something of the true story of the missing money, and the chance would never recur. Upon his action now probably depended the proof of Blake's innocence. It was a painful position for poor Figgy.

"Yes, the 'orse will win," were the first words he heard. Mr. Joliffe was speaking. "I'm quite willing to put anything on 'im for you, Mr. Sleath. Only I want to see the colour of your money. Afore there's any more transactions between us, there's the rest of that old matter to be wiped out."

"You said so in your note."

"I said so, and I meant it."

"But if Blue Cloud is certain to win, I shall get in enough over that to wipe out the old debt and have something in hand," said Sleath eagerly.

Joliffe grinned.

"Yes, if you've got the spondulics to put up."

"I haven't anything at present, but

you know you can trust me --"

Joliffe interrupted him.

"Trust you! Yes, that's likely! Did you stub up before I threatened to go to the doctor about it? You know you didn't."

"I've had such bad luck, Joliffe," said Sleath. "You ought to make allowances. And I did let you have ten pounds."

"Yes, arter I hunted and drove you till I was sick of the whole business," said Mr. Joliffe snappishly. "If you wants to back your fancy, put up your money like a gentleman. As a gentleman myself, I expects to be treated as one."

"I shan't have any tin till next term. I daren't ask my father for any more, and - and I can't raise it. If you put something on Blue Cloud for me, I shall win, and pay you off --"

"No good. You gave me ten pound off twenty-five. What's the good of that to me? I've been hard hit myself lately, and I've got to pay up. I want the money."

"If Blue Cloud --"

"Bother Blue Cloud! Have you got the money?"

"No. I can't pay --"

"So you said afore, but you managed to raise ten quid," said Mr. Joliffe. "I daresay you can raise some more, rather than 'ave me go up to the school."

Sleath was deadly white.

"You wouldn't do that, Joliffe, after what you promised. You said that if I managed the ten pounds, you would give me time."

"I reckon a judge would give you time, if I opened my mouth wide," said Mr. Joliffe with a grin. "You're in pretty deep, this time, young gentleman. You swear you can't raise a sovereign even, and then you stub up ten quid."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you'll get into trouble if you don't let me 'ave the other fifteen pretty sharp," replied Mr. Joliffe with a leer. "Where did you get that money from?"

"I borrowed it."

"Then borrow some more."

"It's impossible," panted Sleath. "Oh, what an utter fool I was ever to have any dealings with you."

"I'm all right if you treat me like a gentleman. When I lose I pay up, don't I?"

When you lose, why don't you do the same?"

"I shall have some money next term. I'd pay you every penny if I could. Don't be hard on me, Joliffe. You haven't done so badly out of me, have you?"

Mr. Joliffe looked sulky, and replaced his pipe in his mouth.

"You'll give me till next term, Joliffe?"

"I'll give you," said Mr. Joliffe deliberately, "till next Saturday."

"Joliffe - I -"

"And I may as well mention that I've kept that five-pun note. I've got it still. I'm not going to part with it in a 'urry. 'Allo! What's the matter with you?"

Sleath staggered, and caught at the table for support.

"Why have you kept it?" he muttered.

"I thought it might be useful," grinned Joliffe. "Am I to 'ave my money on Saturday?"

"There's no way I can get it."

"Get it where you got the last."

"I can't. You don't understand."

"Oh, yes, I do. I understand. If you don't bring me at least ten on Saturday, look out. You'll look pretty queer when I go up to the school and ask the doctor if he knows the number of that 'ere note."

"You wouldn't --"

"Just you wait and see, my young gentleman."

Sleath, with a face like chalk, turned hopelessly to the door.

"I'll do my best," he said wretchedly.

Figgins had remained at the cracked window as if fascinated. Very little of the foregoing conversation had escaped him. With a feeling of guilt, yet of satisfaction at the discovery he had made, he stepped away from the window.

He hurried into the street, and when Sleath came out a minute or two later, Figgins was already well on the road to St. Jim's. As fast as he could go he sprinted towards the school, and reached it a long way ahead of the senior.

Fatty Wynn was watching. He opened the window immediately Figgins appeared, and the junior scrambled in.

"What success?" whispered Wynn eagerly.

"A.1," replied Figgins. "Let's get to the dorm now. We'll talk it over tomorrow."

NELSON LEE COLUMN

SUMMER HOLIDAY

by William Lister

We live in an affluent society (or so we are told). Not that some of us have really noticed it. However, there must be a certain amount of truth in it, as it seems to be accepted as a fact. Friends of mine are already beginning to tell me of their early summer holiday and I assume by the word "early" that by now they are planning their "late" summer holiday. I am having descriptions of Gibraltar, France, Spain and Palestine all painted in glorious sunshine, and what a comfort it all is when I am cycling to work in pouring rain to know that somewhere the sun is shining. Unless I give you the impression that all my friends are members of this affluent society let me hasten to add that I have many friends who know of no such thing and are rarely to be found out of their own home towns even at holiday time.

A schoolteacher friend of mine recently showed me some books on his forthcoming camping holiday in Europe, and one felt it would be nice to join the party. It was then I thought, why not? While not everybody would care for my company I happened to know of a party of friends about to embark on a caravan holiday through England and I had a feeling I would be more than welcome.

There was one difficulty, however. It meant first of all taking a trip back to 1923 in order to join them.

No doubt one could travel into the future and the past by means of some machine of science-fiction, but again this would involve expense. Now the cheapest way to travel back in time is by means of the "Nelson Lee" library. In "The Happy Caravanners," a party of St. Frank's boys, 16 in number, including Nipper and E. O. Handforth were starting out in May 1923 on a journey through the highways and by-ways of rural England, and their first call was at Brightside-on-Sea.

English weather in 1923 was as fickle as English weather in 1970. After setting out in brilliant sunshine on the first day, sheets of rain came, resulting in everybody being wet and miserable, with the caravans bogged down in mud, and Handforth wondering if a caravan holiday was a good idea.

But better days were to follow - days of blue skies, bright sunshine and the long hot days of June.

Brightside-on-Sea lived up to its name with golden sunshine all the way. A pierrot show was given by St. Frank's boys on the sands and the dramatic rescue of a young girl from drowning - and the next day, to quote Nipper, "While the sun was low in the heavens and the dew was still on the grass" they were off again.

Edwy Searles Brooks describes well the scenes passed through, Tommy Watson was compelled to say "There's no scenery in the world to compare with the English."

Rural Hampshire gave the thrill of the boys of St. Frank's Remove fighting the roaring flames of a burning cottage to rescue a lady and her two children, events that led to friendship with the Earl of Bushwick and a short stay on the Bushwick estates.

Breaking camp in falling rain, the whole atmosphere was filled with that pleasant earthy smell which arises from the countryside when rain falls after a period of fine weather.

At this point a telegram from Nelson Lee altered the whole nature of the trip, transforming it from a small party of 16 to the whole of the Remove.

They visited Tiverton in Devon, Exeter and Dartmoor - and if you think they can't visit Dartmoor without Handforth getting mixed up with the convicts, you are right.

Through Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, Lynton, Minehead, Bath, Bristol, making way up to Gloucester, across the Severn through Monmouth into S. Wales. As Reggie Pitt remarked, "We have seen something of England now. See your own country first is a pretty good slogan."

Cardiff was reached, with a stay near Langland Bay in the village of Oystermouth, five miles from Swansea. All with enough adventure to last a lifetime.

Finally they went towards the North - Oldham and Manchester are not famous for their beauty spots, but there is something that grips one.

They reached Blackpool, the summer Mecca of thousands of holiday makers and thence went to Windermere, and embarked on a

totally unforeseen adventure.

If some of our readers should live in any of the districts mentioned it may be of interest to know that in the years gone by St. Frank's Remove came your way, and that there remains this record of their adventures. If a holiday abroad is more in your line why not try New York(?) commencing July 21st, 1923 from the Lake District. Bon Voyage!

#

MONSTER LIBRARY REPRINTS

by R. J. Godsave

One can only suppose that with the publishing of the Monster Library in November 1925 one of the main considerations was to enable readers of the Nelson Lee Library to become acquainted with back numbers which were out of print, and in the eyes of the publishers virtually unobtainable.

That many of those readers in 1925 had never seen or knew of the Lees which were published during the seven years from 1918 must be accepted as a fact. From ten to fifteen years of age would appear to be the average span of reading life for the Lee or any other paper, so that Lees from 1918 to 1921 to many were just back numbers of the past.

It is interesting to note that a series of Lees appeared in the Monster each month. The same series appearing in the original Nelson Lees covered a period of two months. Had both the Monster and the Lee survived it is logical to assume that in the course of time the Monster would have eventually caught up with the Lee.

Starting from O.S. 158 "Captain Burton's Quest" the Lee series reprinted in the Monster were, more or less, in a chronological order. Had not the Monster ceased publication in 1927 then some of Brook's best series, such as Dr. Karnak, would have appeared in 1928 and the Ezra Quirke series a year later.

The abrupt ending of the Monster Library after the Communist School series came as a blow to its readers who were advised by an advertisement at the end of the nineteenth issue to buy No. 54 of the "Schoolboys' Own Library" entitled "Buying the Remove."

It is strange that the series which dealt with the misfortunes

of Reggie Pitt's parents and his playing for the Bannington Town Football Club under the disguise and name of Abdulla was omitted in favour of the Communist School series.

Had the Monster survived for another month then the fine series introducing the St. Frank's Cadets and Archie Glenthorne would probably have been the next and final series.

Although the "Schoolboys' Own Library" continued with reprints of Lee series starting from O.S. 221 these were so abridged as to make the stories lose their meaning.

† † †

NIPPER'S PUBLIC HOUSE EPISODE

by O. W. Wadham

I have a copy of the NELSON LEE SCHOOL STORY LIBRARY entitled "Boss of the Remove!" The story opens with Gore-Pearce, Guilliver and Bell greeting the girls of Moor View school. Page five has a small illustration of the snobby trio greeting the girls. Nothing unusual about that, maybe, but that was - I presume - in the 1920 period, and those teenaged girls were wearing MINI SKIRTS!

Page thirty has another surprise. The yarn for the next week is announced. The cover is pictured. Nipper is shown getting what is today termed "the bum rush" from a local pub. The story was entitled "The Downfall of Nipper," and this description is given:

"What a sensation it causes at St. Frank's! Nipper seen entering a disreputable inn at Bellton - and afterwards discovered helpless and incapable by the roadside!"

I am sure that issue of the LEE would sell thousands of extra copies - the cover picture showing the Junior skipper being turfed from the building labelled Bar would catch the eye of many, usually not Lee fans. And just how did Nipper come to meet this fate? I would surely like some Leeite to tell me. That cover would certainly even sell a modern paperback!

WANTED: Good loose copies or volumes containing one or more of the following: GEMS 801, 817, 826, 828, 832. Also POPULARS 401, 403, 407, 413, 415, 422, 441. Also GEMS 727 - 737 inclusive.

ERIC FAYNE, EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 84 — Magnets 613-5 — The Bounder's Feud

The history of the Magnet in the nineteen-twenties was very largely the history of Tom Redwing, the son of a Pegg fisherman. How he became the particular friend of Vernon-Smith and the vicissitudes that occurred during the course of that ill-matched friendship was the subject of many a fine series, and there can be no doubt that the Redwing stories lifted up the Magnet head and shoulders above the mass of indifferent tales in the early 'twenties. Many of the Redwing series developed the theme of his scholarship and eventual financial independence, but the series in Magnets 613-5 was completely self-contained, and would not have been out of place in the 'thirties.

Redwing was given a detention, owing indirectly to a malicious prank of Skinner's, but Vernon-Smith told Redwing that it was all right for him to go over to Highcliffe to play in the football match there. One of the spectators telephoned Mr. Quelch who angrily went over to Highcliffe to apprehend the culprit in person. Vernon-Smith had to own up to his part in the affair, and he was duly flogged. Not surprisingly, he blamed Skinner for the flogging, and the rest of the series told how he set about trying to get Skinner a flogging in return.

It is possible that the Vernon-Smith/Redwing theme owed something to the Mornington/Erroll stories in the Boys' Friend, but the Magnet version was sufficiently individualistic for it to present the idea with freshness and compelling interest. Because it raised moral problems of a fascinating nature, the Redwing saga never failed to arrest the reader's attention, and there can be no doubt that these stories were really the heralds and precursors of the Golden Age that lay ahead.

SALE: Magnet 1484; Captain, July 1922; Big Budget, Christmas Number 1902 and Marvel 227. One pound posted.

O. WADHAM, 12 MILITARY ROAD, LOWER HUTT, NEW ZEALAND.

XX

Will exchange 12 "Union Jacks" (1928) for 12 "Union Jacks" (1926 or 1927).

M. HALL, 1 TRELAWNEY PLACE, PENRYN, CORNWALL.

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIALNo. 148. MISS PRISCILLA

A few months back my good colleague Roger Jenkins, rather ungallantly, took a side swipe at that dear old lady, Miss Priscilla Fawcett. Another good friend of mine, Miss Flinders, very disloyal to her sex, supported Mr. Jenkins, and further ridiculed the sweet old dear.

Sadly, I cannot contradict or argue against anything that Mr. Jenkins or Miss Flinders wrote. Everthing they said was true.

Yet I loved Miss Fawcett. Surely the Gem would not have been quite the same without her. The name of Priscilla always brings to my mind blue covers and curly-haired heroes.

Nevertheless, as my two friends hinted, Miss Fawcett was a bad character study as even the most loyal Hamiltonians must admit, and the sad fact is that she could have been a very good one indeed.

The author was never quite consistent as to exactly what was the relationship between Miss Fawcett and Tom Merry. She was sometimes referred to as his guardian and he as her ward; she was sometimes named as his old governess; and, on occasion, Tom Merry called her "auntie." She was used too much for comedy. She was further weakened as a guardian when the author described her as the "old lady." Of course, there was nothing very significant in this. It was just that Charles Hamilton had the curious habit of referring to his adult characters as old ladies and old gentlemen, when common sense told us that they could not have been anything of the sort.

There is nothing at all incredible in some woman doting on the boy for whom she is responsible. Some youngsters are ruined by it, as any schoolmaster knows. But any schoolmaster also knows that there are boys, like Tom Merry, who just are not spoiled. The woman with the fetish for all manner of patent medicines is no rarity. Where Charles Hamilton slipped up was applying what I might term the Professor Balmycrumpet technique to Miss Fawcett and her medicines.

Hamilton, in fact, underrated Miss Fawcett and the early Gem. He thought of her as a temporary character in a short-lived series like

all his others had been. He sketched her very roughly as here today and gone tomorrow, and unworthy of much time and attention. Never in his wildest dreams could he have seen that Miss Fawcett, so prominent in the first Tom Merry story, would still be going strong in the last Gem over 30 years later.

That is, no doubt, why characterisation was not particularly strong at the early St. Jim's. Surely we find proof of the cursory nature of the author's application to the series when Cousin Ethel, who was Miss Maynard early on, became Miss Cleveland as time passed.

As the Gem grew older, Tom Merry certainly had some male guardians in the background. I commented last year that it was an infinite pity that General Merry, who showed up as an excellent piece of characterisation during his brief appearance, was not more prominent in the series. We might well have had a Gem India series had the author kept a little more on his toes where the Gem was concerned.

Roger Jenkins takes rather a dim view of Laurel Villa. I like it immensely, though Mr. Jenkins is entirely accurate in what he said about it. Even those who, like me, have a soft spot for Laurel Villa, must admit that it could have been a very great deal better than it was. There was always some doubt as to just where Laurel Villa was. It was fairly near to Eastwood House - but even the placing of Eastwood House is a little vague. Very different from Wharton Lodge, which, at any rate in later times, was not far from Reigate in Surrey.

Miss Priscilla had her finest hour in a chapter in a blue Gem entitled "The Prefect's Plot." Tom Merry, as the result of the evildoing of a senior named Bingham, was expelled from St. Jim's, and they sent for Miss Fawcett to fetch him away. When she learns that her darling is expelled, the sparks fly as indignant emotion gradually overcomes her. It is a clever piece of writing with the uncomfortable Head facing the irate but stricken lady.

This story may well have been my first meeting with Miss Fawcett, and it also may well have provided the reason for my affection for the Lady of Laurel Villa. Be that as it may, "The Prefect's Plot" is one of my favourite Gems.

With the Silverson series, Charles Hamilton missed the bus. He had the opportunity, which he did not grasp, of putting in some out-

standing character work with Miss Fawcett. I pinpointed this factor, years ago, in the C.D. Annual. Silverson believed that if Tom Merry were disgraced, Miss Fawcett would disown him. Tom Merry contemptuously brushed aside such a possibility. Whatever he did, the old lady would stand by him. Manners, shrewdly, was not so certain. Miss Fawcett's principles were so high, he pointed out, that her faith in her darling might fade if circumstances showed him to be an evil young scamp.

Here were possibilities which could have made the Silverson series the greatest story Hamilton had ever written. He never exploited those possibilities. So we were left in doubt about Miss Fawcett.

The giant canvas was there - the groundwork for the masterpiece. But the medium, with most of the writers - and Hamilton was no exception except in certain glowing periods of his career - was one in which enterprise was stifled by the grind of the essential thousands of words each week. It says much for Hamilton that so frequently he rose far above the medium.

So Miss Priscilla had her drawbacks as a piece of character work. Roger Jenkins says that she was a mistake of a serious nature. Miss Flinders says that she was an embarrassment to all those around her.

Miss Priscilla Fawcett was never a mistake for me. She never embarrassed me.

You see, I loved her.

WANTED: MAGNETS 1349, 1299 and below 1246. GEMS 1434, 1441, 1447, 1450, 1454, 1456, 1504, 1599, 1629, 1649. FOR DISPOSAL (preferably for Magnets): many Magnets and early Gems, Aldines, Dick Turpins, Duvals, Robin Hoods, Buffalo Bills, Marvels, Plucks, Union Jacks, Champions, Boys' Friend, True Blues, Chums, Thrillers, etc., details on request.

J. de FREITAS, 29 GILARTH STREET, HIGHETT,
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, 3190.

UNFAIR TO PENTELow!

by Gerry Allison

Poor Pentelow. After being reviled for the death of Arthur Courtney - which he did to orders as explained by G. R. Samways in Collectors' Digest No. 152 - he is now held responsible for the death of Grace Archer in the B.B.C. serial!

I wonder why no one ever tries to look at the matter from the point of view of Pentelow. He kept the Gem and Magnet going during the last years of the First World War, when the paper shortage was so severe that the magazines were reduced to sixteen pages. His responsibility must have been a great burden - loving the boys of Greyfriars and St. Jim's as he did.

I usually agree with Phillip Tierney, but surely he is exaggerating when he says that if he had not known what to expect he would have been quite shocked by 'A Very Gallant Gentleman,' when he read it for the first time three years ago. "As a child" - he goes on - "I would have been really horrified by the story, and I am sure this must have been the effect on young readers when it was first published."

Well, I was 12 when I first read the story fifty-three years ago, and I certainly was not horrified. In fact I quite enjoyed the tale - but of course I did not know - or care, then - that it was a sub-story.

Surely it is a mistake to think children are such tender plants as all that. Practically every story for children during the 19th century had a death-bed scene. In one of the earliest books for bairns "The Fairchild Family," the kids were taken to witness an execution! There are deaths in "Tom Brown's Schooldays;" in "Eric - or Little by Little," in "The Hill" and in many more.

Dickens killed Paul Dombey and Little Nell, and the whole world wept - and enjoyed itself. I read both stories before I was 12. Such stories did no harm to the people who read them, in fact the moral and spiritual fibre of the Victorians and Edwardians compares favourably with that of our generation.

To get back to the Magnet. Frank Richards himself polished off young Herbert Bulstrode in Magnet No. 178. I would advise Philip not to read the three final chapters of that Magnet!

Pentelow also sacrificed Arthur Dangerfield of Wycliffe - one

of his greatest complex characters - a sort of Sixth Form Vernon-Smith in B.F.L. No. 588 "Prefect and Fag" - Herbert Leckenby's favourite story.

Perhaps I can be allowed to quote the passage from C.D. 152, to which I made reference in my first paragraph. Many late-comers to this magazine will never have heard the truth about the death of Arthur Courtney.

"I am very surprised to hear," said Mr. G. R. Samways - speaking to Bill Lofts - "that Mr. Pentelow has been severely criticised at times by some of your members, especially when he killed off the Greyfriars Sixth Formers in Magnet 520 - 'A Very Gallant Gentleman,' and when Arthur Courtney, of course, ceased to appear after his death.

"The following explanation as to the true facts of the matter may remove some of the stigma attached to his name. I am surprised that none of your knowledgable Hamiltonians have ever guessed the reason why Arthur Courtney was removed from the Greyfriars scene.

"Letters had been pouring into the Magnet office for some time from readers who complained of the similarity between the names of Arthur Courtney of the Greyfriars Sixth, and Frank Courtenay, Captain of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe. Some readers thinking that they were one and the same person, whilst others thought the Christian names were wrongly given.

"There was undoubtedly a lot of confusion between the two characters, at least to many readers at that time. John Nix Pentelow, the Magnet editor, asked for guidance on the matter to a higher authority, and he was told bluntly, to kill off one of the characters!

"After much thought, and owing to the fact that Frank Courtenay of Highcliffe was extremely popular by his appearance in those brilliant school stories of Highcliffe 'The Boy Without A Name' and 'Rivals and Chums' (recently re-issued by the Hamilton museum), and also in the light that Arthur Courtney had not featured in many of the current Greyfriars yarns, he decided to finish the character. So" - concluded Mr. Samways - "any onus for the killing off of this Greyfriars character, should rest on the higher authority that ordered it."

It may seem incredible that any such confusion should occur over two names quite different. But I can believe it. After writing

to some of my correspondents for many years, I am still addressed as Allinson instead of Allison. And the article on page 36 of the June Digest about S.O.L. 377 - "The School Squadron" by Eric Roche (George E. Rochester) refers to him as Eric Rothe!

- - -

EDITORIAL COMMENT: If, as has been claimed in some quarters, "Gallant Gentleman" was such a sensational success in its day, it is hard to see why Pentelow or Mr. Samways should need to make excuses for it. And, in my view, the excuse of something being "written to order" is the corniest of the lot. I, personally, find it difficult to believe that the editor would be ordered to remove a character from a series of stories on the grounds of a duplication of names.

The most significant point is usually overlooked. Hamilton had not starred Courtney in a story for many years, so why should any readers be puzzled. The fact that Hamilton introduced a new boy with a name which sounded the same made it clear that he had forgotten the Sixth-Former of early red cover days and had no intention of ever using him again. Hamilton cannot have been bothered over the editor digging up Courtney in order to kill him off. And nor should we be.

LITTLE FOLKS — NOT SO LITTLE!

by W. O. G. Lofts

A curious omission from The Old Boys' Book Catalogue is the paper LITTLE FOLKS. I was certainly aware of its existence, doing some extensive research on it only last year. The copies that I had seen before my research was as the title suggests; a paper for the very young readers, on a par with CHATTERBOX, OUR BUBBLE, and OUR DARLINGS published weekly, then bound into the new collected Annual form.

LITTLE FOLKS started in 1871, and was then published by Cassell, Petter and Galpin. Later this of course became simply 'Cassell.' When the firm of CASSELL decided that they would no longer publish juvenile publications, the Amalgamated Press took them over. The most famous was CHUMS. Whether there was a clause in the contracts that the titles of the paper should not be altered I don't know but LITTLE FOLKS edited then by H. Darkin Williams and priced one shilling monthly drastically changed its contents when its contributors included such famous authors as John Hunter, D. H. Parry, Michael Poole and Percy Westerman. Its last issue Vol. 117, dated February, 1933 (when it was incorporated into the adult magazine QUIVER) had probably the most amazing editorial chat I have

ever read in the closing down of an over 60 years paper:

"For a long time this magazine has been running at a loss. The advertisers have dwindled away to nothing. The Industrial depression has also not helped us at all in this respect. We have a large circulation, but many readers have been passing the magazine around - instead of each reader buying a copy for himself or herself. The smallness of our sales is due to the misfortune of our title LITTLE FOLKS, becoming out of date through the course of time. It has been very difficult to persuade girls of fifteen or sixteen to buy our publication. The last reader who called at the den (editorial office) confessed her age as 27....."

As mentioned before, perhaps there was some clause in the take-over that prevented the A.P. from changing the title to appeal to the older boy and girl - but if this was so, why alter the contents at all? If the title was kept just for tradition, then the paper deserved to die. How on earth could he attract new readers of 16 with such a title? I certainly could not afford to buy the shilling paper in 1933, nor could my parents, and I should think that its sales went to the class of people who bought the B.O.P. and CHUMS. In my opinion as an adult it was very well produced, in style and quality, and it is certainly collected today. Perhaps the gist of it all is that it was a paper the A.P. did not really want, and killed it off in a most extraordinary way.

The Postman Called

(Interesting items from the Editor's letter-bag)

CHARLES DAY (Keighley): I was very interested in the reference to the play "The Silent House," in the June issue of the "C.D." I have in front of me as I write, a copy of, to quote, "The Silent House" by John G. Brandon, author of 'The Big Heart,' 'Young Love.' The book of the famous play by John G. Brandon and George Pickett." The copy I have is one of the "Readers Library" Film Edition, dated 1929. It is illustrated with stills from the film which starred Gibb McLaughlin and Mabel Poulton. This film was an Archibald Nettlefold Production and distributed by Butchers Film Service Ltd. I have always assumed that this author was the John G. Brandon of Sexton Blake and R.S.V.P. fame, but I have no knowledge of the said George Pickett. One thing is certain; the story is a thriller of the first water, very tense, even hair-raising in parts. If ever you have a chance to read it, I should do so.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Many readers have written in with similar information about the Brandon play. Grateful thanks to all who have written.)

* * *

NEWS OF THE CLUBS

NORTHERN

Meeting held Saturday, 13th June, 1970.

A round dozen present on a bright summer evening, reminiscent of those long, balmy summers of the golden age of the Magnet and the Gem, when chairman Geoffrey Wilde opened the meeting by welcoming Tom Porter, who brought with him greetings from the Midland Club. Molly Allison gave the treasurer-librarian's report, which showed a useful working balance in hand. There was news of an article by Alan Gibson in Books and Bookmen.

After some discussion it was agreed that the chairman should write to the Leeds City Librarian presenting a copy of Magnet facsimiles of the second Harry Wharton Rebel series to the city library. It was to be left to the discretion of the librarian whether the volume should be placed in the adult or the juvenile department. It was also reported that the next facsimile, the Flip series, was expected any time, and orders were confirmed.

Owing to other end-of-term commitments, our chairman had been unable to continue the tale of what happened to Hacker, and Ron Hodgson had deputised in fine form at short notice. It was a lively instalment telling how Hacker was pushed into a muddy ditch by Ponsonby, and led, thanks to the finding of Wharton's cap on scene (it had been 'borrowed' by Bunter), to believe that the Remove captain was responsible. Next month, Jack Wood takes on the task of starting the final "run-in" of The Hidden Hand, a title more provocative of the palmy days of the Nelson Lee.

The reading took us up to the usual interval for refreshments and study chat, after which we sat down to a fifteen minutes puzzle from Gerry Allison, who asked us to complete as many nouns as possible in the time limit from the phrase Located at Greyfriars, Kent. Proper names counted three points and other nouns single points. Ron Rhodes was the winner with the astounding total of 100 points. Geoffrey Wilde was second with 67, and Tom Porter third with 63. The meeting ended about 9.20 p.m. Next meeting, Saturday, 11th July, 1970.

JACK WOOD, Hon. Secretary.

MIDLANDMeeting held on 19th May, 1970.

This meeting, which was our A.G.M., was attended by 11 members.

Ian Bennett was elected Chairman for the ensuing year and Ted Davey automatically became Vice-Chairman. Ian's election was very popular and Ted was suitably thanked for his service to the club whilst holding the Chairman's office.

President Jack Corbett, Treasurer Norman and Librarian Tom were all re-elected, but Ted Davey found himself unable to carry on as Secretary and this post was left unfulfilled for the time being. Ted has done a sound job of work during his period as Secretary, as Jack Bellfield and Harry Broster did in former days.

The Treasurer gave his financial statement which showed the club to be in a modestly solvent position, and he, too, was thanked for his service to the club. The library continues to grow steadily, thanks to the solid support of all members.

The anniversary number was Magnet 1057 dated 19/5/1928, thus being exactly 42 years old. The collectors' item was Old Boys' Books - A Complete Catalogue, compiled by Bill Lofts and Derek Adley.

There were several raffle prizes which were drawn for and distributed amid much fun and high good humour. So another satisfying meeting ended, and now we look forward to our next gathering at the Theatre Centre on June 30th.

TOM PORTER

(Correspondent)

* * *

LONDON

Fine weather on the Summer Solstice and what better place to hold a gathering than "Greyfriars," home of the hospitable family of Lawrences. C. H. Chapman, the famous Hamiltonian artist from his nearby home, Roy Parsons from Southampton and Tom Porter from Old Hill, helped to make a very fine attendance. Mr. Chapman brought along some of his sketches and these he distributed to those present.

Bob Blythe read passages from Newsletter number 14, 1953

vintage and followed this by reading a "Trackett Grimm" story entitled "Cunning Carl, the Coiner King." Bob had also brought along for members' perusal two items from the Brooks museum.

Another fine article by Basil Amps culled from "The Reading Post," entitled "Just My View" and featuring Hamiltonia, was read by Eric Lawrence.

Three short quizzes conducted by Ben Whiter, these being "Cliff House and Morcove," "Highcliffe," and "Football," were won by Ray Hopkins, Tom Porter and Ray Hopkins deadheat. Tom Porter conducted his "Located at Greyfriars" competition. This was won by Roy Parsons.

A good spread was available, Betty Lawrence being ably helped by Louise Blythe and Gladys Peters.

All too quickly the time came for "Callover" and "Locking Up." Lifts to the station were available for those who had trains to catch. Five of us, Ray Hopkins, Charlie Wright, Mary Cadogan, Brian Williams and Ben Whiter had a little time to wait for our train, so we continued the meeting in the "Molly Millar" inn outside the station.

And so here's to the next time at Friardale, 2 North Drive, Ruislip, Middlesex, on Sunday, 19th July. Kindly let Bob Acraman know if intending to be present. Phone 713 4151.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

REVIEWS

"BILLY BUNTER IN BRAZIL" (Frank Richards; Armada 3/6) is one of the earliest and one of the best of the post-war Bunter books. A skilful and exciting plot unwinds in a convincing setting, with the old favourite characters well up to standard. "BUNTER THE VENTRILOQUIST" (Frank Richards; Armada 3/6), written about 12 years later, is inconsequential and very light and will delight children, and its wander down old paths should make old readers happy. The two books make a fascinating contrast.

"For Sale and Wanted, old boys/girls comics, magazines, annuals, including many lesser-known publications. Also many types periodicals bought and sold, including aviation, cinema, literary, political, radio, motoring, medical, crime, railway, popular, juvenile, most sports, to mention a few. Also pre-1946 newspapers, particularly at the moment Graphic, Illustrated London News, Sphere, Eve and similar.

E. JONES, 43 DUNDONALD ROAD, COLWYN BAY."