COLLECTORS DIGEST

1976 ANNUAL 1976

Pearl Jubilee Edition

COLLECTORS' DIGEST ANNUAL

Christmas 1976

THIRTIETH YEAR

EDITOR: ERIC FAYNE, Excelsior House, 113 Crookham Road, Crookham, Hampshire, England

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

It seems beyond belief that, with this year's Collectors' Digest Annual, we reach our thirtieth edition. Even more startling to me, personally, is the fact that this is the 18th Annual to carry my name as Editor.

To look back to the beginning of it all is to look back to another world. We knew so little, but we pooled our knowledge, for the love of the thing and the fun of it all. It was a time of delight and innocence.

The aims of the Annual and the Monthly are still the same - to entertain those who remember, and to keep alive the memories of the old papers, the authors, the artists, and the rest, all of which meant so much to us when we were much younger.

Only a handful of the old stalwarts who gave the Annual its enthusiastic send-off are still with us today. Thirty years is a very long time, and, sadly enough, a long time carries off a lot of friends and acquaintances.

Statistics played a huge part in the very early Annuals. Most of the early articles were statistical - numbers and dates, births and deaths, titles and sub-titles, sizes and shapes, real names and pen-names, all figured largely. It was to be some time before the article of appraisal replaced the mainly statistical item.

Without detracting in the slightest from the fine work done by Bill Lofts and others in the research field of later times, one must surely, at this stage, express our admiration of the research work done by the pioneers. Building from almost nothing, gleaning their information from here and there, they built an enormous structure of knowledge which was to inspire later researchers. The work of the pioneers was quite colossal and beyond value.

Herbert Leckenby was the treasured marvel of his day, and with him we link the names of John Medcraft, Roger Jenkins, Jack Murtagh, Bob Blythe, Leonard Packman, John Shaw, Leonard Allen, Frank Wearing, Harry Dowler, Walter Webb, and others. In memory of Tom Hopperton and Gerald Allison we reproduce in this edition a gigantic piece of research work which those two produced together.

Thirty years on, statistics mean nothing like so much as they did in the years 1947 - 1952. Today our contributors evaluate more, and it is to their everlasting credit that so many of them are still able to play a sweet new tune on a very old fiddle.

And we must not forget our gallant band of printers in York - the York Duplicating Services who have done the production work of the Annual for 25 years. Thank you, Y.D.S., for magnificent service down the tumbling years.

And you, dear readers. Thank you for your support and your enthusiasm in often difficult times. Whether you joined us this year or thirty years ago, you are the backbone of the Annual - and the salt of the earth.

A Happy Christmas to you all, and a peaceful and worry-free New Year.

Your sincere friend and editor,

Eric Fayne.

(This Annual is privately circulated. The reproduction of the contents, either wholly or in part, without written permission from the Editor, is strictly forbidden.)

CONTENTS

The Magnet Lives Today

by ROGER M. JENKINS

It is perfectly possible to enjoy the Greyfriars stories without having had any teaching experience, as I did myself before I took up a pedagogic career at the ripe old age of thirty-two, but I think it is also true to say that since that time I have gained considerable additional enjoyment from the classroom scenes in particular and from the portrayal of relationships between masters and boys in general. No matter where Charles Hamilton might have been educated, and no matter how much of a shy recluse he was, his insight into schoolboy psychology never failed him, and as the years have rolled by since I first brushed chalk dust off my academic gown (eighteen, in fact), I have become more and more aware of the affinities between myself and Mr. Quelch (in spirit) and Mr. Prout (in appearance).

I jumped in at the deep end, as an untrained graduate. "So much the better", said Mr. Enright, the headmaster of the mixed grammar school at my interview. "It means you won't have your head full of theoretical nonsense that you will have to forget." My heart warmed to him: I felt sure that none of the Greyfriars staff had obtained diplomas in education - if such things had even existed in those days. We went round the school together and, when he saw two boys jostling one another by glass-panelled swing doors, he cuffed them both, no doubt to show me that his head was not full of theoretical nonsense either. Yet it was a happy school, the happiest at which I have ever taught, and when I left, after ten years, I did so reluctantly.

The first memorable incident in my career there concerned a fourth-form boy named Beavis, who ran away soon after joining the school, and I was summoned to the Head's study to meet the local Inspector of Police who asked me for a detailed description of the boy - height? weight? colour of hair? colour of eyes? physical peculiarities? I am an atrocious observer at the best of times, and after I had stammered out answers at random I left Mr. Enright's study convinced that the police would, as a result of all my mistakes, be looking for a non-existent boy: certainly, I never heard any more about him. I was even more humiliated by the thought that Mr. Quelch would never have been at such a loss to recall minute details. When I began to cast my mind back over the pages of the Magnet I immediately recognised that the ignominious role I had played was in fact the one assigned to Bunter himself in Magnet 1253:-

> "Had you given him more notice, and encouraged him to confide in you, he might very probably have told you things that would be very useful now in the search for him."
>
> "Oh!" said Bunter. "Of - of course, I talked to him sometimes."
>
> "What about?" asked Mr. Brent, with a gleam of hope.
>
> A less obtuse fellow than Bunter would have discerned that the man from Scotland Yard was almost desperately anxious to hear even the slightest detail in connection with 'Jimmy the One'.
>
> "Well, I used to tell him about Bunter Court sometimes," said the fatuous Owl, "and about my splendid holidays, and - "
>
> Mr. Brent gave a snort that made Bunter almost jump from the chair he was sitting on. It was really, as Bunter told the Remove fellows afterwards, like a bull in the room.

"If you talked to the boy, you talked about yourself, apparently!" barked Mr. Brent.
Bunter blinked. What the dickens did the man suppose he would talk about, he wondered.

Bunter was sent back to the form-room with the words "You are a fool!" echoing in his ears, and that about summed up my own thoughts as I returned to Form 4B on that memorable day.

The end of what Mr. Enright liked to call the Christmas Term was noteworthy for the episode of the boy Flixby. He had had a succession of bad reports and the last one had contained an ultimatum: do better or else - . I pointed out to the Head that Flixby now had a report that was worse than ever, and Mr. Enright turned away from me in peevish annoyance. "Tell him he's expelled," he remarked over his shoulder as he entered his study, and shut the door sharply, leaving me gaping. Expulsions at Greyfriars had always been conducted with a certain amount of dignity and ceremony, as in Magnet 1656:-

"You are expelled from this school, Coker! You will not go into Form tomorrow morning - you will pack your box, and be ready to leave the school to take your train. Now leave my study!"
"I tell you I never - "
Dr. Locke rose to his feet. His eyes glinted.
"Leave my study this instant!" he thundered.

It was all a far cry from what happened in Flixby's case, which was more like what Skinner used to call a hole and corner affair in the form-room. After receiving my Christmas present from the form (two bottles of wine - surely Quelch never imbibed?) I took Flixby on one side and told him he would have to leave. His face lit up with delight, and I realised that he was the boy who wanted to be sacked - another Gilbert Tracy in fact. The last I heard of him was six months later when he obtained a temporary job as strawberry picker for the season, a job that was even more temporary than he had intended, since he consumed more strawberries than he placed in the punnets, fell ill, and was in bed with colic for some time. The Flixby affair certainly enhanced my standing in the school, and I had only to appear for a respectful silence to fall.

In the Greyfriars stories it was the French master whose discipline was so weak. In the three grammar schools at which I have taught it was always the Latin teachers who were notoriously bad disciplinarians. I have often wondered why this should be, and feel that it has some subtle connection with the subject itself. Miss Probus was a good example: scholarly, stooping, myopic, she probably envisaged herself teaching studious pupils as keen on Latin and Greek as she herself was. In actual fact, her lessons were a daily disaster, but she maintained an elaborate pretence that nothing untoward ever happened. Passing her classroom one day, I saw a group of pupils dancing a conga up one aisle amid a flight of paper darts all over the classroom. Miss Probus just went on with the lesson as usual, asking questions like "What is the third person singular, pluperfect subjunctive of Finio?" to which came the customary insolence, "Your guess is as good as mine, miss." (This, of course, took place in the days before Nuffield Latin was invented, which now takes all the drudgery - and meaning - out of Latin.)

When grammar school pupils get out of hand, they are far worse than any others, because they possess the intelligence to render their harassment more vindictive and wounding. On one occasion they smeared Miss Probus's desk with clear gum, to which all her precious Latin text books adhered strongly, and while she was sitting down a group of pupils crowded round her, ostensibly to ask her questions, but in reality to shield others who were busy tacking her gown to the floor. The result surpassed their expectations, and one would even have suspected that they had read Magnet 1565:-

> Naturally, he had not noticed that those papers were sticky. He had not expected them to be sticky. He did not discover that they were sticky till his fingers touched them. Then he discovered it.
>
> The amiable expression faded from Quelch's countenance as if wiped off by a duster.
>
> He stared at sticky fingers. Then he stared at sticky papers. Then he rose to his feet and fixed his eyes on that pile of Latin papers, with an expression that the fabled basilisk might have envied.

Mr. Enright was what is called in the teaching trade a snooper. He used to emerge from his study at the end of break or lunch-time and prowl along the corridors. If you were punctual, you earned a frosty smile; if you were late, you were told, "I have been into your classroom, Mr. Smith, and settled them down for you." Having had experience since then of heads who have been too busy to leave their offices, including one comprehensive headmaster who locked himself away from staff and pupils alike, I can now see with the benefit of hindsight that Mr. Enright's interest in the classroom situation was highly commendable, but at that time there is no doubt that the staff were inclined to resent it. They were therefore all the more inclined to chortle over the incident I witnessed in the classroom opposite mine. I had arrived promptly after break but I had left the classroom door open because of the heat, and when Mr. Enright looked in I took the war into the enemy's camp and complained about the poor ventilation. Somewhat taken aback, he could only agree and retire baffled. He then made for Miss Probus's room in the moral certainty that she had not yet arrived. He was quite correct. The door of her classroom was half-open, and when he went in a waste-paper basket full of nasty things fell on his head and lodged on his shoulders. He stood there gobbling with rage like a turkey-cock. Booby-traps claiming the wrong victims were not infrequently to be found in the pages of the Magnet, and I rather like the one in No. 1642:-

> He pushed the door open without a suspicion or misgiving. Then it happened!
>
> It was an inkstand that crashed on his mortar-board! It was an inkpot of black ink that lodged in his neck! It was an inkpot of red ink that caught him in the ear!
>
> He bounded! The inkstand crashed at his feet. The red inkpot slipped off his ear, shedding its contents as it slipped, and clattered down beside the inkstand. The black inkpot remained lodged in his neck, caught there, and black ink ran down Quelch's majestic back!

It was definitely a point in Mr. Enright's favour that he did not share the modern belief that corporal punishment is degrading and barbaric, and if the culprits had hitherto been unaware of that fact it was certainly brought home to them in no uncertain fashion before the morning was over.

It was because Mr. Enright's school was so well run that these incidents stand out so prominently among my decade of memories there. No doubt in some large schools where discipline has gone to pieces, life must be a daily nightmare for

sensitive teachers, but if there is a good framework of order and learning the occasional misdemeanour is both more noteworthy and less intolerable.

My present school is a boys' grammar school over two hundred and fifty years old which is gradually changing into a sixth-form college. The sheer artfulness of some boys coupled with a strong sense of fun renders it the nearest to Greyfriars that I have experienced. One of the real characters on the staff is Mr. Gennett, who has a strong aversion to smoking, and he has often asked me to join him in a pincer movement to trap miscreants between us. He has another method of attack, which is to go up to some notorious fourth-former and say, "Hand them over, Hughes," and before Hughes has had time to think he has passed over twenty Silk Cut cigarettes. Hughes, however, is a boy of no mean intelligence, and the second time Mr. Gennett asked him to hand them over the cigarette box was found to be empty, apart from a note inscribed 'Better luck next time'. Fortunately, Mr. Gennett has a sense of humour, and was not so put out as Mr. Quelch in Magnet 1007 when he sent Vernon-Smith to Dr. Locke for possessing a box of playing cards which turned out in fact to contain Latin notes:-

> Vernon-Smith calmly opened the box. Mr. Quelch's face, as he looked at Smithy's precious Latin notes, was a study in scarlet. His expression was, as Walker of the Sixth told Loder afterwards, worth a guinea a box. The Remove master could scarcely believe his eyes. He fumbled at the cards, looking at them, blinking at them. But any amount of looking, and fumbling, and blinking, could not turn them into playing-cards. They were a set of Latin notes written out on pieces of cardboard; merely that and nothing more.
>
> The Bounder stood with an expressionless face. But Mr. Quelch's face was very expressive.
>
> "You will see, Mr. Quelch, that there is no harm in this boy carrying notes on Latin conjugations and declensions in his pocket," said the Head. "Had you looked into the box before sending him to me - "
>
> Mr. Quelch gasped.
>
> "The box, however, had better be destroyed at once," said Dr. Locke. "Throw it into the waste-paper basket, Vernon-Smith. You may, of course, keep the notes."
>
> "Very well, sir."
>
> "If there is anything more, Mr. Quelch - " said the Head, in a tone of somewhat frigid politeness.
>
> There was nothing more! Mr. Quelch, with a crimson face, tottered from the Sixth Form-room.

Mr. Gennett kept his confiscated cigarettes in his pigeon-hole in the staff room. "I don't quite know what to do with them," he confessed to me one day, but he needn't have bothered, for every box turned out to be quite empty. Mr. Quinton had been helping himself to them for months. Now he is retired, I suppose he will have to buy his own.

In my teaching career I have come across several Billy Bunters. At Mr. Enright's school, I remember one fat boy whose desk lid was up rather a long time, and when I went to investigate I found him scoffing jam tarts out of a paper bag. One of the most artful fat boys in my present school was Carter. He and two others were away on the same day, but all three brought absence notes which I carefully scrutinised and compared with the handwriting in their English exercise books. I decided to interrogate them singly, and I started on Bradby, a fair-haired giant of a boy. He seemed quite unmoved by the similarities in handwriting until I suggested

that if the matter passed out of my hands there was no knowing how it might end, whereupon he eyed me thoughtfully, weighed up the situation, and said, "Yes, sir, all right, I did write it." Drew thought it beneath his dignity to tell lies (even though he might write them) and admitted it at once with a lofty unconcern. I managed to intercept Carter before he entered the form-room, and he explained that his mother had taught him to write, which accounted for the similarities. His note was the most cunning of all in that it possessed a postscript asking permission for him to leave school at any time his troublesome cough should recur (he gave a convincing bark as we read the letter over together). I told him that Bradby and Drew had confessed, and his jaw dropped. Blinking at me through his big round spectacles he said, "What'll happen to me if I say 'yes' as well?" I knew then that the last wicket had fallen.

I think it must have been Cogsby who came nearest to reproducing a Magnet situation. He devoted all his intelligence to working out schemes to miss lessons and homework, and used to come to me regularly with far-fetched excuses that I just as regularly demolished. He must have thought he was on to a winner on Speech Day when he expressed his regrets at being unable to attend that edifying function because he had a dental appointment that afternoon. He handed over an appointment card which I looked at with a jaundiced eye, knowing full well that these were abstracted from the dentists' counters and filled up by the boys themselves when they fancied a half-holiday. "All right, Cogsby," I said. "You go to the dentist this afternoon and bring a note from your father tomorrow, confirming that you have been there." His look of dismay and the dancing eyes of some other boys told me all I needed to know. The following day Cogsby was absent, but he rang up the school pretending to be his father and said that his son was too ill to attend school because he was suffering from the after-effects of dental treatment. "You naughty boy, Cogsby," said the school secretary with asperity. "You come to school this instant and see Mr. Jenkins on your return." I never found out whether the muttered exclamation over the wire was "Oh lor' ", but it was a classic Magnet situation, and from all the stories dealing with tricks over the telephone I have selected an episode from No. 1484 where Bunter fools Mr. Quelch and then succeeds with Dr. Locke as well:-

"Mr. Quelch - " said the Head quite sharply.

"Oh, yes! I regret interrupting you, sir!" The voice came through at last; the clear, keen, rather acid tones that must have been uttered by Mr. Quelch, or by someone with a remarkable gift for the imitation of voices. "But I thought you would be glad to know that Bunter is found, sir."

"Oh! Quite so!" said the Head. That was what he had expected to hear. "Pray take care that that troublesome boy does not elude you again, before I return to the House, Mr. Quelch."

"The fact is, sir - "

"Well?"

"Bunter has - hem - explained himself to me - and - and expressed sincere regret for his - his rather unusual proceedings, and - and I should be very glad, sir, if you were disposed to take a lenient view - "

"What!" The Head almost barked out that word! He was absolutely astonished by such a request from Mr. Quelch!

True, a fellow's form-master might naturally be disposed to put in a word for him. But Mr. Quelch had been so intensely exasperated by Bunter's antics that the very last request that Dr. Locke would have expected him to make was a request for leniency to Bunter! Quelch, indeed, had been much more incensed than the Head!

There is an old saying to the effect that truth is stranger than fiction. I should like to conclude by suggesting that Charles Hamilton's portrayal of school life was not so far-fetched as it is sometimes suggested. I certainly live in hopes that the years to come will provide me with further proof no less entertaining than the experiences of the past. Times change, customs change, and manners change; but human nature remains constant, and in that must lie his greatest claim to fame.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: B. F. L's, first series, numbers 231/233. Also Halfpenny Marvels, 387/389. Greetings from Cambridge Club to Eric and other Clubs.

THURBON, 5 ALL SAINTS PASSAGE, CAMBRIDGE

= =

WANTED: Buy Joker of Greyfriars. Contact:

J. BARTHOLOMEW, 77 EDINGTON STREET

NORTH ROCKHAMPTON, QUEENSLAND 4701, AUSTRALIA

= =

WANTED: No. 29 Story Paper Collector to complete set. Anyone oblige. Your price.

JACK OVERHILL, 99 SHELFORD ROAD, TRUMPINGTON, CAMBRIDGE.

= =

All the latest Science Fiction, Fantasy and Comic Books from America.

ELLIOTT

01-472-6310 or 01-472-0918

= =

JACK HUGHES, 160 Charters Towers Rd., Townsville 4812, Australia, sends Greetings all Hobby Friends. WANTS: Annuals - Playbox 1909, 1927, 1934, 1936; Rainbow 1925, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1930, 1937, 1938; Puck 1922, 1938; Bubbles 1924, 1925, 1929; Crackers 1936, 1941.

= =

WANTED: School Friend 1-37, 174, 196, 203, 259-268. New Series 185-229.

LACK, 4 RUSHMERE ROAD, NORTHAMPTON

= =

SPECIAL JUBILEE CHRISTMAS GREETINGS to Josie Packman, Norman Shaw and Bert Vernon, and a very special Thank You to Skipper Eric, whose efforts made this Jubilee possible. From:-

JOHN BRIDGWATER, 20 BAY CRESCENT, SWANAGE.

June 25th, 1876 –

THE LEGEND AND THE FACT

by H. TRUSCOTT

Probably no area in the world has ever bred so many legends so quickly as what has long been termed the American West. Fiction that is pure invention, fiction that is distorted truth, heroes that were not heroic, ordinary people that were heroic when forced to it; it has had them all. And in many of these tales the Indian was the absolute villain of the piece. Numberless stories show him in this light, stories for adults who were never within a hundred miles of an Indian, stories for boys (and girls), designed to chill the blood at the very thought of an Indian. We have, most of us, at some time or other, played "Cowboys and Indians" - the heroic Cowboy and the devilish Indian. (Did any of us, at the time, I wonder, know what a cowboy was, other than a man in picturesque clothing, which had no connection with any reality we knew, who carried six-shooters, rode a horse and eternally fought Indians, the latter always beaten?) I have stories written at the turn of the century, published in New York, in which the Indians are described throughout in a ringing of the changes on four descriptions: red devils, red demons, red savages and red fiends. Never anything else, and never any suggestion that these red devils ever did anything but devilishly fight heroic white people, or attempt to murder them. I say attempt, for the Indians' successes always took place 'off' - the encounters actually described in the story always had the whites miraculously escaping with no more than a scratch at most, while the Indians were picked off like flies and usually just turned tail and fled. There were always, too, at least fifty Indians to about eight or nine whites.

The film also helped to spread this popular folk-lore. Some film-makers, like William S. Hart, tried early to show some of the truth, but those films of his that did this were not his most popular. Later, another director, John Ford, who had in his early years produced a lot of the traditional white hero-Indian savage films, tried also to tell the truth, with more success. Speaking of his magnificent film "Cheyenne Autumn", he said: "I'd killed more Indians than Custer, Wyatt Earp, Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill Hickok put together. I wanted to show the Indians' point of view for a change. Let's face it, we've treated them very badly - it's a blot on our shield; we've cheated and robbed them, raped, killed, murdered and massacred them, and everything else, but they kill one white man, and out come the troops."

What is perhaps as remarkable as anything is that there really was no need at any time to invent stories (except to distort the truth about Indians) for the real happenings in the Wild West in the later nineteenth century teem with incidents that, told in as restrained and matter-of-fact a manner as possible, still read like far-fetched fiction. The event I want to discuss has its fill of these.

Sunday, 25th June, 1876, saw the annihilation of General George Armstrong Custer and his men by a massive force of Indians at the confluence of the Rosebud and Little Big Horn Rivers. Within a short time this hit the newspapers of the East as a

massacre, and around this central misconception there quickly grew up a mass of detail, some of it twisted fact, some of it as imaginary as the central idea of the massacre. Let us dispose of this first. A massacre is the slaughter of unarmed non-combatants. Custer's men were not non-combatants (they were the aggressors, and had gone out looking for this fight) and they were certainly armed, but - they were hopelessly outnumbered, a circumstance not foreseen by anyone connected with this campaign; not Generals Terry, Gibbon, Custer, nor any of their officers or men. Only one or two of Custer's scouts, Mitch Bouyer and George Herendeen, for instance, had doubts, grave doubts, but Custer had dismissed these and called them old women.

The cause of this disaster is simple enough: Custer disobeyed orders. Leaving aside the fact that the great and glorious mission of the Seventh Cavalry was simply to slaughter Indians, for having committed the unforgiveable offence of being there, in the way of white Americans' ('Mericats', as the Utes called them) greed, the immediate cause was a fundamental weakness in Custer himself. To millions of people who had no more contact with him than the majority of film fans have with their particular film idols, Custer was a hero; sufficient that he was an expert and dedicated Indian-killer, and that he had, while on a mission surveying natural resources, quite by accident discovered gold in the Dakota Black Hills. Those who had to work with him often saw him differently. He was promoted rapidly, and quickly became a General (often called, ironically the "Boy" General); he thus shot over the heads of many, like Major Reno, who were more experienced but much more sober in their approach to the business of leading men into war. His physical bravery was unquestioned, but submission to others' authority and greater knowledge infuriated him. But a leader, demanding obedience and discipline from those he leads, must first be able to discipline himself, and this Custer found difficult, practically to the point of impossibility.

Two officers who had a great deal to do with Custer were Major Marcus A. Reno, who suffered greatly later as a result of Custer's disobedience at the Little Big Horn, and Frederick William Benteen, senior captain of the Seventh Cavalry. Obviously, one must except the Custers here, but otherwise the general opinion, official and unofficial, with which Reno was in full agreement, was that Benteen was the ablest officer in the entire Seventh Cavalry. He was a tough-minded individual, rarely satisfied with anything - he was severely self-critical, in other words, but of himself as much as of others. Benteen was the son of a wealthy plantation owner, but did not share the Southerners' belief in the inevitable rightness of slavery. And here we begin to encounter the real-life fiction. He accepted a commission as a first lieutenant of Volunteers in the Union Army at the outbreak of the Civil War, and thereby brought upon himself his father's curse. The old man pledged himself to pray each day that his son would meet death from an avenging bullet fired by one of his own kin. Fortunately, these prayers were not answered. It later fell to Benteen, as another fictional stroke, to have to capture his father, who had become a blockade runner on inland rivers. Would this not have delighted Frank Richards? Even he could not have improved upon this coincidence. On being discharged Benteen applied for a commission in the regular army, and was appointed a captain, assigned to the newly-formed Seventh Cavalry.

From their first meeting Benteen strongly disliked Custer, who tried to impress the Captain, and was annoyed when he obviously failed. Benteen had an unerring eye for the real and the false. He did not allow this to interfere with the performance of his duties, but he and Custer never got on. Benteen's dislike was hardened by the affair of the Washita in the winter of 1868. The Indians, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Kiowa, goaded by persistent breaking of white men's promises and treaties, had broken out in the summer of 1868, and killed - they had done what they ought not to have done. And they knew it. Some made the quite genuine excuse that the white man had driven them to it, but others shook their heads sadly and said that evil should not be returned for evil. Custer was now on a punitive mission. His orders, when he found the Indians, were to destroy them, scatter them, to drive them back to the reservations - but on no account to allow any of them to escape, or go free. These were orders he was delighted to carry out. As he was preparing for this expedition Red Cloud, Sioux Chief, had signed yet another agreement with the Great Father in Washington. News of this had reached Custer before he set out, but it made no difference; he had had no countermanding orders, although by military law knowledge of the treaty should have been sufficient. And yet here are Custer's own words, uttered only a matter of weeks before he began this mission: "For my part, I am no Indian hater. I admire the red man. I have said before, and I say again, that the Indian is a brave and noble foe, and driven to many of his crimes by the misdoings of the white men in his lands. But I am first of all a soldier, and a soldier obeys orders." In the light of later events, the final sentence is a masterpiece of irony. Custer chose to ignore his knowledge of the new treaty, ignoring also his knowledge of military law. New orders did, in fact, arrive not long after he had set out. As it was, he continued with the expedition, thus breaking the new treaty almost as soon as it had been signed. Small wonder that the Indians sometimes lost patience.

During the night preceding the Washita, there were one or two interesting remarks by some of Custer's officers. One, Charles DeRudio, said that he hoped Custer for a change knew what he was doing. Another, James Calhoun, said he had heard that there were an estimated thousand Indian warriors out near the river. DeRudio said that Custer would charge them if there were ten thousand, and Benteen then made this remark, very prophetically: "Some day he's going to find his ten thousand Indians. Then we'll all wish we had decided to be something else besides officers and gentlemen in the Seventh Cavalry."

Custer did find his ten thousand Indians - on 25th June, 1876. Back at the Washita, Custer divided his men into four attacking columns and deployed them to come from different directions, to cut off every possible avenue of escape from the village. One column, under Major Elliott, had actually crossed the Washita to cut off any retreat that way. They swept through the village shortly before dawn, bravely killing unarmed women and old men, and some children. The dead included the old Cheyenne Chief, Black Kettle, and his wife, who was shot in the back as she tried to reach her husband. It was Major Chivington's Sand Creek massacre over again, save that this time the Chenne Chief did not get away.

Custer felt that his job was done, then realised that Major Elliott was not

with them. And again we have real life fiction. Custer was quite prepared to charge to Elliott's rescue, but his scouts said that the firing that could be heard from across the river was not from Army carbines but from Indians' Winchesters. Just then the sun came up, and over two thousand Indians were seen drawn up on the further side of the river, some way from the bank. Custer wanted still more to dash to Elliott's rescue, but he was forcibly restrained, and it was pointed out to him, by a captured Indian woman, that the major was already dead, and so would he be if he did not get out. He was later charged with abandoning nineteen of his men, but it is only fair to say that the charge was ridiculous; it was not a willing abandonment, and he could have done nothing except get himself and whoever went with him killed also. But again we have a fictional situation that would have delighted Frank Richards' heart. It was Benteen, who disliked Custer, who was instrumental in getting the General cleared of this charge.

Even Custer could see that he had best get out. But his fury was alarming, and it prompted a savage revenge. He ordered his officers to get the larger number of the men firing, to keep the Indians occupied, while he had piled up the Indian dead, 103 men, 16 women and 11 small children, plus 241 saddles, 1123 tanned buffalo hides, 82 rifles and revolvers, 425 axes and lances, 4035 arrows and warbows, 2185 blankets, 535 pounds of gunpowder, 1375 pounds of lead and bullets, 750 pounds of tobacco, and untold thousands of pounds of buffalo meat cured for the winter, all in one great mound. To this was added all the tipis. Then the mound was fired.

There is an old Cheyenne proverb which runs "Kill an Indian of the plains and two more spring up in his place. But destroy that Indian's pony and his heart for war drops dead within him." No doubt with this mind, Custer killed all the captured ponies before the eyes of their owners. The Indians watched in absolute silence, not even returning the soldiers' fire. The Cheyenne never forgot this, nor did they ever forgive Custer.

As a result of Washita, Benteen, whose opinion of Custer was already that he was "incompetent, lacking in any sense of responsibility, and an insufferable egoist", allowed his dislike to flare into open hatred. He obeyed orders, but that was as far as he would go. No matter how Custer tried to make Benteen utter some comment on which he could indict the captain, Benteen maintained a stony silence. He spilled words as though they were drops of water in the desert even on normal affairs, and he had no use for words of any kind on the subject of Custer and Washita. But morose and taciturn as Benteen might be, he had a sense of judgment in men that was unsurpassed, and many testified to this. Lieutenant Frank Gibson wrote to his wife that Benteen was "one of the coolest and bravest men I have ever known", and only summed up the opinion of many of the junior officers in doing so. A sergeant, Charles Windolph, who had served twelve years with Captain Benteen, said of him: "He was just about the finest soldier and the greatest gentleman I ever knew", and Major-General Hugh L. Scott, later concerned in the last of the Indian wars in 1915, gave him even higher praise, called him "my Model, and the idol of the Seventh Cavalry", and wrote of Benteen: "He governed mainly by suggestion. I never once heard him raise his voice to enforce his purpose. He would sit by the

open fire at night, and often I watched to find out the secret of his quiet, steady government, that I might go and govern likewise."

I have dwelt on this summary of Benteen's character because he was one of the three principals involved on 25th June, 1876. Benteen did not like Custer because of what he saw as the General's brashness, incompetence and cruelty, and Custer did not like Benteen because he felt uncomfortably (and accurately) that Benteen saw through him.

The third in this trio of principals, Major Marcus A. Reno, was quiet but not taciturn. He changed after 1876, when tongues, egged on by Libby Custer, began to whisper, then to state and finally to shout that he was responsible for Custer's death, by not having supported him, and insinuations of desertion in the face of the enemy were thrown at him until he asked for an investigation, which cleared him; but he became a rather heavy drinker, with a different sort of moroseness from Benteen's. But until that fateful battle he was friendly, an effective, even a brilliant officer, and was highly respected by all except Libby Custer. That he had Benteen's respect is an important fact, for this was not easy to earn. What is more, he retained this throughout the various attempts to besmirch him which was made during the years that followed 1876, including the final successful one. At no time die Benteen treat Reno with anything but the warm friendship he had always accorded him, and at the end of Reno's army career Benteen was the only one who did not change.

Reno early made an enemy of Libby Custer. She adored her husband, which was right and proper, but anything he wanted to do was right, and anyone who opposed him in any way, or thought differently from the General was her husband's enemy, and therefore her enemy, also. Fine woman as she undoubtedly was in many ways, this attitude made her also a very dangerous one. Her devotion to Custer was probably a good deal fed by the fact that they could have no children, so Autie, as she called him, became child to her as well as husband; and all the evidence shows that a tigress in defence of her young would have nothing on Libby Custer in defence of her husband. The Renos (Mrs. Reno died only shortly after Reno was posted to the Seventh Cavalry in 1869) innocently antagonised Libby by inviting the Custers to their home and thus inadvertently showing Libby that what they had was rather better than what she had. This was aggravated by the fact that Reno, whom Libby saw as stolid and dull, was polite to her, well-mannered, but always reserved; she did not see these as admirable qualities but as an indication that he did not care whether or not he received attention from her, or favours from the General. Custer knew that Reno was an officer he could thoroughly rely on, therefore he gave no outward support to his wife's dislike. But that dislike was to flower into evil later on.

Custer almost survived the battle of the Little Big Horn - by not being present. It was a political matter. The Democrats were already strongly criticising President Grant's administration, partly with a charge of malfeasance in office against the Secretary of War, William W. Belknap, which, whether true or not, had enough steam to cause an unpleasant sensation; Grant dropped Belknap like a hot potato. Because of a fancied, or even a real, slight, years before when Custer's

horse bolted past the saluting base, Grant did not like Custer. The latter intended to run for President, and he had on his side the power of the Press in the person of the owner and publisher of the New York Herald, James Gordon Bennett. To the charge against Belknap Custer, with Bennett, added one of complicity against the President's brother, Orville Grant. But the main reason, behind all the overt ones, for the widespread antagonism to Grant's administration was the President's favouring of and strong advocacy for a humane policy towards the Indians - and of this Custer, with Bennett's guiding hand, took full advantage.

As a result of these machinations, Custer came close to losing his commission. Realising that he was on thin ice, he tried to get an interview with Grant, who flatly refused to see him; so Custer decided to leave Washington. He was arrested, on Grant's orders, in Chicago, for having failed to obtain proper leave from the War Department. It was General Phil Sheridan who got him out of that one. Sheridan is often credited with the brilliant line "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." What Sheridan actually said was "The only good Indian I ever saw was dead".

Custer found that General Terry was in charge of the coming campaign against the Sioux, which had been mapped out by General Sherman. Custer also found that he was expressly forbidden to accompany the expedition. Terry, however, realised that he had not enough experience of Indian warfare, and he believed that Custer knew far more about it and would be invaluable. So, as a result of Terry's requests and some humble-pie letters from Custer, the writing of which must have been extremely galling for him, and still more so for Libby, Custer was at length permitted to accompany the expedition, but only as acting commander of his old regiment, the Seventh Cavalry, whose actual commander, Colonel Sturgis, was conveniently placed on detached service. Custer was also very much under the orders of General Terry, and was instructed to do precisely as he was told - no more and no less.

Sherman's strategy for the campaign was a three-pronged attack to converge on the Indians where they were believed to be massed at a distance from the mouth of the Little Big Horn River. Terry was to move west from Fort Abraham Lincoln, General Crook to march north from Fort Fetterman, Wyoming, and General Gibbon to come south-east from Fort Ellis in Montana. All Indian resitance was to be crushed, the survivors escorted back to re-defined reservations. The plan looked as if it could not fail. By the middle of June, Terry and Gibbon had marched across the plains to meet at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Rosebud Rivers. Neither knew at that time that General Crook and his men had been chased back into Wyoming after a battle with a large force of Indians under Crazy Horse, and that Crook would not be joining them. Nonetheless, time was of the essence if the plan was to succeed, so Terry and Gibbon went ahead. They were agreed that between them they had sufficent forces to overwhelm what Indians they might meet; neither put the hostiles at more than 1,500, and their working estimate was nearer 1,000.

Terry gave Custer written orders directing the Seventh Cavalry to follow up the Rosebud until the Indian trail was struck, then to follow it to the Little Big Horn. Gibbon's troops, mostly infantry, would simultaneously march upstream from the

mouth of the Little Big Horn, so that with Custer's regiment coming downstream, the Indians would be caught and crushed between the two. Custer was expected to co-operate to the full with Gibbon's column, and if Custer arrived at the Indian trail first he was to wait for Gibbon; if Gibbon arrived first, he would wait for Custer, so that the two arms of the attack should lead out in their different directions simultaneously. On the afternoon of 22nd June, as they set off, Gibbon called to Custer "Don't forget, General, to wait for us". "Don't worry, General, I shall wait!" Custer shouted back. They were his last words to Gibbon. Note, too, that the date set for the attack was Monday, 26th June. The date of the actual battle was Sunday, 25th June.

The Indian tribes gathered at the Little Big Horn were not there for any warlike purpose. They were carrying out an age-old custom of following the buffalo herds' annual migration north-west. This had become more necessary than ever through the scarcity of game caused by the white man's ruthless killing of buffalo, and gradual depletion of the herds, which had been brought near to extinction level. And gathered together over a fairly wide area were nearly 1,800 Cheyenne, many Ogalala Sioux, Arapaho, Brulé Sioux, Sansarc and Two Kettle Sioux (two of the seven Teton tribes); also Minneconjou Sioux. The largest single camp was one of 3,000 Hunkpapa Sioux. Custer had indeed found his ten thousand Indians. Although they were gathered to try to solve a food problem brought on by the actions of white men, they were not there with thoughts of war in their minds. But Indians rarely went unprepared for eventualities. It is clear that Custer had some hope of taking the hostiles by surprise, although even he must have realised that it was as good as impossible for white soldiers to be within twenty or thirty miles of Indians who were not asleep and the latter not know it.

In spite of his last words to General Gibbon Custer had no intention of waiting at the Indian trail. This was a chance of adding to his personal glory that was not to be missed. Many of his men wondered why he was pushing on so fast, camping late and breaking camp early, with the minimum of break during the day, which he bore with great impatience. Even Reno, with his experience of the General, wondered. Benteen had no illusions. On the night of 24th June they were camped at the arranged point. Reno made a remark about their at least having time to get their breath before the morning of Monday, 26th June. "Don't you believe it", said Benteen. "He'll have us out of here at first light." Reno could not believe it, and felt sure that this time Benteen was allowing his dislike of Custer to cloud his judgment of the man. But it was Benteen who was right. If not quite at first light, by 9 a.m. Custer had sent three companies with Captain Benteen, working round north of the river. Benteen's orders were to "pitch into any Indians he might find." Custer and Reno continued for some time together, until they were a few miles from the first Indian village. Then Custer sent Reno on ahead, also with three companies, and himself followed with the rest, the bulk, at a more leisurely pace.

It has often been said that there were no white survivors of the battle of the Little Big Horn. This was not quite accurate - if you do not limit that battle to the action that wiped out Custer and the men with him, the bulk of the regiment. For a

long time this was the attitude adopted: the battle was Custer; presumably Reno and the others were mere ringside spectators. In fact, Reno arrived first, to find his scanty army of 112 men outnumbered by at least five to one. It is a longstanding mystery what Custer's purpose was in sending Reno on ahead at all; there was a little more point to Benteen's detour, though it is unlikely that he would have been able to do much had he encountered any Indians. True, at this time Custer still thought the number of Indians present far smaller than it actually was, and that any individual bands would number only a comparative handful of Indians. But what Reno was supposed to do with his pitifully small number of men against even 1,000 or so hostiles defies the imagination. Custer presumably intended to arrive to throw in the weight of his men. But, as we shall see later, from Reno's account, Custer had given no plan of attack. In the meantime, Benteen had received a message signed "W. W. Cooke", but sent on Custer's orders, which read: "Benteen. Come on. Big village. Be quick. Bring packs. W. W. Cooke. P.S. Bring packs." Benteen, unaware that Custer and Reno had separated, made all haste, but as he began to cross the river he caught sight of troopers ahead of him and raced to come up with them. Reno called out "For God's sake, Benteen, halt and help me. I've lost half of my men." Reno at last decided to save the remnant of his and Benteen's men, who could do nothing against the Indians and stood a fair chance of following their dead fellows; Benteen was in complete agreement, and so they withdrew to a bluff at some distance, which did afford some cover. In spite of their listening intently they could hear no sound of firing from the direction from which Custer must come, if he came at all. As we know, he did not come.

So there were white survivors of the Little Big Horn: Reno, Benteen and what remained of their men. But of the main Custer army there was not a solitary survivor; not a single white man to testify to what happened to that force after Custer separated from Reno. There are only Indian accounts, and it was long enough before any white American historian thought of tapping this source. I have read upwards of forty books on the subject of the Little Big Horn, to say nothing of innumerable articles, and almost all are vitiated as records of historical fact either by an already assumed hero-worship of Custer or imagined accounts from a white man's point of view, or both together, and a complete lack of documentation. Some openly admit that they have fictionalised certain parts of the story to suggest the main sense. I have based this account on the only two books I have so far encountered that do not do any of these things, and which are fully documented. One is the only genuine attempt I know to gather the Indian survivors' impressions and memories of that battle. This is CUSTER'S FALL, by David Humphreys Miller, published in 1957, in America, and in Corgi paperback in 1965; this includes, among other things, a very full list of sources. There is, indeed, another book which purports to tell the Indians' account of the Little Big Horn. This is CUSTER'S LAST STAND, by Will Henry, a more recent book. But although Henry makes this claim, he names no Indian with whom he has talked, and, indeed, gives no documentation whatever. He writes his book as a fictional story, and in a brief prefatory note even admits that at times, where there is no record of a particular conversation, he has invented one for the purpose. Such works of "history" I can do without, especially since his account differs materially from Miller's documented one.

Miller spent many years, from about 1935 up to the early fifties, talking to Indian survivors of the battle, whose memories were clear, although some were in their nineties and one was over one hundred. The last Indian survivor of the battle, who actually fought on that day, was Iron Hail, who died in 1955. The last white survivor, who rode with Reno on that fateful day, was Sergeant Charles Windolph, from whom I quoted on Benteen's character. He died in 1950, at Lead, South Dakota, aged 98, and, at Miller's invitation, took part in several unofficial reunions with Indian survivors of the Little Big Horn.

There were a number of Indians who claimed to have killed Custer. One, White Bull, hereditary chief of the Minneconjou Sioux, only developed this idea in later life, so maybe it was wishful thinking. Brave Bear, Cheyenne chief, is usually credited with this distinction, although he himself never liked to talk about it. His almost invariable remarks on the Custer fight were: "I was in the Battle of the Little Big Horn. The Indians called the General 'Long Hair'. It is a fight I do not like to talk about." He died in 1932, aged 87.

Reno and Benteen both were attacked in newspaper articles, and by these armchair critics, most of whom had never been within one hundred miles of an Indian, they were made responsible for Custer's death by their not giving him the support he should have had. The idea of his having disobeyed orders was angrily pooh-poohed, in spite of the written orders General Terry knew he had given to Custer, and which he knew Custer had not obeyed. Nonetheless, he was not quick to speak out, which is strange, since he was Libby Custer's first choice for responsibility for her husband's death. She knew someone had blundered, and she would never credit the possibility that that someone might be her Autie. Having discarded Terry as a scapegoat, she turned her guns on Reno and Benteen, with the assistance of Frederick Whittaker, who had already been writing highly fictionalised accounts of the battle which glorified Custer, and deplored that so brilliant a genius should have had to depend on such broken reeds as Major Reno and Captain Benteen. Reno, Libby claimed, was a poor thing. No doubt he did his best, but his lack (!) of experience of Indian warfare let him down, and caused him to fail to support her husband when he needed it most. But Benteen! Benteen had a lot of experience, he was an old Indian fighter, a man of remarkable personal courage, as he had proved on many occasions, who had often fought under Custer and knew his business perfectly. That he should have, on his own showing, deliberately disobeyed the peremptory orders of Custer to "come on", argued either a desire to sacrifice Custer, or an ignorance of which his past career rendered him incapable.

When news of this attack filtered through to Reno and Benteen, they were so angry and perturbed that they wrote their reply jointly, making it a detailed account of the action on the Little Big Horn. Not only had Custer not named a point of junction, but he had not proposed a plan of attack. Reno recited the orders Custer had given him which, boiled down, were simply to attack the village, and this he had carried out, so far as he could. He sent word to Custer that he had the enemy in front of him in force. At that time Benteen had not joined him, so he was not commanding seven companies, as many of these articles claimed that he was, but only the remains of three. "You see by this", Reno wrote, "I was the advance and the first to be engaged and draw fire, and was consequently the command to be

supported, and not the one from which support could be expected." Had Benteen been twenty minutes later in coming to his support, added Reno, "not a man of that regiment would be living today to tell the tale."

There was a theory put about that, in fact, Custer was not killed by an Indian at all, but that he committed suicide. One of the stoutest supporters of this theory was Colonel Richard Irving Dodge. In his book, OUR WILD INDIANS, published in 1883, he wrote: "Custer's body was found unscalped and unmutilated. My knowledge of Indians convinces me that he died by his own hand." Colonel Dodge was right about the state of Custer's body when it was found, but whether his interpretation is correct, I could not say.

It may be of interest that, after pack details had been removed and other losses allowed for en route, Custer had an actual fighting force of 214 men by the time he engaged the Indians at "Custer Field". Reno's fighting force, as I have said, was 112 men, Benteen's about 120. Something like 450 all told. Even if they had stayed together they would have had their work cut out to hold Terry's estimated 1,000 - 1,500 Indians. This is why Custer was ordered to wait at the Indian trail. When he disobeyed that order he had virtually signed his own death-warrant and that of his men, even if the force of Indians had been no larger than Terry thought it was.

The other one of the two books to which I referred is FAINT THE TRUMPET SOUNDS, by John Upton Terrell and Colonel George Walton, which was published in 1966. This is Reno's story, again fully documented, from his joining the Seventh Cavalry in 1869 until his death in 1889. I quote from John Terrell's preface: "Major Marcus A. Reno was a victim of vicious Army politics. The incompetence, egotism and stupidity of glory-seeking George Armstrong Custer pushed him into the spotlight of history ... As a student and writer of Western history, I long ago formed the opinion that no American officer had been so unjustly treated, so greatly maligned and unfairly discredited as Mark Reno. Both my own research and that of Colonel Walton unequivocally support this contention. Yet complete accuracy demands the additional comment that, although Major Reno was a brilliant, dedicated and admirable field officer, although he was maliciously persecuted, he was also in many ways his own worst enemy."

I add my own final comment that, while I agree with John Terrell concerning Reno, and leaving aside Custer's direct flouting of Terry's orders, if they, Custer, Reno, Benteen, the other officers and the men, had not gone out to hunt up and savage, or at least to persecute, Indians who were not on the warpath, who had no thought of war in their minds - in other words, if the Indians' right to occupy freely part of their own country, and a part which should be of use to them in living their life the way they were accustomed to, had been recognised - the deaths which occurred at the Little Big Horn one hundred years ago would not have taken place.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to all, JOHN COX, EDENBRIDGE, KENT.

Bulldog's Alma Mater

by R. HIBBERT

It might have been St. Jim's.

Bulldog? Bulldog Drummond; Sapper's Bulldog Drummond; the archetypal Bond; our main bulwark against Bolshevik infiltration in the dear dead days.

The links between Bulldog and St. Jim's are few and tenuous, but I put forward the theory for what it's worth and perhaps someone who's an authority on the St. Jim's saga might be able to add more information to support it. Or destroy it.

One thing's certain, Hugh Drummond, like William George Bunter, was 'a public school man'. We're told, on page 17 of the Hodder and Stoughton 'Bulldog Drummond, his Four Rounds with Carl Peterson' omnibus volume, that he'd been in the final of the Public School Heavyweights, but we don't know much about his school days.

There was a 'stinks master at his school, but he'd never listened to him' ('The Black Gang' - page 470 of the Omnibus). He was 'a member of his school debating society' ('Bulldog Drummond' - page 77). 'His quickness on his feet was astonishing ... in his youth he could do the 100 in a shade over ten seconds' ('The Black Gang' - pp. 288-9).

He was a fag to a prefect named Bryan Johnstone ('The Black Gang' - page 289) later to be Director of Criminal Investigation.

During the Great War Drummond was an army officer - a captain - and although his was a temporary commission he expected to be addressed as Captain Drummond for the rest of his life.

His regiment was the Royal Loamshires (pp. 15 and 16 of 'Bulldog Drummond') and here we have his first firm links with St. Jim's. When Mr. Railton, St. Jim's School House master, answered his country's call he too joined the Loamshires and, in 'The House Master's Home Coming', Gem double number 393, 21.8.1915, we're told that the Colonel of the regiment - Colonel Lyndon - was an old boy of St. Jim's and Chairman of the Governors.

Colonel Lyndon thought well of Sergeant Railton and presumably held Bulldog in high regard; Captain Drummond had earned his D.S.O. and his M.C.

I assume that Captain Drummond and Sergeant Railton knew one another. It could be argued that if they were in different battalions they might never have met, but I think they must have known one another very well. When faced with difficult situations they deal with them in the same highly unusual way. This suggests that the two men knew one another during the war and kept in touch afterwards.

In the Spring of 1919 Bulldog had his first brush with Master Criminal Carl Peterson. Carl - and it became his wont - was trying to take over the United

Kingdom. Drummond set about confounding his knavish tricks, and, being good old gregarious Hugh, didn't do it on his own. He roped in his chums - men about town like himself - and set about hiring "at least fifty demobilised soldiers who are on for a scrap" ('Bulldog Drummond' - page 169). He used his private army of old Loamshires to break up Peterson's private army of reds, pinks, liberals and long haired fellow travellers.

At Christmas, 1922, Tom Merry - unjustly accused of stealing 46 gold sovereigns from Mr. Ratcliff's desk - refused to be expelled from St. Jim's. (Gems 776 (23rd December, 1922) to 784 (17th February, 1923). 200 Juniors supported Tom, barricaded themselves in School House and held out for weeks. What did Dr. Holmes do? Precious little apart from making sententious speeches. He left it all to Mr. Railton who sent for 'thirty of his former comrades in arms; old Loamshires who'd fought with him in Flanders'.

We're not told what Hugh paid his men, but those serving in Railton's Own received ten bob a day and all found. Not ungenerous in 1923, especially when you consider the attractive nature of the work - smashing private property and clouting not over large teenagers.

Ex-Private Brown said he'd be sorry when the siege was over and that probably explains why Mr. Railton's veterans took five weeks winkling out 200 schoolboys. Hugh's men were mustered, transported to the battle zone and had stormed Peterson's H.Q. all in about two days. Hugh, who if he knew nothing else, knew about war and warriors, probably gave his men so much on account and promised them the rest when the battle was won.

Mr. Railton paid his mercenaries regular wages so they became cautious and long winded. His Loamshires didn't break through the School House defences until Tom Merry and Co. had decided to end their barring-out.

I think I've established that there's probably a connection between Railton and Drummond, but that doesn't necessarily make Bulldog an old boy of St. Jim's. This is where the services of our St. Jim's experts are needed. Someone steeped in the lore of the pre World War 1 Gem might unearth a reference to Drummond, or Bryan Johnstone, or to one of Bulldog's other pals:- Peter Darrell (he was in the same battalion as Hugh and possibly a relative of George Darrell of the St. Jim's Sixth), Algy Longworth, Toby Sinclair, Ted Jermingham, Jerry Seymour. Our hero's name might be mentioned in one of those potted histories of St. Jim's, biographies of former scholars and masters, sports records and so on which appeared in 'Holiday Annuals'. Perhaps somewhere we shall find 'H. Drummond of the Shell holds the record for the 100 yards sprint. In 1910 he ran it in 10.001 seconds.

There are similarities between the St. Jim's stories and the Bulldog Drummond stories. Violence is never far below the surface, punch-ups aren't quite the order of the day, but none of the decent chaps are averse to them. There's a lot of horseplay and Bulldog and his friends go in for blowouts which are very like study teas at St. Jim's. Considering that Tom Merry and Co. and Bulldog and Co. are what those of us who know our place would call proper toffs they have very vulgar tastes in food.

Now, as anyone knows who's studied the eating habits of proper toffs on stage, screen and television, everything is done in style. Butlers and parlour maids hover, the ancestral silver gleams, the brilliance of the napery blinds. All concerned know which knife and fork to use on the stuffed ortolan or the quail in aspic and which crystal goblet the Emva Cream should be poured into and quaffed out of.

Tom Merry and Bulldog must know about these niceties, but they ignore them. It could be that the St. Jim's policy was to make sure that any fussiness was knocked out of a lad. "Plain living and high thinking are what we aim at," Dr. Holmes might have said, so Tom Merry's idea of ambrosia is a plateful of fried sausages, a slice of pork pie and a chunk of fruit cake, and Bulldog visiting Toby Sinclair, doesn't think sausages and ale for breakfast the least bit unusual.

So there we are. The links between St. Jims's and Bulldog are few and tenuous, but I hope someone will be able to forge a few more. St. Jim's, by the way, is in Sussex, and Sapper, as Mr. Usborne tells us in 'Clubland Heroes' published by Constable in 1953, had a thing about Sussex. 'Sussex was the title he gave to several of the peerage and to at least one bishop' (page 165) and 'Drummond is well connected, and there is some evidence that his uncle was the Duke of Sussex' (page 164).

But when was Bulldog at St. Jim's?

Let's say he was 25 in 1919. He couldn't have been younger than 22 or 23. So he was born in 1894. Assuming he went to St. Jim's at the age of 12 and left when he was 18 he'd be there from 1906 to 1912. But what did he do between 1912 and the outbreak of war in 1914? There's no mention of his going to university. Mind you, he loafed most of his life (in between bouts with Master Criminals) so a two years' loaf would come natural to him.

If he joined up straight from school at the age of 18 in 1914 he was born in 1896. That would mean he went to St. Jim's in 1908 and be younger than Tom Merry. Possible. Any Drummonds in the 3rd Form?

One last point. Bulldog and his cronies were members of the Junior Sports Club and that was on the South West corner of that well known London square - St. James'.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Attention Australian Readers: Complete set (38) Bunter hard backs with dust jackets for sale.

R. WHITE, 5/35 FORSYTH STREET

KINGSFORD, N.S.W. 2032. Phone 663-4608

= =

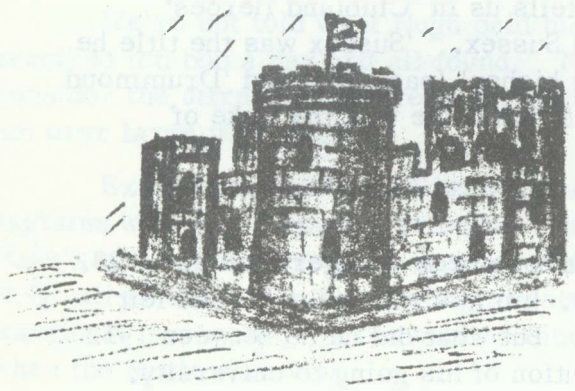
Best wishes to Eric Fayne and Howard Baker for another great year.

H. K. ATKINSON, BRADFORD

SNOW

by R. J. GODSAVE

E. S. Brooks always made certain that snow had its place in the Christmas stories of the Nelson Lee Library. Generally these stories were contained in two or three issues, although counting the Christmas double number o.s. 130 as two issues I know of only one Christmas story being contained in one issue in the old series. This was "The Mystery of Grey Towers" which was the sequel to Jack Mason's adventures at St. Frank's the previous term. With the coming of the new year and a new series the snow which fell so heavily at Christmas would be forgotten and usually only just mentioned.



The great exception to this criticism is the famous Colonel Clinton series which followed immediately after "The Mystery of Grey Towers" o.s. 186 which in itself was a very snowy and icy issue. "The Soldier Housemaster" o.s. 187 concerned the College House juniors leaving the usual leading characters as onlookers. In this issue the Trotwood twins were introduced who according to E. O. Handforth made up the three freaks with Colonel Clinton newly arrived at St. Frank's.

This series was in effect in two parts, the first dealing with the constant drilling in the snow covered Triangle and route marches on the slushy half frozen roads. The second part was indeed a thriller with such a title as "Who Killed Colonel Clinton?"

In contrast to the usual run of Christmas stories the whole of the Solomon Levi series ran from December 1920 through the Christmas holidays and all through January 1921.

Christmas on this occasion was spent at Tregellis castle with Levi and his father as guests. Although I do not recall where the castle was situated it would not be far wrong to place it in Cornwall. It was never mentioned to my knowledge, only vague mention of the journey westward.

A description of the journey of the St. Frank's party from the station to Tregellis castle in the two cars sent shows the weather at its worst with a snow storm raging and deep snow on the roads. The following day Mr. Stanley Webb and Mr. Hooker J. Ryan - Solomon Levi's enemies arrived in Tregellis Village and stayed at the Blue Lion Inn. Brooks in his usual attractive style describes the building as an old fashioned, comfortable looking inn, with wreaths of smoke curling from the ornamental chimneys, and very picturesque with snow all around. The following extract gives a good Brooksian description of this winter scene at Tregellis.

> 'It was Christmas Eve, and snow had not fallen since early morning; but the sky was leaden and heavy and a sharp, biting wind was blowing fiercely. There was every promise of another big fall of snow, too, before so very long. King Frost had seized the whole countryside in his grip,

and in this lonely region the outlook was chilly, desolate and bleak.'

Another series which ran through December and January including Christmas was the Communist School stories of 1921/22. The self-styled Rebels used the last week of the Christmas holidays to arrive at St. Frank's with the object of occupying the Ancient House while the rest of the school were still on holiday. This action would enable them to carry on their vendetta against Dr. Stafford whose brutal outbursts were due to the machinations of Mr. Hugh Trenton. In this series the mention of snow was not of violent downfalls, but of Bellton Lane being snowy white and a frost that was keen. Apart from the cold winds, etc., there was little mention of snow.

On the other hand Brooks seems to have gone to the other extreme in o.s. 446 "The Schoolboy Santa Claus". Such heavy falls of snow almost obliterated a group of cottages at Pelton's Bend on the outskirts of Bellton. High winds and huge drifts of snow had stopped the railway services causing the party of juniors invited to spend their Christmas at the home of Sir Edward and Lady Handforth to be forced to spend it at St. Frank's.

Brooks made good use of heavy falls of snow with blockages in the railway cuttings which often was the start of a good Christmas series. The last Christmas of the old series was celebrated by Nos. 550, 551 with 552 commencing the new year of 1926. These three Nelson Lees were one of Brooks' best Christmas stories with settings in Moor View School, London, and Lord Dorriemore's castle in Derbyshire. As is well known the Peak district usually has more than its fair share of snow. With trains brought to a stand-still, huge drifts were the order of the day. Incidentally, William Napoleon Browne figured prominently in this holiday series.

Although this article has only dealt with the old series Brooks gave the Lees of the first and second New Series treatment quite equal in the matter of snow at Christmastide.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: Rover 1074, 1146, 1518, 1533, 1535, 1536, 1537, 1538; Wizard 1216, 1220, 1222, 1370, 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374; Aventure 1261, 1388, 1527, 1549, 1562. Merry Xmas to Norman Shaw, Bill Lofts, Derek Adley, Bert Holmes, Joe de Freitas, etc.

DICK JACKSON

52 GORDON ROAD, EDINBURGH EH12 6LU.

= =

Seasonal Greetings to all members of O.B.B.C's everywhere and to all readers of "Collectors' Digest". My special thanks to Northern O.B.B.C. for my first year of rewarding membership.

D. SWIFT, 22 WOODNOOK CLOSE, LEEDS, LS16 6PQ.

BUNTER ON TELEVISION

A RETROSPECTIVE SURVEY

by BRIAN DOYLE

It took Billy Bunter 44 years to become a television star. The only surprising thing about the occurrence was that no enterprising BBC producer had taken the plunge into the Greyfriars waters before.

As early as June 1939, Jonah Barrington, the widely-read radio critic of the "Daily Express", had put a tentative toe into the waters. "I regret to report," he wrote, "that the BBC have rejected, as a possible serial, the adventures of those deathless heroes, Billy Bunter, Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Co. To Mr. Kenneth Newman (author of 'The Spy at Rippingham' radio serial), who suggested the idea, the BBC have replied: 'We regret our readers are quite unanimous in considering your story to be quite unsuitable.'" Barrington went on: "So far it has only been turned down by the Children's Hour people. I suggest it to the Variety boys. (Note: Have been trying to think up a cast. Sydney Howard or Charles Laughton for Bunter! Ralph Lynn for 'D'Arcy the dude? Arthur Marshall for the Head? It's a fascinating pastime)." It must have been - even though Barrington did get his characters mixed up rather!

In fact, Bunter's fruity voice was first heard on BBC radio (so far as I can trace) in April 1949, when excerpts were broadcast from E. S. Turner's now-classic book about old boys' papers, "Boys Will Be Boys". Bunter was heard in a typical scene when he visited the Famous Five in Harry Wharton's study at Greyfriars. It was brief, but it was a foot in the door.

Odd letters appeared in the Press over the next few months, suggesting Bunter for radio, television, or even films. The Skilton-published Bunter books had started to appear and a Bunter revival was in the air. It had to wait its coming into full flower, however, until December 1951.

On December 2, 1951, in the London "Evening News", radio critic Leslie Ayre broke the news that BBC TV were to audition would-be Billy Bunters for a brand-new TV series, due to begin in February. He began his column in time-honoured fashion: "I say, you fellows, what a ripping jape! The BBC TV chaps at Lime Grove are going to wonder what is happening to them on Monday. They are going to be surrounded by Billy Bunters. It is enough to have to deal with one 'Owl' of the Remove, the fat sneak. But just imagine fifty Bunters! Ouch! There will be Bunters in the studios, Bunters in the corridors and - you can be sure of it - Bunters in the canteen. Can't you see the BBC fellows running around asking what has happened to their tuck? All this is because of the new lark of putting Bunter - and, of course, the other Greyfriars fellows - on television. Bunters have written to the BBC from all over the place, most of them from London and the South, but some from Nottingham, Berkshire and Lancashire. Hardly any of them have acted before, but they are all fat and they nearly all say in their letters that they can put away the tuck, especially

jam-tarts. Well, it's going to be hard cheese for all of them except one. But I say, look here! Do you know who's going to choose the Bunter? A girl! Yes, you fellows, a girl! But cheer up. This girl, Joy Harington, is a jolly decent sort - for a girl. Almost as decent as Marjorie Hazeldene."

Joy Harington had been assigned to produce the new Bunter TV series and she must have had her work cut out, if the following week's National newspapers were anything to go by. The would-be Bunters rolled up in their dozens - and the Press went to Town ... Photographs of the aspiring - and perspiring - Bunters appeared, together with accounts of the auditions at Lime Grove Studios, written more often than not, in 'Greyfriars-ese' ...

"A bounty of Billy Bunters - 38 of them, all eager to play on TV the immortal Fat Sneak of Greyfriars School Remove - yesterday filled a BBC audition theatre in London to bursting-point," said the "Daily Mail". "Only two had the sketchiest notion of the character they wished to play ... but all these would-be Bunters were qualified by one thing - a rotund, owlish fatness, and Miss Joy Harington, who is to produce the Greyfriars fable on TV in February, yesterday admitted difficulty in selecting a short-list. One by one, they read Bunterisms from the script written by Miss Harington and her brother Charles, in the true vein of Frank Richards. A strong favourite for the part was a 19-stone, 19-year-old from Ilford, Essex, Edward Parker, who showed considerable prowess after the audition when the Bunters repaired to the BBC tuckshop downstairs for a spread of jam-tarts. Edward managed to get a tart or two to himself while the others were scrambling for a share. And no wonder the others had to scramble. There were exactly 22 jam-tarts between 38 Bunters - burly Bunters, bantam Bunters, Bunters in blazers, bespectacled Bunters and brilliantined Bunters, all bursting at the seams."

Leslie Ayre returned to the fray in the "Evening News" and listed the four professional actors who read such parts as Mr. Quelch, Dr. Locke and Bob Cherry at the Bunter auditions. They were John Osborne (the now-famous playwright, no less), Leslie Phillips (later to become a famous comedy star), Leslie Heritage (later well-known as 'Bob Dale' in "Mrs. Dale's Diary") and Tony Kilshawe. He also interviewed some of the would-be Bunters, including one 15-year-old schoolboy who weighed 15 stones and stood nearly 6 feet tall!

Other newspapers mentioned the aspiring Bunter who broke a chair when he sat on it (thereby providing an unrehearsed 'Ouch!'), the groaning lift at Lime Grove Studios which had to convey the lads to the appropriate studio, the Bunters who arrived nervously clutching their Mothers' hands, and the fact that the majority of the boys applying to play fiction's most famous schoolboy had never read a story about him, though a few had followed the strip about him in "Knockout Comic".

After a few weeks silence on the subject of Bunter, Britain's National newspapers suddenly burst into fat life once again on 29th January, 1952, with the announcement that the BBC had chosen its TV Billy Bunter. Not surprisingly, none of the plump amateurs who had been auditioned had been successful. The role had gone to 29-year-old professional actor Gerald Campion, who was 5 ft. 5 ins. tall and tipped the scales at 11 st. 12 lbs. In numerous interviews he explained that the BBC had arranged to pad him out to the required Bunter silhouette, that he had

been a schoolboy reader of "The Magnet" in pre-war days, and that he was looking forward enormously to playing the role. It also turned out that Campion was married, with a 6-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son, lived in Chelsea, was the son of author and scriptwriter Cyril Campion, a cousin of Charlie Chaplin, and a godson of the late Sir Gerald du Maurier. Campion admitted that his nickname at University College School had been 'Fatty' and also that he had appeared in the West End stage production of "Goodbye Mr. Chips", played the Fat Boy in the recent film version of "Pickwick Papers", and made a dozen or so previous TV appearances.

So, now that the BBC had found their Bunter after their two months highly-publicized search, the stage (or rather TV studio) was set for the much-heralded series. Frank Richards himself had written the scripts, the producer was the aforementioned Joy Harington, and the settings were designed by Stephen Taylor. It had been arranged that the plays would be transmitted live, twice - at 5.40 in the afternoon for young viewers and again at 8.00 in the evening for adults.

So it was that, on Tuesday, 19th February, 1952, "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School", made its television bow, to the stately strains of its theme music, a short passage from John Ireland's "Sea Symphony". The first story was "The Siege" and the cast included (apart from, of course, Gerald Campion as Bunter), John Charlesworth (a noted child actor who had been first-class in the role of East to John Howard Davies' Tom in the film of "Tom Brown's Schooldays") as Harry Wharton, Keith Faulkner as Bob Cherry (Faulkner was best-known at the time as Ginger in the "Just William" TV series), Barry Macgregor as Johnny Bull, David Spenser as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Michael Danvers-Walker as Frank Nuget, John Rutherford as Vernon-Smith, John Quayle as Peter Todd, Cavan Malone as Lord Mauleverer, Philip Guard as Skinner, and John Osborne (yes, the John Osborne, but not yet looking back in anger) as Wingate. The adults were 54-year-old Kynaston Reeves (who had played the Head in the West End production of Ian Hay's "The Housemaster" for two years and who later repeated his performance in the film version) as Mr. Quelch, Edward Lexy as Mr. Prout, John Stuart (a pre-war British screen star) as Dr. Locke, and Christopher Hodge as Gosling, the school porter. The production ran for thirty minutes.

Over the next few days the TV critics had a field day expressing their opinions of the initial Bunter show. In the main, they were disappointed. Leonard Mosley, of the "Daily Express", was vehement in his dislike, which almost amounted to hatred. "It was an historic occasion for TV," he began. "For the first time in the history of the service two performances of the same studio programme were given in the same evening. What momentous occasion justified this eventful dedication of precious screen time to repetition? A first performance of a scintilating new play. The debut of a great comedian? An intricate but exciting experiment in the new forms of visual entertainment? No. We saw last night two performances of the first instalment of a new schoolboy serial called 'Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School'. You have to be an earnest critic with a sense of mission to have sat through them both, for what went on in them was futile, fatuous, unfunny, dismal and dated. Now I know all about Bunter, the Owl of the Remove. I read 'The Magnet' too, when I was a boy. But who on earth thought children of 1952 could possibly be interested in the dreary larks of these outmoded and impossible schoolboys from the past?

Their antics drove most of the juveniles around my house to distractions of boredom as they watched them. When TV's announcer suggested that grown-ups would be interested in the repeat performance their eyes turned upon me more in bewilderment than contempt. It was indeed a drab and monotonous series of japes we had to watch. And it was embarrassing to think that these characters were the delights of my generation. I don't blame present-day children for preferring jet-age comics. Their heroes may be nasty, but at least they never bore anyone."

This jaded attack not unnaturally led to a series of readers' letters springing to the defence of the programme - and of Greyfriars and its characters. One reader summed up the general reaction with the simple words: "Leonard Mosley is a bore - futile, dismal, dated."

J. Stubbs Walker, in the "Daily Mail", was almost as nasty. "It is incredible that they (the BBC) have gone to town on a show which no one who understands modern children would have touched with a bargepole. You cannot make visual a set of characters long made famous by the craft of an artist's brush. Anyway, this generation knows not Bunter as mine did. Take the silly thing off." In fairness to Stubbs Walker, it should be said that he thought the second instalment "was a considerable improvement on the first ... and the 'schoolboys' have obviously learned to act together as a team."

Most of the other newspapers greeted the new series warmly, with special praise for the Bunter of Gerald Campion and the Quelch of Kynaston Reeves. Typical comments were: "the jollywellfullness is terrific ... Kynaston Reeves has the finest gimlets that ever bored through a form-master's glasses. He is every inch a Mr. Quelch ... a spiffing show." ... "this was the real thing, just as my youthful imagination pictured the fantastic goings-on in that fabulous academy of anything-but-learning." ... "the star was Mr. Quelch - gimlet-eyed, swishing his stick and handing out impots - superbly played by Kynaston Reeves." ... "Gerald Campion's portrayal of the fat schoolboy is masterly ... I imagine that many sat up for the repeat performance ... Yaroooh, it's terrific ... richly satisfying." "... very well cast indeed ... managed to catch the atmosphere ... the Mr. Quelch of Kynaston Reeves was utterly authentic, straight out of the pages of 'The Magnet'."

Several papers mentioned the fact that the man who had made the whole thing possible in the first place, Frank Richards himself, watched the first episode in his home in Kinsgate, on a specially-installed TV set. One or two even carried a photograph of the familiar, skull-capped figure, sitting in front of the set, looking both benign and expectant. In a subsequent letter to Herbert Leckenby, then-editor of the "Collector's Digest", Richards commented: "The first programme seemed to me remarkably good and the production was as near perfect as anything could be. Gerald Campion was Bunter to the life, and I half-expected Mr. Quelch to step out of the screen he was so much alive. I had a very happy half-hour viewing and am looking forward with much anticipation to the rest of the series. Who could have foreseen this when Bunter was first evolved in 1899?"

Leckenby himself (to whom our hobby owes so much) was himself somewhat disenchanted. "Kynaston Reeves as Mr. Quelch did at times get near the Quelch

we know; and there were glimmerings of Bunter in Gerald Campion's portrayal. But, oh dear, the boys. A colourless Harry Wharton, what we feared, a member of the chorus; an incredible Inky, repeating a few of the familiar lines without the slightest expression; a Bob Cherry who said 'Hallo, hallo, hallo!' now and again like a parrot; worst of all, a dreadful caricature of the steady, handsome Wingate we had all visualised." A case of Leckenby looking back in anger at the now-renowned playwright!

Other off-the-cuff opinions, gathered by Herbert Leckenby on the telephone after the programme: "I was agreeably surprised and thought the show quite good. Bunter, to my mind, was quite good, though he could do with a good bit more padding. Weak, I think, was Harry Wharton, who was too small and never gave the slightest suggestion of leadership. I thought Bob Cherry good. Undoubtedly, the show could do with a little more zip but, considering everything, I thought it was a success." (Eric Fayne.) "It didn't come off. Only Gerald Campion as Bunter was at all successful. Kynaston Reeves was more like Hacker than Quelch. The boys seemed more like fags than Removites." (Bob Whiter.) "On the whole, better than I expected. Bunter and Prout were very good, but the boys, with the exception of Frank Nugent, were hopeless." (Don Webster.) "Some of the boys were poor and used expressions never found in a Frank Richards story. This also applied to Gosling." (John R. Shaw.)

It was the then little-known Robert Robinson who, writing in the "Yorkshire Evening Press", who perhaps summed up the general reaction in a nutshell: "Concrete realisation of character is never as satisfactory as one's own imagined conception."

When that first series came to an end after six episodes, Jonah Barrington wrote in the "Sunday Chronicle": "Contrary to all expectations, TV's Billy Bunter programmes have hit the jackpot. Producer Joy Harington tells me that the appreciation figure was 79 per cent - highest for any children's serial since TV began. So now Miss Harington wants to know, would viewers (adults as well as children) welcome a revival of Mr. B. Bunter later in the year? Answers to me please, on a postcard."

Reported Barrington on the following Sunday: "As a result of the largest TV ballot of my entire critical experience, I have to tell Miss Joy Harington that 'Sunday Chronicle' voters, by a 94 per cent majority, want Bunter back as soon as possible. They regard him as the greatest TV character since Muffin the Mule. And since these postcards seem to be divided equally among children and adults, I assume that the adult 'repeat' programme at 8 p.m. is also wanted."

Encouragement indeed for Bunter, Greyfriars, Frank Richards, the cast, producer Joy Harington, and BBC TV in general. So much was written in the Press about the Bunter TV series during 1952 that some people might have been forgiven if they thought that BBC stood for 'Billy Bunter Corporation' in those days!

There were no more Bunter TV series for a while, but the Fat Owl bounced back on to the small screens of the nation on 7 July, 1953 (with a repeat on 19 July) in a new 'single' TV play, again titled "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School", with the

credit 'specially written for television by Frank Richards'. Gerald Campion was Bunter again, but the rest of the cast had completely changed. Harry Wharton was played by Henry Searle, Brian Roper (who starred in the Hollywood film of "The Secret Garden" opposite Margaret O'Brien) was Bob Cherry, John Cavanah was Frank Nugent, John Breslin was Johnny Bull, and William Strange was Inky. Ronald Adam donned the mortar-board of Mr. Quelch, Mr. Prout was Cameron Hall, Skinner was Geoffrey Colville and Snoop was David Askey (today a TV director himself). Joy Harington again produced. A note in the "Radio Times" at the time, stated, in an item about Campion: "The padded suit he wore for the previous productions, specially made for him by a London theatrical costumier, has been borrowed so many times in the past twelve months for fancy dress parties and other events, that it has had to be considerably refurbished for this production."

After this latest TV production, letters continued to pour into the BBC office of Miss Harington, asking for more Bunter and so eventually, in late-June, 1954, another new 'single' play (again specially written by Frank Richards) was transmitted (with a repeat a few days later). It was titled "Bunter Won't Go" and the cast this time was a mixture of the old and the new. Campion was naturally Bunter again (he, in fact, played the role throughout the entire run of Bunter TV plays and became completely identified with the character, much to the detriment of his subsequent acting career), Wharton was Henry Searle, Bob Cherry was Brian Smith, Ronald Moody was Inky, and Michael Danvers-Walker and Barry Macgregor returned to play their original characters of Nugent and Bull. Kynaston Reeves was back too, as Mr. Quelch, as was John Stuart as Dr. Locke.

Billy Bunter was by now becoming a regular, if intermittent, part of British children's television and letters continued to pour into the BBC demanding another actual series, as opposed to the odd single plays. Their wishes were granted on 22 July, 1955, when a brand-new series of six, fortnightly Bunter plays, under the generic title "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School", began, with "Bunter on the Run". All the plays were, as usual, specially penned by Frank Richards.

Campion was Bunter (of course) and John Charlesworth (TV's original Wharton and later to die in tragic circumstances) returned to portray the Captain of the Remove. Brian Roper and Ronald Moody were again Cherry and Hurree Singh, and Colin Campbell was Bull, Peter Marden was Nugent, Mr. Quelch was Raf de la Torre, Edward Lexy was Mr. Prout, Anthony Valentine (later to take over as Wharton, and later still to become famous for his TV roles in "Callan", "Justice", "Colditz" and "Raffles") was Lord Mauleverer, and Kenneth Cope was Loder. The first four plays were produced by Joy Harington and the remaining two by Pharic Maclaren.

By this time, TV's Bunter was entering a new field of controversy. In his parish magazine, one Rev. Girling, of Enfield, Middlesex, objected to the use of the words 'crikey' in the Bunter TV series. The National newspapers seized on the story and once again the Fat Owl's name was blazoned across the country's breakfast-table reading. Girling was reported as saying: "I counted the word 'crikey' thirteen times in one broadcast. I am not saying there is anything intentionally blasphemous about it. There is a difference between a thing that is obscene or

blasphemous and that which is just slack. I feel that the BBC should do better." Frank Richards himself retorted: "I cannot remember any bad language ever going down on my typewriter. I have always been extremely particular about that. But surely a boy can say 'crikey'. Why I even say 'oh, crikey' myself sometimes." Leslie Ayre, of the London "Evening News", hopefully ended the argument when he stated the dictionary meaning of 'crikey': "Since 1835 it has been merely 'an exclamation of surprise, admiration, etc."

The Fat Owl had come into the news again in 1954, when, at Pedhill, Surrey, a man tried to divorce his wife because, he said, she wouldn't let him watch Bunter on TV!

Come 1956, when yet another new Bunter series began on BBC TV, Gerald Campion was, according to Press interviews, becoming restless with forever playing Bunter. He confessed to David Clayton in the "Daily Mail" that he'd quite like to get away from acting completely. "I'm not all that fat either," he insisted, "squash and tennis see to that." He was also becoming fed-up with forcing a weak smile when, on ordering a steak in a restaurant, the grinning waiter as often as not enquired if he was sure he wouldn't prefer some jam-tarts instead.

The new Bunter TV series, starting in September 1956, had Anthony Valentine as Wharton, Brian Roper as Cherry, Laurence Harrington as Nugent, David Coote as Bull, Barry Barnett (now a theatrical agent) as Hurree Singh, and the returning Kynaston Reeves as Mr. Quelch. It also boasted Coker (Peter Scott) and Mr. Bunter (in the portly person of Paul Whitsun-Jones). It was produced by Shaun Sutton. It was, I think, in this series, that Campion played the dual-roles of Billy Bunter and his cousin Wally, in one memorable episode (it was memorable for Campion too, for he admitted in a 1960 Press feature that it remained his own personal favourite episode in the entire saga).

In July 1960, came what was, I believe (and I don't possess complete files on the TV Bunter), the final series. Produced by David Goddard, it retained only Gerald Campion from the previous casts. Harry Wharton was Richard Palmer (who was a welcome guest of the London OBBC a few years ago), Bob Cherry was Cavan Kendall, Frank Nugent was Michael Crawford (yes, <u>that</u> Michael Crawford, today of "Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em" and "Billy" fame), Hurree Singh was Leonard Davey, Johnny Bull was Nigel Anthony (today a prolific broadcaster with the BBC Radio Drama Reprtory Company), Mr. Quelch was John Woodnutt, and John Dunbar was P. C. Tozer. Others who featured included David Hemmings (now a famed film star) as Potter, Tim Hudson as Mr. Prout, and Michael Caridia as Coker.

A few repeats of various Bunter TV episodes came along in the early-1960's. But since then there has been silence. Letters to BBC TV politely requesting the return of Billy Bunter to televsion, are courteously answered with words to the effect that 'there are no plans at present to revive the series, but thank you for your interest.'

Gerald Campion (who also, incidentally, played Bunter in two Christmas Greyfriars plays produced on the West End stage in 1958 and 1959, later being succeeded by Peter Bridgemont in four further productions) has retired from acting

and, after successfully running the famous show business rendevouz, 'Gerry's Club', in London's Shaftesbury Avenue, for several years, now, I believe, runs a restaurant-club somewhere in the country. In 1952, by the way, he attended a meeting of the London OBBC at Wood Green.

I, personally, think that Campion was by far the best thing in the BBC TV series. He contributed a brilliant portrayal of the Fat Owl of the Remove and physically created a character which still lives vividly in the memory of those who saw it. The rest of the schoolboys seemed too young and lacked personality. The trouble may have lain in the casting. That famous fictional schoolboy characters can be brought memorably to life on TV was proved by the 1961 TV serialisation of Talbot Baines Reed's "The Fifth Form at St. Dominic's", which is still well-remembered by those fortunate enough to have viewed it. The more recent TV serial of "Tom Brown's Schooldays" also provided believable and well-characterized portrayals of schoolboy characters.

Mr. Quelch too, was never the Henry Samuel we know and love in the pages of "The Magnet". Kynaston Reeves, a fine actor, was the nearest attempt, but he made the character too wild and eccentric. As Bob Whiter so rightly commented at the time, he would have made a first-rate Hacker. A contemporary actor, well-known for his many fine TV performances (including that of the German Commandant in "Colditz"), who might make an excellent Quelch is, I think, Bernard Hepton.

The other chief fault with the Greyfriars TV series was the lack of believable sets. And the lack of enough 'extras'. These were no doubt due to small budgets. But what you so often saw was a tiny group of boys alone in a cardboard-looking quad, or a handful of boys in a classroom corner. If Bunter does ever return to TV, perhaps the extrerior sequences could be filmed at, say, Sherborne School, in Dorset, where the recent musical re-make of "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" was shot (in that production many actual Sherborne boys stayed on after the end of term to take part in the film for a small fee). In that way true authenticity would be achieved.

I suppose that no television, or even film, version of the Greyfriars stories will ever live up to one's mental images. But how about a full-length BBC radio adaptation? That might well work. And at least Gerald Campion wouldn't have to get padded up for it . . . !

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR to our worthy Editor and all my "chooms" and "cobbers" too numerous to mention individually. It is wonderful our togetherness, although miles apart. WANTED: to complete run of 800 consecutive Union Jacks: Nos. 847, 917, 921, 929, 930, 934, 948, 952, 992, 994, 1008. Fair price or good exchange offered.

H. VERNON

5 GILLMAN ST., CHELTENHAM, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA 3192.

Les Rowley reminisces on the not too serious subject of

THE SHADOWS AND THE SHADES OF GREYFRIARS

It has been one of those lovely days. A day which makes one reluctant to see it go; a day full of serene contentment; a day which one feels should be allowed to go on for ever. Such days seem to come less frequently than they did in the halcyon days of youth and - because of the infrequency - are more precious. I am sure that you have experienced similar days in your own lives and will know what I mean far better than the words of this opening paragraph can express.

I am staying with friends in the country; friends who have garnished the beauty of the tree-lined avenues and roads with the flowers and shrubberies of their own carefully nurtured garden. The sun has been kind to us and for much of the day we had sprawled at our ease in the lea of a friendly tree, talking over those things which are of an interest between friends. The sun, settling its way through the tree tops and over the rhododendruns, had brought with its dying the cooler air of even and we had foresaken our deck chairs for the deeper comfort of the armchairs of the drawing room. Now we had retired, our 'goodnights' said before yet another reminiscence retarded the already late hour.

Pushing back the curtains, I open the lattice and look down to where the grey mists were dragging their curtain across the flower beds and lawns. The final dark has not descended in spite of the lateness of the hour but, in the protracted twilight, the shadows have deepened sufficiently to form uncertain outlines for tree and bush. As I look and breathe in the fragrance of the night air, I can hear voices in the distance. I am reminded of far off days and far off places when, leaving the playing fields at dusk, other boys and I would call to each other as we went our separate ways. Distant farewells sounding eerily across deserted football pitches, echoing and re-echoing until they were swallowed by the encroaching silence. Voices so indistinct as to baffle identification; sounds that were carried away so swiftly yet leaving behind them the awakening of an elusive memory. That indefinite hour when reality covets fancy and makes a traitor of the mind.

"Tea in my study, you fellows." Herbert Vernon-Smith has been a 'star turn' in the match with St. Jim's and the Bounder is well pleased with himself as he extends that invitation. Harry Wharton & Co. cheerfully accept for the afternoon's game has been a gruelling one and has sharpened their appetites. The spread in Study No. 4 is bound to be a lavish one over which they can chatter about the game, the forthcoming fixture with Rookwood, and sundry other topics. The group, as it makes its way across the quadrangle in the deepening dusk, is a happy one. They are looking forward to sitting round a cosy study fire, downing the sosses and poached eggs, the sardines, the tarts and the doughnuts, so dear to the stomachs of fifteen year olds.

Unfortunately there is a fly - an exceptionally fat fly - in this particular ointment. The fly, of course, is William George Bunter who, whilst his school-

fellows have been strenuously engaged in pursuing the flying ball, has been strenuously engaged himself in diminishing the Bounder's spread. Bunter is due for something in the way of a record booting when he is discovered. In this instance the reckoning is likely to come in the middle of the feast instead of after it.

Another who discovered that the way of the transgressor could be hard - painfully hard - was Gideon Gooch. Mr. Gooch, a solicitor of shady repute who came to Greyfriars in the mists of evening to lead Bunter on the downward path to explusion, found not one stupid schoolboy waiting for him, but half a dozen of the liveliest members of the Remove. Not for him was there any magic to be found in a dimly lit quad as his legal person was grasped on all sides and, secured and bound, led through the gloom to the woodshed. Doubtless, as the weary hours of his incarceration passed, Mr. Gooch wishes from the bottoms of his elastic sided boots that he had not embarked upon such a risky enterprise. Ahead of him lay an unpleasant interview with the Head and whilst it is doubtful that he pondered on the wisdom of honesty being the best policy during that long vigil it is certain that he found no romance at all in the stilly watches of the night. Perhaps he should not have worn elastic sided boots - a uniform symbol of notoriety as far as Greyfriars legal johnnies were concerned!

Nocturnal gloom served to cloak the questionable activities of Loder, Carne and Walker. Singly or together they would return from one of those exciting (and expensive) little excursions to the Cross Keys or the Three Fishers at an hour when "the last light had long been extinguished and the last door long since closed". This form of extra-mural activity did not have the blessing of authority and the reward for discovery was an early train home in the morning with the Head's stern voice ringing in one's ears - "there is no place at Greyfriars for a boy guilty of such outrageous conduct. I shall write a letter to your parents informing them of my decision and expressing the hope that in some other sphere you may find opportunity to redeem yourself!" Which was generous of the old Head to express that hope but of little comfort to those who took the early train home.

Fortunately for ourselves as well as for Loder, Carne and Walker, discovery was never complete. Greyfriars would have been a duller place without them but, for those of us who longed for them to receive some small come-uppance, there was compensation when one or the other of them would find the window or door they had left unlatched now secured against them ... like Loder who "stood leaning on the window in a state of terror that was almost pitiable. He had chanced it often and often, relying on his own wary cunning to see him through. Now he had chanced it once too often and the chopper was coming down!" All good, thrilling stuff, especially if your name happens to be Gerald Loder. In this case it is Wharton who has barred his ingress and who is contemptuously smiling at the terrified prefect from the other side of the window pane.

Herbert Vernon-Smith had probably heard the chimes at midnight as often as the Sixth Form rascals and we have frequently followed his return over the ruins in the Cloisters and up a convenient drainpipe and on to the leads outside the Remove box room, the window of which has been left open. Smithy, of course, is a cool customer and keeps his nerve when he finds the way barred. After all, there

is still the faithful Redwing who will let down a rope from the dorm window up which his pal can climb a perilous fifty or seventy feet (Greyfriars owned to fluctuating specifications).

How many of us shared the thrill of such moments with the Bounder of Greyfriars, sighing with relief when he reached the sanctuary of his bed. The fact that Smithy has many redeeming facets to his character whilst Loder, Carne and Walker have none, has meant more than mere mitigation for just as many faults. For, although we can never condone the blackguard in his make-up, we appreciate his sportsmanship and remember the occasions when he has broken bounds to go to the aid of others - Wingate minor and Bob Cherry to mention but two. For the villains of the Sixth no such allowances can be made - especially when we have such instances as Loder sending Bunter to the "Cross Keys" after call-over with a note for 'Mr. B'. It is like Bunter to get himself nabbed by the portly Prout just as it is like Loder to leave the fat Owl to shoulder the consequence.

It is like Loder, too, to lie in wait for the purpose of making a cowardly attack on the Captain of the School in the dark. The attack, meant for Wingate is made in error on little Mr. Wiggins, the master of the Third who is returning from attending a lecture in Courtfield. Realising what he has done, Loder turns to flee and runs straight into Harold Skinner, returning - not from a lecture - but from a 'night out' at the "Cross Keys". As though that isn't enough, the fruity boom of Prout is heard enquiring of the summer night. "What - what is it? I heard, I am sure that I heard ... why it is Wiggins. You are hurt my dear fellow." With all the elegance of a rogue elephant chasing a rabbit, Prout hurtles after the terrified Skinner. "Extraordinary!" exclaims Prout as he charges. Come, come, Mr. Prout, 'unprecedented', surely!

The distant voices that had drawn me to the lattice had gradually become more distant as the shadows in the garden below have deepened. Snatches of memory still chase each other as the silence descends. It is easy to imagine the sudden yelp of pain from an intruder as Mr. Quelch lashes out with a poker. Or perhaps there comes the soft sob of a schoolboy who has fallen from grace through his own folly and who now has no friend to whom he can turn ... or the startled gasp of an acting headmaster as he receives a bucket of tar on his head. The cheer for the 'guy' as it is paraded in the light of the November bonfire. Thoughts follow reflections as I close the windows and draw the curtains.

Earlier I was reluctant to say 'goodbye' to such a lovely day. Now I find that I am as reluctant to leave the Greyfriars I had been reminiscing about, for Greyfriars is responsible for much of my personal happiness regardless of whether the day has been a good or bad one. My thoughts turn from the shadows that embrace the School itself to the shades that are connected with it or with its scholars. Does the rustle of leaves amongst the broken masonry of the ruined tower sound as though some restless spirit of a long dead friar is still walking the measured tread of penitence? Does the grey cloaked figure of that last brave Abbot stand guard over the still undiscovered treasure of his tortured Order?

Many years have passed since Thomas Cromwell, in 1536, the newly

appointed 'Vicar-General' began his suppression of the minor monasteries amongst which was that of the Order of Grey Friars. Those years have buried many secrets beneath their violent history and their embattled faith; secrets that could be told by every paving stone and cloistered arch - if only stone could talk! We can only visualise that dread day when the Commission from Cromwell descended on the monastery to pillage and destroy - for that, indeed, was their intent. No warrant or Commission signed by their Royal Master could excuse their behaviour.

News of the Commissions' coming preceded it by a few precious hours - not long in its advance it is true, but long enough for the courageous Abbot to find a secure hiding place for the priceless monastic plate of bejewelled gold and silver. The Abbot - Abbot Anselm of Torrington, I understand from the writings of Mr. H. S. Quelch - chose his hiding place well. Probably only he knew the secret and that secret he took with him, as did many of his kind, to that place from which no human agency can retrieve it. The treasure has never been recovered to this day and one cannot even attempt a guess at its value, but one has only to think of the eerie shadows of ruined tower and cloisters to accept the possibility that Abbot Anselm still keeps watch.

The tragedy of yesterday therefore blends with the lighter memories of today. Every Greyfriars boy knows of the treasure and doubtless many have entertained the wish that they could find it. Mr. Quelch, in his draft of his "History of Greyfriars School", refers to more than one recorded sighting of Abbot Anslem but this erudite historian does not give too much credence to stories of the supernatural. In more modern history the subject has been a vehicle for practical jokers - William George Bunter having been scared out of his fat wits on more than one occasion.

Those of us who share a romantic belief about the existence of both treasure and spectral guardian are left to dream our dreams! Schoolboys are more practical and treat the subject of a ghostly world if not with levity, at least with a robust form of humour. I give below but two instances where the subject has failed to attract the sobriety it deserves.

Herbert Vernon-Smith agreed readily that Greyfriars was haunted. "Why everyone has heard of the Ghost of the Agonised American," he averred. "The mean, bony, frame of the Presence has been seen gliding along the Remove corridor, its ghastly - sorry, ghostly features lined with misery and frustration. It appears to be searching vainly for something that is lost or hidden from view. From time to time it will give a long hollow moan of misery and despair." I learned eventually that Smithy was referring in this fashion to Fisher T. Fish who was alleged to be searching for a halfpenny piece that he lost during his first term at the School.

One would have expected a serious approach to the matter from Peter Todd, the legal genius (?) of Study No. 7 and when he gave a considered opinion I was prepared to listen with care.

"That Greyfriars is haunted, is an undeniable fact," said Toddy with much conviction. "Every study in the Remove passage and some further afield have

experienced a visitation - not once but several times. The kitchens below stairs have had good reason to believe in the existence of the spook. Not that it has ever been seen, though, but its hauntings show a pattern of sorts. The manifestation - if one can call it that - shows a marked proclivity for places where food is stored and I rather gather that the apparition is more - much more - of the substance than the shadow. A stiff dose of a fives bat is awaiting the spectre when next it materialises. I feel it needs a short, sharp lesson in not snaffling a fellow's sardines."

The shades of Greyfriars, some more imagined than others, give pride of place to other uneasy spirits that have their haunts far from the School. Not all wraiths are aristocratic, but it helps the atmosphere if there is a gloomy turret or dismal cell around. Walls panelled in oak that has almost blackened with age and behind which lie secret passages are also ideal for phantom earls and cavaliers. Mauleverer Towers comes chillingly to the mind as one recaptures the drama that unfolded against the legend of the Red Earl. In such surroundings it is easy to give credence to the family ghost especially when the present Earl disappears and is imprisoned in a secret chamber with only a centuries old skeleton for company.

To many there is no more romantic age than that of the Civil War when divided loyalties split some of the 'best' families asunder. There is a thrilling little story regarding the Wharton family ghost that has its origin in this period. Colonel Wharton, who tells the story rather well when he is not subject to interruption, gives the following brief outline.

"The year 1644, with the battles of Marston Moor, Copredy Bridge and Newbury, was a fateful one for the Royalists. The Wharton family, as ever loyal to its Sovereign, had its sons at the wars far from home. Wimford, and the surrounding area including Wharton Magna, unfortunately fell into the hands of the Parliamentary forces. The operation was made successful by betrayal and treachery on the part of a member of the Wharton family - a distant cousin who had long been regarded as the proverbial bad apple in an otherwise good barrel. The villain, Rupert Wharton-Stacey, was granted the Wharton estates as a reward for his treason. As though the burden was not enough, news came of the death at Newbury of Humphry Wharton the head of the family. Although there was enough cause for the house to be in solemn mourning, the usurper Wharton-Stacey decides to hold high revel at the Lodge.

Outside the house a storm was at its height; inside the lights from the chandaliers threw their beams on the festive throng of Cromwell's soldiery. They had plundered the cellar and had already drunken their fill and their voices were raised in ribald chorus. Oliver, himself, would not have wished to have claimed them as his own. Intoxicated both with wine and his new possessions, Wharton-Stacey stood at the foot of the staircase, urging the unruly mob on to greater noise. Suddenly, the great double door flew open and, as though borne on the howling winds from without, the startling figure of a Cavalier appeared, sword drawn and advancing toward the drunken Rupert.

The traitor stopped in mid-voice and gazed at the visitor. A look of

horrified recognition came to Wharton-Stacey's face, dredging it of its wine-induced flush and leaving a ghastly pallor in its place.

"But you're dead, Humphry, you're dead!" babbled Rupert.

"One last thing I have to do before I go to the rest that you never will know. I have come to despatch you, not only from the family and the country that you have so dishonoured, but from the life that you are not worthy to continue. Have at you, rogue and traitor!"

"Spellbound, the Roundheads watched as Cavalier and cousin cut and thrust at each other, but they did not have to watch for long! With a terrible cry, Rupert fell back, mortally wounded and with the silver blade of his cousin embedded in his worthless carcass. The cavalier stood back and gazed with scorn at the figure sprawled at the foot of the staircase, the bloody stains already absorbed by the polished wood. Recovering their wits the Roundheads leapt upon the victorious Humphry only to find that he had vanished as suddenly as he had arrived.

Rupert was buried in the local churchyard and for a while Humphry's sword lay neglected in the gun room until it was either stolen or mislaid. It is said that once a year the forlorn figure of Humphry returns to seek the sword with which he avenged his family's honour. For in those days his blade was often the soldier's only friend and to be parted would have been a matter of the Cavalier's prime concern."

Other ghosts from the chronicles of Greyfriars come crowding in - Reynham Castle, Lochmuir, Pengarth - to mention but a few. Sleep, however, is at last persistent to triumph over what has been one of those lovely days. But lovely days are not complete unless shared with friends, so thank you for your company as I at last leave this brief excursion amongst the shadows and shades of Greyfriars.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Merry Xmas to you all. Thanks for the happy memories so precious now.

LES FARROW

13 FYDELL STREET, BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE, PE21 8LE

= =

Seasonal greetings to all readers and especially to those who share my interest in E. S. Brooks. May 1977 see an upsurge of interest in his writings. Also, when schools are being discussed, may St. Frank's be mentioned as well as Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood. (Contributors please note.)

BOB BLYTHE

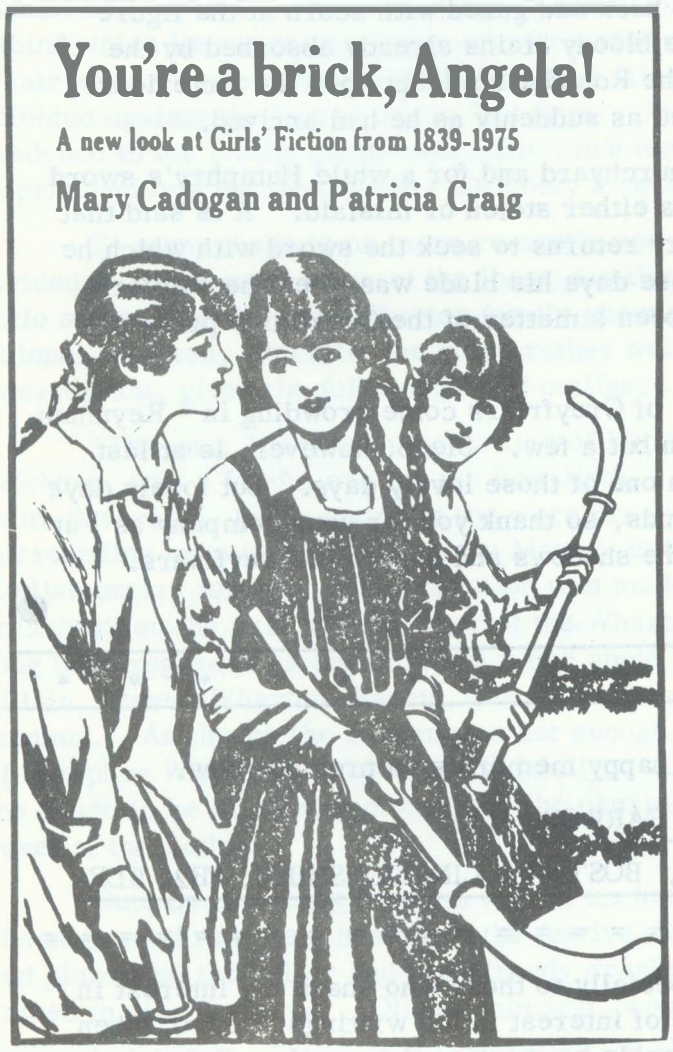
47 EVELYN AVE., KINGSBURY, LONDON, NW9 0JF.

Those spiffing schoolgirls and manly boys.

by MARY CADOGAN

(An appreciation of Angela Brazil and Charles Hamilton)

This of course is Charles Hamilton's year, when many of us are celebrating his centenary. However 1976 has also brought acknowledgement of the work of Angela Brazil, another extremely talented writer for young people.*



COVER DESIGN BASED ON ORIGINAL PICTURE COVER OF ANGELA BRAZIL'S 'THE LUCKIEST GIRL IN THE SCHOOL'.

As Angela and Charles have given so much pleasure to several generations of children and adults it seems appropriate, in this 1976 COLLECTORS' DIGEST ANNUAL, to pay them a joint tribute.

Both writers were Victorians (Angela was born in 1869 and Charles in 1876): though in many ways the product of their age, each was able to respond to the challenge and 'modernity' of the twentieth century. (For instance, each wrote about 'pupil power': Hamilton as early as 1907 when Tom Merry suggests a juniors' strike at St. Jim's, and Angela Brazil with Gipsy Latimer's democratic ideals in THE LEADER OF THE LOWER SCHOOL, 1912.) Brefore their advent there had been many tales of school life, but in 1906, with THE FORTUNES OF PHILIPPA and the St. Jim's stories in PLUCK respectively, Angela and Charles laid the foundations of a new and exciting genre - the twentieth century school story.

* She has inspired two books in 1976, YOU'RE A BRICK, ANGELA! by Patricia Craig and myself, (Gollancz) and a biography by Gillian Freeman, THE SCHOOLGIRL ETHIC (Allen Lane).

It is interesting that they both turned their talents to writing school stories in that year - as each had an earlier history of a different type of writing. Their success was immediate, prolific and enduring. Charles Hamilton, as readers well know, is still the subject of appreciative articles in COLLECTORS' DIGEST and the MUSEUM PRESS publications, and his MAGNETS and GEMS are being regularly reprinted by the HOWARD BAKER press. Several of Angela Brazil's titles are today available in ARMADA paperbacks, reprinted as recently as the late 1960's.

Apart from their obvious skill as story-tellers, perhaps initially the reason for their success was that Angela and Charles were both in sympathy with the child: they had the gift of writing from the young person's viewpoint, without obviously imposing adult comment or ethics. In fact they did make strong moral points - but without holding up the story or giving the juvenile reader the feeling that he was being 'conned'. Hamilton was very much aware, as he wrote in a letter to Eric Fayne in 1952, of the necessity of putting over standards and values '... too deftly for the youthful reader to detect the pill in the jam'.

In this respect these popular authors differed from many of their predecessors, children's writers who were more concerned with 'preaching' than entertaining in their stories.

Their use - and occasional invention - of schoolchildren's slang was an expression of their desire to write about young people as if from the inside. The Greyfriars' fellows 'jawed', 'scrapped' and 'punted' footballs, and 'yarooh!' in the minds of many people is exclusively associated with Hamilton's characters. Angela Brazil's slang was even more excessive and colourful: 'It gives me spasms': 'Well, I call it a grizzly swindle', and '... it's a sneaking rag to prig their bikkies!'.

There is a great deal of humour to be found in both writers, but whereas much of Angela's is unconscious, Hamilton was a master in this field. We not only chuckle with the Famous Five at the antics of Bunter but respond delightedly to the superb touches of irony which are frequently found in the MAGNET and GEM. This particular attribute of Charles Hamilton's points one of the major differences between himself and Angela Brazil. His stories stand up so much better than hers to adult appraisal, because of their irony, insight and social awareness. This is why many of us find that our appreciation of Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood grows with advancing years: it is this capacity for creating characters with whom children can totally identify - but who also appeal throughout adult life - which makes Charles Hamilton unsurpassed as a writer of school stories.

Neither of these authors married, and each went on writing to the very end. In THE SCHOOLGIRL ETHIC, Gillian Freeman records an amusing anecdote. When Angela Brazil's publishers heard the news of her death in 1947 "someone in the Blackie office suggested it wouldn't be long before they received the manuscript of 'The School at the Pearly Gates'." In fact Miss Brazil was so astute that this might more probably have been called 'First Term at the Pearly Gates' - thus creating the possibility of a follow-up!

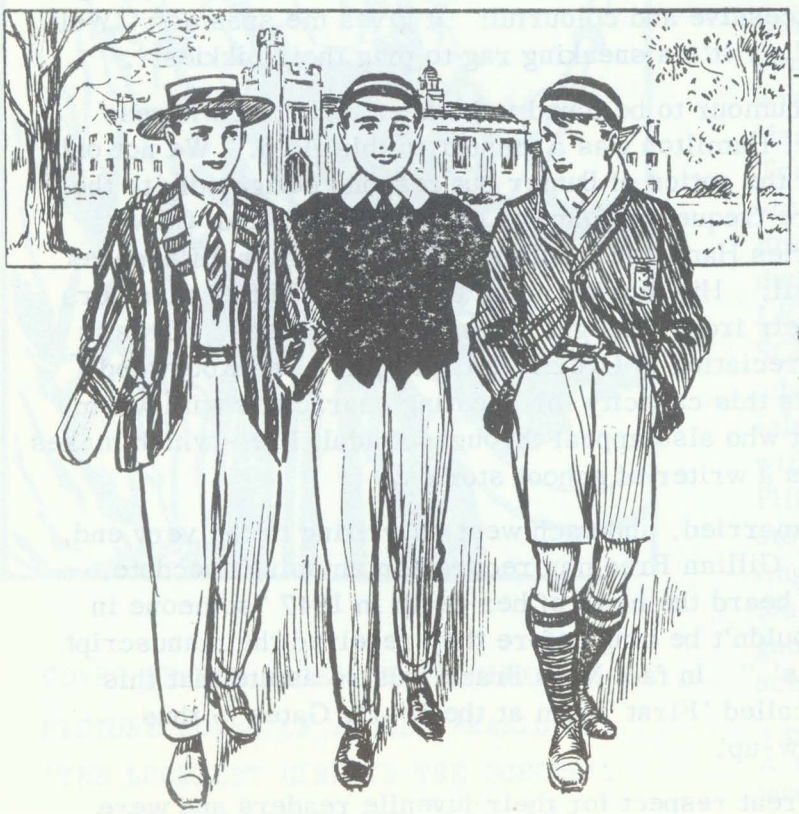
Angela and Charles had great respect for their juvenile readers and were

never too busy to deal meticulously with the numerous letters received from them.

Both authors seemed quintessentially, and appealingly, English - adept at expressing the mellow mood, exhilaration, a sense of fair play. They were intensely patriotic, especially in times of war: sadistic, bull-necked, heel-clicking 'Huns' met their match in terrible tomboys from St. Chad's, or plucky Greyfriars youths. Angela Brazil and Charles Hamilton were, of course, inclined to be suspicious of foreigners in peacetime, too. Their inept Mossoo's and hysterical Mam'zelles threw British spunk and tolerance into sharp relief, as well as adding colour and humour to many of the stories. But they were often champions of the underdog, or the odd man out - and neither had any time for snobbery or bullying.

Angela was perhaps more progressive than Hamilton, and her schools were less tradition ridden. Her girls flirted with fortune-telling, theosophy, Celtic faery and occultism - whereas Hamilton's progressive characters were usually rated as eccentrics - like the faddist form master, who forced the Remove into skipping, sandals and food reform - and disapproved of fisticuffs. Yet Hamilton could be extremely challenging towards 'the establishment' - especially lawyers and politicians: "'Ought to be boiled in oil.' said Bob Cherry gravely. 'In fact, boiling in oil would be too good. He ought to be shut up in the House of Commons and made to listen to the speeches for hours on end till he perished in anguish.'"

The sea fascinated both writers. For Angela Brazil it represented adventure and danger, and her girls, with astounding frequency, were cut off by the tide and



hopelessly marooned. Hamilton's resourceful juniors were less passive when challenged by the elements: of course they sometimes went adrift when they could no longer control a small boat in a storm, but the sea was more likely to give a Remove hero awaiting expulsion the chance to save Mr. Quelch from drowning - and to have the sentence of expulsion rescinded.

"I say, you girls," said Billy Bunter, "I've got a sprig of mistletoe here!"
BUNTER TURNING ON HIS DUBIOUS CHARMS !

Both used sport as a potent symbol of healthy-mindedness and vigour. Hamilton tended to confine himself to conventional sports like cricket and soccer - but Angela was completely carried away by it all - the physical energy of her teenage heroines was, to say the least, exhausting. They indulged in orgies of chest-expanding, tree-climbing, long jumps, high jumps, every kind of race from the obstacle to the three legged, as well as Indian clubs, dumb-bells, lacrosse, hockey and cricket. (They weren't too good at this - even fielding balls in their skirts, and bowling 'half over-, and half under-arm.)

And, more than many children's writers, Angela Brazil and Charles Hamilton were tremendously skilful in describing friendships, which played such an important part in their stories. Angela's 'flaming intensities' were actually more superficial than the understated, but deep, relationships which existed between the 'chums' of Greyfriars and St. Jim's. These gave many of us as children an ideal of what friendship might be, a standard which we tried to attain.

Crushes and calf-love were there too, and Angela's expectedly were the more excessive. "'I'm falling in love with her', she admitted to Wendy. 'I was taken with her, of course, the moment I saw her, but I believe now I'm going to have it badly. I think she's beautiful. If there were a peach competition she'd win it at a canter.'"

Compare this with the understatement of Bob Cherry's feelings for Marjorie Hazeldene, an infatuation sustained from 1908 to 1940 when the MAGNET ended: "'I'm an ass, Harry. But - but what a ripping girl she is, isn't she?'" Today we can revel in the refreshing innocence of this.

It is also intriguing to compare their attitudes towards headmasters and headmistresses. In many of Hamilton's adventures one could truly say that a boy's best friend is his headmaster. Dr. Locke, in particular, is just, kindly and always

likely in situations of crisis to give an erring pupil the benefit of the doubt - or another chance to make good. Angela Brazil's headmistresses, however, were formidable, humourless and often belligerent ladies, who struck terror into the hearts of their girls, though never having to resort to the birch so often wielded at Greyfriars. For instance, in A PATRIOTIC SCHOOLGIRL the spirited juniors who broke crocodile to obtain the autograph of a wartime air-ace were soon put down by their head, Mrs. Morrison: first she tells the miscreants that they have trailed Brackenfield School's standards "in the dust"; next she tears to shreds in front of the whole school all the slips of paper which were signed by their airman hero. Expressing the hope that their schoolfellows will treat them with contempt, and the belief that no punishment is really adequate, Mrs. Morrison goes on: "'I shall expect each to recite ten lines of poetry to her House Mistress every morning before breakfast until the end of the term; and Marjorie Anderson, who, I understand, was the instigator of the whole affair, will spend Saturday afternoon indoors until she has copied out the whole of Bacon's essay on 'Empire'.'"

Frequently the sagas of both authors suggest that they shared a minor fetish for food. In Angela's case the apotheosis of bliss was the dormitory feast, and in her autobiography MY OWN SCHOOLDAYS she reminisces happily about crumbs in her bed and food smuggled into the dorm. With Hamilton, communal tuck consumption took place more often in study teas, caravanning holidays or at picnics. There were popping corks, hampers and lunch-baskets by the side of sunny streams. They did themselves jolly well, these hearty adolescents: Angela Brazil and Charles Hamilton liked to describe their spreads in detail - the ham sandwiches, sausages, cold meats, hard-boiled eggs, pies, puddings and cakes galore, jam tarts, lemonade, ginger pop and a variety of non-alcoholic wines.

They excelled at describing locations - especially the countryside. Angela was almost intoxicated by botany rambles, which incidentally were omitted from some of the 1960's paperback reprints - a great loss! Gillian Freeman's THE SCHOOLGIRL ETHIC produces a lovely quotation in which the girls of Grovebury School respond to the 'joyous infection' of spring:

> "Even the mistress herself ... finally flung prudence to the winds and skirmished through the coppices with enthusiasm equal to that of her pupils, lured from the pathway by glimpses of kingcups, or the pursuit of a Peacock butterfly."

Slightly less ecstatic in his response to nature, Hamilton is at his best when describing those perpetually sunlit pre-war summers of the 1930's, when the Greyfriars juniors rowed endlessly up and down the peaceful River Sark (disturbed only by apoplectic utterances from Sir Hilton Popper when they came within shouting distance of Popper's Island).

Idyllic summer scenes were matched by both writers in their descriptions of Christmas celebrations. I specially like the Christmassy touches in Angela's A HARUM SCARUM SCHOOLGIRL, when American Diana Hewlitt spends the festive season at an English vicarage. She wholeheartedly participates in the traditional celebrations - decorating the church and arranging a children's party. But most of

all she enjoys a carol-singing expedition:

'It was a unique experience, trudging along country lanes with a cart and lanterns, with hoar frost under foot, and a few stars winking in a misty sky, then standing in the cold night air to sing their carols. Diana felt that she could never forget it ...'

Hamilton has produced so many first-rate Christmas stories that it is almost impossible to select just one short quotation. So, instead, let us move forward with a New Year resolution from the MAGNET, which has always appealed to me.

In a 1911 MAGNET ('John Bull Junior', No. 152) Colonel Wharton suggests to Harry that his resolution for that year should be "'to bear with Bunter patiently, and try to make a better fellow of him.'

Harry laughed ruefully. 'We've tried that before' he said, 'But you're right, uncle: we'll try again.'"

And try they did, to the delight of so many of us, again and again and again!

It is fitting to end this tribute to Angela Brazil and Charles Hamilton with the Fat Owl. Psychologically - as well as in the flesh - he is the giant of children's fiction; the underdog who has become a cult figure. We may not like Bunter, but it is impossible not to respond to the unpretentious exuberance which - in spite of his obtuseness and greed - he has come to symbolize in so many people's minds.

As long as his image survives, so will Charles Hamilton and Angela Brazil.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

When food and liquor and gifts galore tarnish the festive pot. Put your head inside the "C.D.A." and forget the ruddy lot.

JOHN BURSLEM

= =

WANTED: Annuals to complete sets:- "Chums", No. 1, 3, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25 (1917); "Captains", Vol. 28, 29-35 inclusive, 39-47 (1922). Several spare Chums for sale/exchange.

LEN HAWKEY, 3 SEAVIEW ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA, ESSEX

= =

WANTED: Nelson Lee's new series, 66, 67. Top prices paid for both. Write:-

NIC GAYLE, 94 ST. ANDREW'S RD., EXMOUTH, DEVON.

= =

Best wishes for Christmas and 1977 to all hobbists. Magnets wanted - exchange available.

JOHN BECK

29 MILL ROAD, LEWES, EAST SUSSEX.

BACK STREET BOY

by JACK OVERHILL

The cry of a newsboy in the street on Sunday evening, 2nd August, 1914, sent me running to him with a penny from my father to buy a paper that contained the latest war-news. Headlines told of the German ultimatum to Belgium and the mobilization of French and Russian forces. There were comparisons of the might in men and armaments of what seemed likely to be the opposing armies.

The next morning - August Bank Holiday - I was passing the Light Dragoon public house near my home when Jack Shepherd, the landlord, came out with his wife and some friends and got in a waiting taxi. He was dressed in the uniform of the Royal Marines and knowing the naval reservists had been called up, I ran to Cambridge railway station to see them off. The station - then the longest in England - was crowded with marines and boisterous farewells were taking place with relatives and friends. There was excited talk of the war being over by Christmas; someone started singing: You can't beat the boys of the bulldog breed and everyone joined in. There were last-minute hugs and kisses as the men entrained; carriage doors slammed; and to shouting and waving the train steamed out of the station.

Britain declared war on Germany the next day.

Early one morning, a mate told me there were soldiers on Coe Fen, a short distance away. I ran down the lane with the eagerness of an eleven-year-old to find out what was afoot. Stretching away to the far end of the Fen was a row of white bell tents. Parallel with them over a ditch were horses and waggons. There were no sentries and I peeped in some of the tents where soldiers were sitting and lying, some still sleeping.

I heard there were soldiers over the other side of the town and to be in the swim, I set off at a run to Midsummer Common. I'd never seen anything like it when I got there. Soldiers, horses, tents, waggons, limbers, guns - there was hardly room to move. The soldiers were washing, shaving, cleaning their boots, belts and buttons, grooming and saddling horses, cooking, carrying, sweeping, scrubbing. There was so much coming and going, so much hustle and bustle, I seemed to have toppled into a strange new world. I was thrilled by it. Cap and shoulder badges took my fancy and I began asking for them; to learn they were for my sisters - if I had any.

The Sixth Division was in the town. The streets at daytime were filled with marching men; people crowded the paths to watch and cheer them as they passed. At nights there was laughing and singing inside and outside pubs - an upsurging of life of a kind the townsfolk had never known. A new song, It's a long way to Tipperary, was whistled and sung by everyone; it increased the war fever that had

swept into the homes of rich and poor and into the breasts of men, women, and children. As it was the summer holidays, I almost lived on Coe Fen with men of the Royal Army Medical Corps. I came across two of them washing their red-cross armlets in a ditch. One was short and dark and had a black moustache, the other was tall and fair. They were grumbling because their pay hadn't come through and they were broke.

I got talking to them. They were dying for a smoke. I offered to buy them some tobacco. They were dubious about letting me do it. I pleaded with them. At last, they let me.

I ran home, got a few coppers out of my money-box and bought the twist of tobacco they had told me to get. And as the ditch was a poor wash-tub, I took home their armlets and washed, dried, and ironed them.

A few days later, they received their pay and squared up with me over the tobacco. And they each gave me a penny interest. By then, I was on a friendly footing with them and in and out of their tent as I liked. The short dark soldier was Patrick Barron; the tall fair one was Christopher Nagle. One came from Dublin, the other from Cork. Barron didn't talk much. Our walks were a sort of silent communion. He was 40 and had served through the Boer War. He took me on the river in a rowing-boat; I steered into the bank; he toppled backwards, legs in the air, oars adrift. Not a word of reproach from him.

Nagle was 25, always ready for a bit of sport and always after the girls. And how he charmed them with his Irish blarney. We were out together when there was an eclipse of the sun and he went to much trouble to find a piece of glass, which he smoked with matches, so that I could see it.

Barron was like a father, Nagle a big brother.

The soldiers were inoculated while they were on Coe Fen. I read no warning in it. And I was only vaguely aware of big battles being waged in France and Belgium. One morning I ran down the lane to the Fen. There I saw only grass, trees and sky. Soldiers, horses, tents and waggons had vanished. They had come in the night and had gone in the night.

I had got used to the sight of soldiers on the march in long columns of four, sometimes singing, one of them playing a mouth-organ. Those marching men had become part of the town. When they went it seemed empty.

The Welsh territorials came. The Royal Garrison Artillery was stationed in the neighbourhood, some in billets, others in big, empty houses. Reveille was sounded outside the Cross Keys every morning, Lights Out every night. I was delighted. It was like being a soldier - with none of his duties and obligations.

I was soon friendly with some of the soldiers. They were billeted in a big house nearby and before long I was using the house like my own, skipping in and out at all hours of the day. The house was full of soldiers and the first time I went in it, I was struck by its cold, inhospitable air. The weather was raw, the evening was drawing in. I entered a large room; soldiers lay all round, their feet pointing to

the middle. The floor was wet and muddy and the only light was that of guttering candle-ends the soldiers were reading and writing by. Our kitchen-workshop, with its cheerful coal fire, seemed a palace to it.

I made a pal of Dick, billeted at the Cross Keys. He had charge of two horses stabled at the Light Dragoon yard and I went there to help him groom and harness them. I had a professional air in doing it. I hissed loudly while grooming the horses and talked soothingly to them while they were harnessed. Dick then exercised the horses, becoming part of a column that went along Trumpington Road at a steady walk. I went with Dick, first on foot and then on horseback; for it wasn't long before I was heaved up on to the spare horse beside him. The back of the horse was so broad that when I straddled it, I was doing the splits. Not a good seat to play the part of Dick Turpin and Buffalo Bill, but somehow I managed it.

I liked Dick so much that I wanted to go out with him in the evening.

'You can't,' he said. 'Me and my mate go out after girls.'

Girls! I was filled with contempt. And when I saw him set off with his mate, spit-and-polish from head to foot, I despaired. That was his only fault and one day when I found him and his horses gone, I felt lost. War brought excitement, but there was a price to pay for it.

To that background, I became acquainted with the Companion Papers - Magnet, Gem, Boys' Friend, Dreadnought, Penny Popular, and Chuckles. The first was a Gem. Tom Merry and Co., got up a fund to help soldiers at the front. They challenged St. Jim's first eleven to a football match to help the fund. The first eleven accepted the challenge but ridiculed it by playing in top hats and evening suits. An illustration showed Kildare, the School captain, removing his top hat as he headed the ball in the net.

I welcomed the early adventures of Harry Wharton and Co., in the Dreadnought and Tom Merry and Co., in the Penny Popular; and a find in the shape of back numbers was a four-room cottage in a side street, the front room converted into a little grocery-shop kept by an old lady who dealt in the weeklies at half-price or exchange two for one as a sideline. She was small and always wore a black dress that touched the ground; her husband, a little man with a heavy, black moustache, hawked coal. He grumbled continuously about boys cluttering up the place every time he passed in and out. Meek and mild, she smiled benignly, whispered 'Don't take any notice of him', and went on displaying her stock, which she took down from shelves lining two-thirds of one wall. How I liked going through it; there was no telling what I might come across. But only every back numer of the Magnet and Gem would have satisfied me.

Talbot had arrived at St. Jim's a few months before I read the Gem and, soon under his sway, I was filled with regret that I hadn't read the previous stories about him; especially, how he gained the King's Pardon for his misdeeds by saving a troop train from being wrecked by a German spy. I never read those stories as a boy - readers must have hoarded their copies - but I read some of the abridged versions when they were reprinted in the 1930's - the time my son was reading them.

And now I come to a problem. I didn't like any of the new boys that arrived at St. Jim's while I read the Gem and they came thick and fast during the first world war. Some, like Racke and Trimble, couldn't be liked, but Cardew, apparently a popular character, I disliked as much as the rest. Would I have disliked the Toff had I met him as a new boy? Anyway, that didn't happen and though Tom Merry was the king-pin, he was overshadowed at the time by Talbot, whose shoes I lived in. How much was shown on a cold, wet morning in April 1915. Occasionally, I went with a handcart to the Gas Works for ½ cwt. of coke. I stopped when I came to Dobby Loker's paper-shop, put the shafts of the handcart on the ground and went in and bought the week's Gem: For Another's Sake. The cover picture was of Dr. Holmes and Talbot on the steps of the School and bore the words 'The Midnight Expulsion'. Gore was the villain of the piece - he often was in those days - and Talbot, the schoolboy cracksman, to save him from disgrace, had ventured to tamper with the Head's safe, and been discovered doing it.

Talbot expelled! How unhappy I was as I got going again with the handcart. Unhappy? Downright miserable.

I liked the Toff tales and the hint of young love between Talbot and Marie Rivers, with her father, the Professor, and Hookey Walker, as a pair of crooks; but there was an overtone of gloom about them, as there was in so many of the Gem stories of the period. I wanted them like those of the early days of Tom Merry and Co., in the Penny Popular - lighthearted tales of life in and around St. Jim's, the old school basking in sunshine, or covered in snow.

The war spirit in the Magnet and Gem was in keeping with the times, and I was so thrilled by the clashes between the various Co's and Germans on land and sea that even now, over sixty years later, I remember some of them in detail. To me, The Cruise Of The Famous Five was outstanding. Ponsonby and Co., of Highcliffe set a barge adrift on which were the Famous Five; it got blown out to sea and they came into conflict with a German warship. Adroit manoeuvring on the part of Frank Richards to keep the English members of the Co., free from bloodshed was for Inky, an Indian, to use a pistol when it was necessary.

One of my weekly jobs was going to the coalyard for ½ cwt. of coal. An old wheelwright a few streets away let out handcarts at a penny an hour. He had a long white beard and if he hadn't been so grumpy over keeping the handcart an extra few minutes, I'd have liked him, as he looked like Father Christmas; but he would keep harping on those few minutes, even wanting another penny for them - he didn't get it. I knew which were the light and heavy handcarts; the lightest happened to be the biggest and so the best all round, as a lot of coal in it looked a little and the yardman gave me more. The coalyard was over a mile away; I paid sevenpence at the gate-office for the ½ cwt. of coal; then, I pushed and pulled the handcart across the yard, sometimes, through mud and slush to my boot-tops, to a row of coal trucks. A short, sturdy, rosy-faced yardman was in one of them. He had a big shovel and knowing how the poor lived as he was one of them, he knew how to use it. I held the handcart steady while he shovelled coal into it. That done, he jumped down from the truck to help me out of the yard. He came to my right side as I pulled between the shafts, a big, coal-grimed hand closed over mine,

and I dropped in it the penny tip that would buy him half a pint of beer. On the road, I always stopped to see how much coal I'd got - usually, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., which gave us a good fire all the week.

When I worked out of school hours, I went to the coalyard before breakfast; at other times, more or less when I liked. One Saturday, I went mid-morning. The yardmen were having their lunch of bread and cheese in a shed and I sat on top of the tipped-up handcart and read a Magnet, Sportsmen All, while I waited. The story opens on a warm evening in July with No. 1 study in the Remove passage filled to overflowing to celebrate a win over Redclyffe at cricket. Remarks like 'Jam this way', 'Buck up with those sardines, Franky', 'Any more tea in the pot, Squiff?' show the juniors are in high spirits. D'Arcy, of St. Jim's arrives to say his patah is presenting a silver cup for competition in a series of sporting events between St. Jim's, Greyfriars, Rookwood and Highcliffe and is arranging with the Heads of the schools for a week's holiday to be granted for it.

Everything is staged and comes off, with Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, Cousin Ethel, and Marie Rivers, among the spectators. The story is laced throughout with humour, Prout, Gosling and Coker well to the fore in providing it. Peter Todd, disgruntled because he isn't included in the boat-race, forms his own eight: Bunter, Alonzo Todd, Dutton and Skinner, four of the crew, leads to farce - followed by drama, Harry Wharton saving Peter from drowning.

Highcliffe wins the boat-race, Smithson fainting over his oar-handle and De Courcy (the Caterpillar) needing to be lifted out of the boat and massaged for five minutes before he can stand. Bob Cherry wins the hundred yards in 10 4/5 seconds, De Courcy wins the quarter-mile, Tom Merry wins the half-mile (no times stated), Figgins wins the mile in 4 minutes 55 seconds, Talbot wins the hurdle-race, Wilkinson of Highcliffe wins the high jump and long jump, Mark Linley wins the 13 miles marathon, Vernon Smith, his pacemaker, crying with exchaustion as he throws himself down on the grass beside the road in sight of the school gates - the finishing line - and coming into his own by throwing the cricket ball 93 yards to win. The tug-of-war resolves itself into Bunter v Fatty Wynn, the Greyfriars team winning. The swimming sports include a pyjama-and-candle race and picking up plates from the bottom of the swimming-bath; Monty Lowther wins the former, De Courcy, with twenty plates, the latter. Knockouts predominate in the 10-round boxing contests, Bob Cherry laying out Tom Merry in the 8th round. (Grundy had recently arrived at St. Jim's and as a fighter had reigned supreme until Tom Merry took him on in the dormitory and licked him. Bob and Tom were two of my favourites and, ideally matched, a better result would have been a draw.)

Greyfriars wins Lord Eastwood's silver cup - to be expected.

Sportsmen All, written by G. R. Samways, had a summery air. I liked it when I was young and I like it now I am old.

Chance enabled me to keep my copy.

There was a national appeal for weekly and monthly magazines, to be handed in at any Post Office, for the troops in France. On a wave of enthusiasm, I sent

400 Magnets and Gems. Long after, I found Sportsman All in a pocket of the old jacket I used to wear when going to the coalyard. I've still got it - the only red-cover Magnet among the few I have.

Chuckles Wade met me as I entered the school playground on a summer afternoon. He held up a Gem called The Fighting Prefect. 'Cor, talk about good,' he said. 'All about an old boy turning up at St. Jim's to give Ratty a good hiding - he chases him all over the place.'

I never knew whether Chuckles got his nickname from the weekly comic, but it suited him, and I can still hear his laughter over the calamity that descened on the crabby New House master. In spite of Ratty having a down on Darrell, he stepped in and saved him from the old boy after his blood. A story to gladden a schoolboy's heart.

(Chuckles became a keen cyclist and after he married I often saw him and his wife cycling round the countryside. The spirit of Greyfriars and St. Jim's still lived in him. The time came when he cycled alone. I met him in Boots. He was stout, bald and grey, but still smiling. His comment on his ageing self, 'I'm not even a museum piece, now,' brought back warm memories of our schooldays and the weeklies we had shared together.)

Levison hadn't yet reformed when I first read the Gem. His cynical manner and scheming ways sometimes led to his own undoing. That was the case in Nobody's Study, a double number I came across in the little old lady's grocery-shop. I returned home in the damp of a winter evening to find the fire in our kitchen-workshop burning low. 'Wind in the wrong direction,' said my father. Seemingly, the wind kept in the wrong direction, for in spite of my building up the fire and trying to stir it into a blaze, it continued to burn low - and smoked. And that made the room look cheerless.

My father, a shoemaker, worked by the light of a little swing oil-lamp, the light shielded from his eyes by a shade that darkened the rest of the room. Sitting low on a chair to be in the light, I read Nobody's Study, called that at St. Jim's as it was only used as a punishment-room. There was a legend in the school that a monk once disappeared from the room, leaving all his clothes behind him, and was never seen again. Levison goads Tom Merry into staying a night in the room. The gas goes out; there are mysterious rustlings; something cold touches Tom's neck as he stands in the pitch darkness. He bolts. The next night, to show more pluck, Levison stays in the room. In the morning, he's disappeared, his clothes a little heap on the floor.

The part of the room in shadow became peopled with ghosts as I read. Their number was increased by a story called The Hound Of The Moor in the same issue. An illustration showed a man madly thrashing along a horse pulling the cart he is in, a big dog chasing behind. I didn't read it. The room had become creepy enough. I kept on looking over my shoulder as I went upstairs to bed in the guttering light of a candle.

An even more spine-chilling story was the Gem - A Shadow In The School.

Lumley-Lumley knocked down and injured in saving Herries' dog Towser is believed to be dead. Levison, a new boy at St. Jim's, thinks he's in a trance and with Mellish accompanying him, he goes in the middle of the night to the vaults under the chapel to look at Lumley-Lumley in his coffin. Trembling with fear, Mellish stands in the pitch dark outside the vault while Levison goes in with a lighted lantern. Mellish hears Lumley-Lumley speaking and mad with fright runs away.

I read the story alone in the house at night - a gloomy old house with two flights of boxed-in stairs that creaked and harboured ghosts - I knew they were there, waiting for me in the dark - and filled with horror I went and played in the street to get my nerve back.

A bit later, I worked as an errand-boy for a high-class tailors' shop. The father and two sons that owned the business lived in a large, new-built house on the outskirts of the town. They came to work wearing frock coats and silk hats. These they removed in a back room; then, in silk shirts and starched collars, they got on with their trade. Their clientele was upper crust and when a gentleman of the university entered the shop, one of them quickly slipped on a smart jacket to meet him and discuss his order. They were kind to me in an aloof way and as I went to the shop straight from school in the afternoon, they asked me several times to have tea at their table after they had finished. I always declined. The reason was simple. I washed up the tea-things and I couldn't stand the smell of the stinking tea-cloth. My father had a mania for cleanliness and tea-cloths of that sort weren't used in our house. When there were no errands to run, I had to stand out of sight in a little alcove - in the dim light of a low-burning gas-jet as it got dark. I read while waiting. One dismal evening it was a Magnet - Spirited Away. A small boy in the second form at Greyfriars was kidnapped - carried away in a postman's bag. I didn't like the title: that suggested the next world, about which the less I knew the better. The dim-lit alcove became filled with shadowy figures intent on shoving me in a bag and taking me off to suffer the torments of the damned. I wasn't heir to a throne, nor a millionaire's son, but there was no telling what those shadowy figures would get up to if I wasn't. I was glad when I escaped from them by taking a parcel to a nearby college.

I had proof that dismal surroundings were not needed to scare me. One sunny morning when I was away from school - on some pretext or another I was often away from school - I wandered on to the Plantun, a tree-lined road bordered by a brook near my home and sat on a seat in the shade to read one of the Circle Of Thirteen stories in the Boys' Friend. Harvey Keene, detective, was eliminating one of a gang of master criminals every week. The silence of the night was suddenly broken to the people in a house by a piercing scream in the garden. The scream, though I read of it in the bright light of the day, chilled me to the bone. Quickly, I got up and went home. (I found out later that a man murdered in the garden in mysterious circumstances - no footprints, no clues - had been strangled by an ape sitting in one of the trees there.)

Bunter's sleepwalking, which I read of in the Dreadnought, with illustrations of him on a rooftop gave me the creeps. Perhaps, because I was a nascent altophobist. And talking of Bunter, I liked him in those days, especially in Bunter

The Blade, which I bought in such springlike weather that for thirty years I thought it came out in April instead of February, the month of Mediterranean blue skies in England. The cover picture of Bunter, sitting on a stile, resplendent in Etons and topper, a master - probably Mr. Quelch - nearby, and two boys running away in the distance, is as clear to me now as when I first saw it sixty-one years ago. But Bunter became too much of a good thing. Apart from his many failings, he 'bade fare to crack his glasses' and 'glared like a basilisk' too much for me - and for my friend, John Fayers, who, fed up with slogging on at the Gas Works from 6.0 a.m. to 6.0 p.m. for a few shillings a week, gave me all his Nelson Lees and joined the army, to like that even less when Pathans took pot-shots at him on the North-West Frontier.

Spring, summer, autumn, winter, the Magnet and Gem thrilled me. And not for a year or two - FOR LIFE.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: Bunter hardback novels: Bunter's Bargain, Bunter's Treasure Hunt, Bunter's Christmas Party.

SIMON GARRETT

BATHWICK HOUSE, BATH, AVON, BA2 6NX.

= =

A Merry Christmas to all collectors and special thanks to Eric Fayne. Many more happy New Years for Collectors' Digest. Still wanted: Mistress Mariner, Serendipity Shop, School In The Wood, The "Sally" Books, all by Dorita Fairlie Bruce; also William The Superman, William The Lawless by Richmal Crompton, and School Friend Annuals, 1942, 1943; Girls Crystal Annuals, 1940, 1941; Golden Annual For Girls 1929, 1939; Schoolgirls' Own Annual 1942.

MARY CADOGAN

46 OVERBURY AVENUE, BECKENHAM, KENT

Tel. 01-650-7023

= =

WANTED: Boys' Own Paper for June, July, 1942; F. S. Brereton's King Of Ranleigh, Trapped In The Jungle, With Wolseley to Kumasi.

J. W. DOUPE, Urbanizacion Prixmar 43, Tacoronte, Tenerife, Canary Islands.

= =

Kind regards friends, cobbers, both hemispheres. WANTED: Penny Plucks, 155, 158, 160, 165, 173, 176, 198, 248, 250, 546.

CYRIL ROWE, LINDENS, HORSFORD, NORWICH.

= =

The Third Murray

AND THE HON. JOHN LAWLESS

by JOSIE PACKMAN

Readers of Blakiana in a recent issue of the monthly C. D. will recall the article on "Father and Son" authors jointly written by Don Harkness and myself.

Whilst looking up references to check details for the above article I had occasion to read through the whole of that magnificent contribution to Blakiana, 18 instalments of the "Century Makers" by the late Walter Webb. At the time when William Murray Graydon and Robert Murray were keeping the flag of the Union Jack flying, a third Murray was contributing a fantastic number of stories to the Saga. This was Andrew Murray the famous creator of those incredible crooks Kew and Carlac. However, it is not about them I wish to write but of Andrew Murray and his gentleman adventurer - The Hon. John Lawless.

Before commencing this work I decided to look through as many issues of the Collectors' Digest as possible including the Annuals, just to see whether anyone else had "done" this character before.

Well, I did read them. What a splendid way to spend a Saturday morning and afternoon. Forgotten was the TV and the Charlie Chaplin film I had intended to see as well as the film in the afternoon. I started on those C. D. 's and read every issue of Blakiana from 1953 onwards and other items as well. I heartily recommend such a treat to all lovers of the C. D. whatever may be their interests. What a host of memories can be revived. I never stoppef for lunch just read on. My cat Bebe had been fed so she went fast asleep beside me in her own armchair. Dinner was finally achieved at 7 p. m. I had all the information I wanted so back to the object of this article, a tale of two English Gentlemen, Andrew Murray and the Hon. John Lawless.

Andrew Murray was born in 1880 and wrote his first Sexton Blake story for the Union Jack in 1911. Although I cannot trace any description of him I should imagine him to have been very much like his creation, the Hon. John Lawless who was "tall dark and handsome". The first tale of Lawless was U. J. No. 550 in 1914, "A Bid for a Battleship". He was described as an adventurer who "sailed close to the wind" at times, but he was certainly an English gentleman, his mother being Countess of Warlowe and his father a famous Arctic explorer. He inherited his father's love of exploration and most of his younger days had been spent travelling around the world. How easy it was to do such a thing in those days of the early 20th century!!!

I must interrupt here to say that for some inexplicable reason the Hon. John Lawless and his coloured valet Sam, were originally called Lawliss and Pete. The change was made apparently without any explanation, at least I cannot find any. A couple of the stories in 1916 are missing from my collection and in the next issue

I possess the names appeared as Lawless and Sam. Anyway, from the first Lawless story in the Sexton Blake Library in 1917, the Hon. John Lawless and Sam was the "order of the day".

Andrew Murray was a most prolific writer, he became the second Century Maker. Whether he travelled a lot as a young man we do not know but many of his tales were of overseas adventures with very authentic backgrounds. The number of Lawless tales in the Union Jack was 20 and 33 in the Sexton Blake Library. These 33 appeared between 1917 and 1923, quite an achievement considering all the other work Andrew was contributing at that time. His Kew and Carlac stories were still being published as well as two new characters - Humble Begge and Count Bonalli, the Owl.

In that first U.J. story aforementioned we learn that the Hon. John Lawless and Sexton Blake are old friends. Blake certainly had a lot of old friends, must be all those fellows he went to school with. However, friends they were and Blake had often warned John about his proclivity for getting into trouble through wanting to help people, especially those in real distress. Many of the adventures chronicled by Andrew Murray were just that. By some extraordinary chance Lawless would get involved with people, be it when just taking a walk in the usually quiet square where his mother lived or a chance encounter in a country inn. Apart from this Lawless had at one time been a King's Messenger and still on occasion was requested by the F.O. to take on a mission. Such a one was behind the story related in S.B.L. No. 35, called The Half Caste. A tale of skulduggery on the West coast of Africa, and that's what is at the root of the trouble - a black skull!!!!

Many and varied were the lands to which Andrew sent his gentleman adventurer as well as Sexton Blake and Tinker. From West Africa back to Italy and then to Africa again to a place called Kooloolomba and a "City of the Apes" truly a forerunner of the "Planet of the Apes", trained gorillas who captured Tinker. Looking through more S.B.L's I found they all had more adventures in Syria, the South Seas, Australia, a visit to the Holy Land in that grand tale "The Mosque of the Mahdi". In the "Red Crescent" Lawless, Blake and Tinker end up in Afghanistan and the tale called "Blood Brotherhood" they encounter curious and mysterious Indian Magic. These and many other adventures in foreign lands are part of the Lawless story, many of the intricate plots worthy of being hardcover best-sellers and better than many a film plot.

Truly Andrew Murray was a very gifted writer of detective-cum-adventure tales with Sexton Blake and Lawless working together for the good of all. I feel this part of his work for the Blake Saga has been largely overshadowed by his possibly more well-known crooks Kew and Carlac. For myself I prefer the tales of an "English Gentleman".

May I finish by being allowed to quote the definition of an English gentleman as written by H. Rider Haggard to his son in the story of Allan Quatermain:-

> "In the hope that in days to come he and many other boys whom I shall never know, may in the acts and thoughts of Allan Quatermain and his companions find something to help him and them to reach to what, with Sir Henry Curtis,

I hold to be the highest rank whereto we can attain - the state and dignity of English Gentlemen".

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: BOYS' FRIEND 3d/4d LIBRARY (1st Series): 302, 429, 433, 669, 723, 727; BOYS' FRIEND 4d LIBRARY (2nd Series): 22,52,58,68,79,90,111,156,194, 204,230,254,302,419,523,530; THRILLER 4d LIBRARY No. 3: Three Die at Midnight by John Hunter, and No. 11: Killer Aboard by G. H. Teed; SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY (1st Series): 11,156,219,229,255,271,283,307,312,356,371; SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY (2nd Series): 1,8,16,19,21,25,35,41,52,85,89,119,123,129,144, 153,155,161,165,183,188,200,207,236,250,261,262,267,272,273,281,291,297, 317, 345,356,362,368,374,384,391,405,463,464,536,590,615,628,640,644,646,663,687, 692,693,703,707,718. Also A Leap Through Space by Lester Bidston (Drane, 1921). All items must be in good to mint collectors' condition - not tatty or over-worn. Will pay good prices for all.
Season's Greetings to all old friends, and congratulations to Eric Fayne on C.D's Pearl Jubilee, from:

CHRISTOPHER LOWDER

"EYETHERMES", CRADLEY, Near MALVERN, WORCESTERSHIRE.

= =

The largest Old Boys' Book stock at your disposal! Write or phone for wants! Appointment please if calling to see Aladdin's Cave! Special Sale of "fair" copies in all sections at greatly reduced prices, besides usual stock.
All the very best to customers/friends for Xmas and the New Year.

NORMAN SHAW

84 BELVEDERE RD., LONDON, SE19 2HZ.

Tel. 01-771-9857

= =

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all my friends in the London O. B. B. C. and to our Editor, Eric, who makes our year one of delight and enjoyment.
WANTED: Bullseyes, "who doesn't"; also B. F. L., Nelson Lee and Historical Stories and S. B. O. No. 185, "The Phantom Of The Highlands".

SAM THURBON

29 STRAWBERRY HILL RD., TWICKENHAM, MIDDLESEX. Phone 892-5314

= =

WANTED: S.B.L's, 2nd series, numbers 697, 352, 357, 413.

MRS. J. PACKMAN

27 ARCHDALE RD., E. DULWICH, LONDON, SE22 9HL.

The Adventures of an Adventure Story

by ROBERT BLYTHE

Way back in 1969, during my series of articles on the E. S. Brooks correspondence, I dwelt briefly on the story "Among the Solar Planets", and indicated that the correspondence on this particular title was interesting, but too lengthy to be dealt with at that time. Well, the space is now available, the time is right, and I have the inclination. Three things which do not always coincide - especially the latter qualification!

However, to begin.

We begin in April 1910 with a letter to the editor of "Chums".

9th April, 1910.

The Editor,
"CHUMS"

Dear Sir,

I beg to enclose herewith the MS. of a 60,000-word adventure story entitled "AMONG THE SOLAR PLANETS".

May I ask you to give special attention to this MS.?

I have written the story especially for "Chums", and as you know something about my work (having read "OSWALD RAYMOND'S PERIL", the style of which you said was "quite nice") I should esteem it a favour if you would let me have as early decision as possible.

I enclose stamped and addressed post-card for acknowledgment.

Awaiting the favour of your reply,

I am, Dear Sir,
Faithfully Yours,
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

This was duly acknowledged but with a slightly disapproving note from the MSS clerk.

MSS. Department,
11th April, '10

Dear Sir,

We beg to acknowledge the receipt of your MS. "Among the Solar Planets". May I point out that no postage is enclosed for its return should it prove unsuitable.

Yours faithfully,
THE MSS. CLERK

Our Edwy must have suffered a lapse of memory at this point, for he then offered it to Hamilton Edwards before hearing from the editor of "Chums".

22nd April, 1910.

Hamilton Edwards, Esqre.,
Managing Editor,
Harmsworth's Boys' Papers, etc.

Dear Sir,

I have just completed a 65,000-word story for boys, entitled "Among the Solar Planets" - which title explains the nature of the tale. If this is likely to be of service to you for any of your publications I shall be very pleased to forward it for your consideration if you will kindly let me know.

I may add that I have had many stories published by Messrs. C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., and Messrs. Shurey's, and a boys' serial which I wrote immediately previous to the above mentioned work has just been accepted by Messrs. James Henderson & Sons.

I enclosed stamped and addressed envelope for reply, and thank you in anticipation for an early answer.

I am, Dear Sir,
Faithfully Yours,
E. S. B.

P. S. I am also a regular weekly contributor to a South Wales periodical. E. S. B.
P. P. S. I have for many years made a study of the papers which you control, so that I am fully conversant with your main requirements. E. S. B.

In reply came a note which must have put E. S. B. in a quandary.

Fleet Street
April 25th, 1910.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter, I shall be pleased to give my best consideration to your story "Among the Solar Planets". Kindly address the MS to "The Editor, The Boys' Friend".

Yours faithfully,
THE EDITOR

I don't suppose Edwy would have minded who published it, providing someone did, but he had to get an answer from "Chums" as soon as possible, or sooner, even.

26th April, 1910.

The Editor,
CHUMS

Dear Sir,

On the 9th inst. I sent you typescript of a 65,000 word adventure story, entitled Among The Solar Planets, stating that I had written it especially for Chums, and asking you to favour me with as early a decision as possible with regard to its suitability or otherwise.

If you have had an opportunity of reading and considering the work, I shall be obliged if you will kindly let me have your views in relation to it.

I enclose 6d. in stamps - 4d. postage, 2d. registration - and if the story does not meet with your requirements I shall be glad if you will kindly send it back to me by return of post, so that I may offer it elsewhere without any unnecessary delay.

Faithfully yours,
EDWY S. BROOKS

It wasn't until after a couple of weeks of nail-biting that he got his answer - a rather deflating one for an aspiring author - but an answer.

"CHUMS"

11th May, 1910.

Dear Sir,

I have read your serial with considerable interest, but regret that it is not quite the kind of thing we are looking for. If you will pardon me for pointing it out to you, I would suggest that the chief fault the story has from the point of view of a serial is that the adventures on each of the planets are not sufficiently different. On each planet the adventurers meet with weird inhabitants and fall into their hands and then fall out again. It seems to me that you have missed chances of really thrilling adventures. However, that is only a personal opinion with which perhaps you may differ.

Again thanking you for letting me see the story,

Yours faithfully,

However, deflating or not, it didn't stop him sending it to the editor of the "Boys' Friend". I blush for him over the comments made in the first paragraph, but - all's fair, etc., etc.

17th May, 1910.

The Editor,
The "Boys' Friend"

Dear Sir,

I regret not having replied before to your letter of the 25th ult. wherein you requested me to send you my story Among The Solar Planets, which I had then just finished writing. The typing now being completed I have pleasure in submitting the MS. for your consideration.

As you will notice, suggestion is made towards the end with regard to a sequel to the story. If you are favourably impressed with Among The Solar Planets I shall immediately commence writing the sequel. Should you prefer it, however, I could easily alter the last chapters and add a further 40,000 words (making about 100,000 words in all) and thus convert it into one long story. I shall await your decision with some expectancy.

I am, Dear Sir,
Faithfully Yours,
E. S. B.

It would only gild the lily were I to offer any comments of my own between the next batch of letters, and so I will let them speak for themselves, but from here on the story takes on an amusing aspect - although I'm sure that Edwy did not find it so.

24th May, 1910.

The Editor,
The BOYS' FRIEND

Dear Sir,

On the 17th inst. I wrote you, enclosing - at your request - the typescript of a 65,000-word serial for boys entitled "Among the Solar Planets". I registered the parcel. I did not receive any acknowledgment from you, but by this afternoon's post a perfect stranger writes me informing me that he had found my story in Fleet Street, on Sunday, the 22nd inst.!!

I am at present endeavouring to regain possession, and in the meantime perhaps you will kindly make inquiries at your end with a view to ascertaining how this extraordinary state of affairs came to pass.

I am naturally a little upset about the matter as I was anticipating a notification from you as to whether the story would be acceptable or not.

Awaiting your reply,

I am, Dear Sir,
Faithfully Yours,
E. S. B.

Fleet Street
25th May, 1910.

Edwy Searles Brooks, Esqre.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter, I am naturally exceedingly sorry to hear that your MS "Among the Solar Planets" has gone astray and am quite at a loss to account for the miscarriage. On receipt of your copy I gave it a careful personal reading and wrote to you explaining in detail my reasons for rejecting the tale, at the same time suggesting that you should submit more of your work for consideration.

According to my Postal Account Book your MS was duly posted to you on the Thursday and my first notification that anything was out of course was the receipt of yours this morning.

I am naturally anxious to have the matter cleared and to ascertain if possible the cause of the trouble. Will you please be good enough to let me know if you can whether the stamps on the parcel were cancelled or otherwise?

Yours faithfully,
THE EDITOR

26th May, 1910.

The Editor,
"The Boys' Friend"

Dear Sir,

Your letter to hand with thanks. I have obtained the MS. of "Among the Solar Planets" back, thanks to Mr. Henry Pattingson, 85 Swan Street, Trinity Street, S. E., into whose hands it fell. I note your remarks and am writing him by this same post asking him to send me all particulars as to how the MS. was found and where. When I received them from him I will let you know, so that you can ascertain how the story got astray.

I was surprised to learn that you had rejected my tale and returned it on the Thursday, for it only reached your office the day before. However, you say you wrote me, explaining in detail your reasons for rejection. That letter I have not, of course, received. Can you let me have an exact copy of it?

I do not think the M. S. could have been wrapped in paper at all, for the outside pages (minus the covers, which are missing altogether) are in a very dirty state. I am enclosing the first and last pages for your inspection.

Immediately on hearing from Mr. Pattinson - who is being put to considerable trouble through this matter - I shall write you again, and then perhaps we shall learn something more definite.

Faithfully Yours,
E. S. B.

Fleet Street
27th May, 1910.

Edwy Searles Brooks, Esqre.

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday's date. I am glad at least that you have got your MS back, and shall await your next communication with interest.

Regarding the tale itself, I gave it a careful reading almost as soon as it came in. I like the style in which the story is written but the subject of "Among the Solar Planets" is too much against it. From previous experience I know perfectly well that such stories are not appreciated by my boys and if I may say so I consider your yarn better suited for publication in book form than serially. In my opinion the highly-imaginative style of fiction is quite unsuited for the working-class boy.

I am sorry not to be able to make use of "Among the Solar Planets" but I should like to see something else from you. It is more satisfactory to me if authors will submit synopses in advance of the actual copy.

Yours faithfully,
THE EDITOR

28th May, 1910.

The Editor,
"The Boys' Friend"

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 27th, and for your criticism of my story "Among the Solar Planets". I am glad you like my style of writing and shall be very pleased to send you on further work from my pen. At present, however, I am unaware as to what length story would suit you best. I am now engaged upon writing a circus story which will be something about 40,000 words when completed. May I send you the synopsis of this? Or if that is too short for the "Friend" may I send along the synopsis of a "Sexton Blake" story for the "Union Jack?"

Regarding the matter of "Among the Solar Planets" I have received a reply from Mr. Pattinson this morning and what he says seems to prove that my MS. was never put in the post at all. For your benefit I reproduce the letter in its entirety:-

"65 Swan Street
Trinity Street,
S.E. 27/5/10

"Dear Sir,

Yours of 26th to hand. I received P.O. by 4 p.m. delivery; MS. was sent at noon. No trouble at all, am only too glad to be of assistance to you. It was between 9.30 and 10 p.m., Sunday, 22nd, when I picked it up outside the "Daily Chronicle" Offices. It had the appearance of being a small roll of waste paper, as its wrappings of two pieces of brown paper were very much torn at the ends, and it was tied round the centre with an old brown bootlace. I kicked it and as it appeared rather hard picked it up and tore off its dirty wrappings, unfortunately throwing them away; then seeing that it appeared to be a story, took it home. I feel sure there were no stamps on it, nor writing. It was rather dirty; that was why I tore off its cover, but if there had been stamps or writing on it I think I should have noticed it.

"If it was posted on the previous Thursday - according to the Editor of the "Boys' Friend" - it seems a very mysterious matter for it to be found in the street three days afterwards.

"I trust you will get to the bottom of it and am only too willing to give you my assistance in the matter and answer any further questions that you may ask.

"I am, Dear Sir,
"Yours Faithfully,
"HY PATTINSON"

As you will see Mr. Pattinson writes very nicely and I dislike putting him to all this trouble. It is quite evident the MS. was never even prepared for the post; even an office-boy would not roll it up, much less secure it with an old brown bootlace! It is unfortunate that Mr. Pattinson threw the wrappers away, but as he says it is probable they bore no writing or stamps.

I sincerely trust that you will discover at your end how the manuscript came to be in such a peculiar condition, and shall look forward with anticipation to your reply. I may say that a good part of the MS. will have to be re-typed before I can send it out again.

I am, Dear Sir,
Faithfully Yours,
E. S. B.

Fleet Street
30th May, 1910.

Edwy Searles Brooks, Esqre.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter. I am making the most careful enquiries into the matter of your MS and will let you know later what I am able to trace of the cause of the miscarriage.

Regarding your circus story I should be most delighted to receive the synopsis and the topic is a distinctly promising one.

The writer has no control of the "Union Jack" and you should communicate with the Editor of that

journal direct.

Yours faithfully,
THE EDITOR
The Boys' Friend

June 1st, 1910.

The Editor,
"The Boys' Friend"

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for yours of the 30th ult.

I thank you for the attention which you are giving to the matter of the lost MS., and note that you will let me hear from you again in regard to it when you have been able to trace the cause of the miscarriage.

Faithfully Yours,
E. S. B.

Fleet Street
June 10th, 1910.

Edwy Searles Brooks, Esqre.

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your MS 'Caravan and Canvas" which I will carefully read in the course of next week. I am sorry to say that so far I have been unable to penetrate further into the matter of your other MS beyond ascertaining that it is entered in our postbook as having been safely dispatched.

Yours faithfully,
THE EDITOR

And with that we shall have to be satisfied, because there are no more allusions to it in the correspondence. My own opinion, for what it's worth, is that it was "borrowed" by an office boy, who probably enjoyed it, in spite of the editor's opinion that "the highly imaginative style of fiction is quite unsuited to the working class boy".

Why it was found in Fleet Street, tied up with an old brown boot-lace is another matter. Perhaps the editor was right after all, and my office boy didn't enjoy it, and expressed his opinion by throwing it away - who knows?

Still, Edwy had the last laugh, because, nine years later, in the "Nelson Lee Library" for 1919/1920, appeared the serial "In Trackless Space", which was our old friend with a new title. What is more, in 1920 the whole thing was reprinted in the "Boys' Friend Library", 1st, Ser. No. 504. And so, as the old song says "who has the last laugh now?"

P.S. Some of these letters have already appeared in the C.D. for 1968 and 1969, but are repeated for the sake of completeness.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Christmas and New Year Greetings to all "C.D." and Annual readers; Club Members, collectors and especially all of the late Edwy Searles Brooks' "customers".

WILLIAM LISTER, 137 CUNLIFFE RD., BLACKPOOL, FY1 6RX.

SEXTON BLAKE'S PAST

by S. GORDON SWAN

Faithful followers of the Sexton Blake Saga will recall the tales of his boyhood days which first appeared as serials and then in book form in The Boys' Friend Library (First Series). These were respectively No. 102, "Sexton Blake at School", No. 105, "Sexton Blake in the Sixth" and No. 107, "Sexton Blake at Oxford".

In the first of these narratives Blake was introduced as a boy living in a martello tower with a certain Dr. Lanchester, who taught him many things, including independence and self-reliance. One day the doctor sent his ward out to shoot teal, and when the boy returned to the tower he found Dr. Lanchester dead -- murdered. A letter of instruction informed the boy that he must go to an address in London, a journey for which money had been provided.

At the house in London two middle-aged men heard of the death of Dr. Lanchester and decided that the boy must go to school. "We will call him Sexton Blake", said one, and the other replied: "Sexton Blake; it gives a clue to the truth, yet conceals it."

How Blake went to St. Anne's in "a plain carriage drawn by a pair of magnificent bays" and met Spots Losely, who was to become a lifelong friend, is ancient history. Blake's true identity was never revealed, however, although he did say in the second story that the house he went to in London was "a certain Embassy".

When these stories by Cecil Hayter were reprinted in the B. F. L. (Second Series) in 1933 -- under the name of John Andrews -- Blake was provided with a father, Dr. Berkeley Blake, which was consistent with the revelations about his family contained in No. 1 of The Detective Weekly, "Sexton Blake's Secret", by Jack Lewis.

What may not be so well-known is that there was another version of the detective's juvenile career which ran serially in The Pilot in 1937, entitled "Sexton Blake at School". The Pilot specialised in the fictionalised schooldays of various notabilities, from Guy Fawkes and Buffalo Bill to Harry Houdini. The present writer does not possess the opening instalments of this particular story, but it probably began in No. 73 or No. 74, and definitely finished in No. 91.

Judging by the synopsis in No. 75, the tale began in exactly the same way as Cecil Hayter's account, with Blake living in a martello tower with Dr. Lanchester and being sent out on a shooting expedition to get him out of the way. (Blake adopted precisely the same tactics with Tinker in the story "Tinker Abroad", it may be noted.) When the boy returns to the tower, a variation from the original appears -- he discovers that Dr. Lanchester has been carried away in a boat by three men.

As in the first episode, Blake finds a letter giving him an address in London, where he finds two other guardians, Sir Charles Durex and a man named Burton.

These two decide to send the boy to Claverdon Abbey School, and Blake's arrival here is in contrast to his appearance at St. Anne's -- he is driven up in a sleekly magnificent Rolls Royce. As this story was written in 1937 and Blake's schooldays must have been approximately 25 years before, one would imagine cars of this description were a rarity and possibly an anachronism.

Blake cannot get anyone to tell him his real identity: his guardians plead secrecy, and the headmaster of Claverdon Abbey is no more confidential on the subject. The boy possesses an antique ring, however, which is found to be the royal ring of the Duchy of Karenberg -- a symbol of authority in that country. At school the boy soon tangles with a burly scholar known as Bull Bristow and has a fight with him, after which they become friends. Bristow takes the place filled by Sir Richard Losely in the original version, and appears in an adult role in another Blake serial in The Pilot called "The Flaming Frontier".

There are attempts on Blake's life and the boy does not trust his two guardians, Sir Charles Durex and the man Burton. Nor does he trust Bristow when he finds out that Burton is Bristow's uncle, and for a time there is a rift between the two friends. Blake's main enemy, however, is a man known as "His Excellency", otherwise The Margrave of Julian-Schwartzheim, who had been Finance Minister to the Duchy of Karenberg. This man, a malevolent hunchback, is keeping prisoner a boy who is the exact double of Sexton Blake.

Numerous adventures and narrow escapes follow, and on one occasion Blake leaves the school in an effort to solve the mystery surrounding him. He is followed by Bull Bristow, who comes to Blake's rescue at a desperate moment, thus restoring their old friendship.

The two proceed to Hawksbay Manor, which His Excellency has made his headquarters and where Blake's double is imprisoned. Blake succeeds in rescuing this boy and finds out that he is known as Prince Rupert of Karenberg. The truants return to Claverdon Abbey in apparently repentant mood and Blake smuggles his double into the school. The two culprits are to be expelled, but Blake bluffs his guardian, Sir Charles Durex, into believing that his ward knows more about his schemes than he actually does, and the order for expulsion is rescinded. Instead, the two are publicly flogged.

The climax comes at Hawksbay Manor, where Sir Charles and Burton have a showdown with His Excellency. In this house Blake finds his old guardian, Dr. Lanchester, who has been kept a prisoner and was the best of the three guardians. It appears that, years before, when His Excellency was Finance Minister of Karenberg -- and out of favour with the Duke -- Sir Charles, an international financier, had made a treaty with him to exploit the vast, untapped wealth of Karenberg. Then the Duke and his English wife were killed in an avalanche and His Excellency constituted himself guardian of their son, Prince Rupert and announced that the boy was mentally defective so that His Excellency could control the country. He also hoped to doublecross Sir Charles and the two became enemies, plotting against each other for years.

It transpires that, when the Duke and his wife were killed, they were

accompanied by the latter's twin sister, Lady Ann Blakeney, and her husband, Sir Ronald Blakeney, who were also killed. They left behind a son, Ronald, who was the image of Prince Rupert. Sir Charles conceived the idea of rearing a puppet Duke in opposition to His Excellency's ward, but Dr. Lanchester brought up the boy too well for the furtherance of Sir Charles's schemes.

In the end, His Excellency blows up Hawksbay Manor and all the conspirators, including Dr. Lanchester, are killed, but Blake and his friends escape. So from this narrative we find that Sexton Blake's real name is Ronald Blakeney.

It seems strange that, while in 1933 the Amalgamated Press devised a plausible parentage for Blake, some four years later they published this story which provided Blake with an alternative identity.

One also wonders what Cecil Hayter had in mind when he left Blake's origin in obscurity and what was meant by the reference to the house in London which was "a certain Embassy". This phrase may have given rise to the new story in The Pilot, which was by an anonymous author, but whom I suspect to have been the writer known as John Brearley -- real name, John Garbutt.

---

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: Nelson Lees, old series, Nos. 448 to 454, paper back or bound. Will pay £10.

LEN RICHARDS

18 RETFORD COURT, THE PHILOG, WHITCHURCH, CARDIFF, CF4 1EE

Phone Cardiff 612642

= =

Will anyone sell works edited by Hammerton, books by Farjeon and Virgil Markham and Nightmare by Brock. Also want Bullseyes, U.J's, S.B.L's. All letters answered.

BRIDGWATER, 20 BAY CRESCENT, SWANAGE.

= =

Seasonal Greetings, Editor, Staff, Contributors, Readers, Friends everywhere and a thought for our "absent" friends.

BERT HOLMES

= =

WANTED: Garden Murder Case, Winter Murder Case, by Van Dine, £3 each offered for hardback copies.

BUSH, 9 ARMSTRONG SQUARE

HERNE BAY, KENT, CT6 8AF.

Christmas and its Pantomime Time again

by RAYMOND CURE

Christmas 1931 and Gwyn Evans is ill, at least the Editor says so in his chat, and at this late stage I have no reason to doubt him.

Christmas and no Gwyn Evans, its like saying Christmas and no plum pudding or Christmas and no Christmas tree. In those days we had come to rely upon Gwyn Evans for a Christmas story in the Union Jack and now Gwyn was ill, tough luck. However, there is a ray of hope piercing the gloom. Our Editor tells us that this Christmas offering of the Union Jack of 1931, No. 1470, entitled "The Phantom of the Pantomime" presumably by a Mr. W. J. Elliott has all the backing of our Gwyn Evans. He has collaborated all the way with Mr. W. J. Elliott with the plot, the theme, etc., etc. So we are still to have a breath of the Gwyn Evans touch for Christmas after all. Add to this (hints our Editor) after much clamouring for a story including Pedro, his readers are to be suitably rewarded and in spite of Mr. Evans unfortunate illness we are to have the best of Christmas fare. This being so dry your eyes, after all its Christmas and Pantomime time again.

The title of our story should remind one of that and it also reminds me that around that time we were seeing that old film of Lon Chaney's "The Phantom of the Opera". (The talking version was not made until 1943 and starred Claude Rains as the Phantom.) There seems to be some connection between the titles of the film and the Union Jack story, but who cares, its Christmas and the more Phantoms the better.

Talking about the festive season Mr. W. J. Elliott says "Christmas was approaching and already the little town was showing signs of the gaiety and suppressed excitement of the season. A band played in the Winter Gardens and the Salvation Army were holding a service in the market place. There was a Sunday concert at the Royal Theatre. It was a chilling mid-winter Sunday evening".

The scene is set in a dark side street just away from the town centre, in a derelect theatre that had a weirdo for a caretaker. He had bent shoulders, bandy legs, old with wrinkled skin drawn across high cheek bones that made his face look like a deaths-head. He shuffled instead of walking. Like I said, he's a weirdo and he's only the caretaker. Would you care to take a look at the Phantom and take two asperins before proceeding. Quote:

"Across the floor where the moonlight showed appeared a slow-moving horrible shadow - the shadow of a great batlike form flying through the air and slowly swooping downwards growing larger and larger as it did so, until the whole floor was blotted out by the vast black shadow. A form took shape, a form with hunched shoulders and half-folded wings hanging limply from them, a dead white face, blazing eyes and two long sharp gleaming teeth hanging down over the quivering lower lip. (Shades of Dracula!!!!!!)

The eyes of this ghastly monster fixed on the sleeping form of a girl. The horrible

claw-like hands fumbled at the window. As it opened the monster's form slipped through and fluttered to the floor and then commenced to crawl slowly across the floor to its intended victim."

Talking about Pantomimes, I was beginning to wonder where our title actually came in as most of the action takes place during a "Strolling players" week in the derelict theatre, playing The Vampire Man, Pedro, Sexton Blake's bloodhound was included in the cast. Needless to say the last chapter reveals all. (It always does - that's what it's there for.)

The show is over, Sexton Blake and Tinker have cleared up the mystery and now as the Grey Panther slid in swift silence through the thick carpet of snow everywhere they saw posters advertising the Pantomime "Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves". Gone is our shuffling caretaker with his deathlike face, gone is our crawling bat-like phantom. Fear and horror are banished, the Spirit of Christmas reigns. It's Pantomime time again. What more could you wish. It really does seem as if Gwyn Evans was behind W. J. Elliott in planning this seasonable story.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the Editor, Staff and Readers of the Collectors' Digest. Has anyone for sale any of the following books, Richmal Crompton's "More William", "William The Good", "William The Bad", "William's Crowded Hours", "William Does His Bit", "William The Bold", and "William The Tramp". Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan The Invincible", "Tarzan and The City Of Gold", "Tarzan And The Lion Man", "Tarzan And The Leopard Men", "Tarzan And The Foreign Legion", "Tarzan And The Castaways", "Tarzan And The Madman". Anything of Al. Capp's "Li'l Abner Yokum Of Dogpatch U.S.A.", and "Der Kaptain And Der Katzenjammer Kids", author unknown. All postage incurred will be refunded, but please write notifying price to be agreed before desptaching any item. Thank you.

J. P. FITZGERALD

324 BARLOW MOOR RD., MANCHESTER, M21 2AY.

= =

WANTED in TOP Condition - MAGNETS 526,530,547,117,1126,1131,1133,1134, 1184,1190-1194. GEMS 720-22, 816,822,839,935-36,952-53,1020,1034-35. Top price paid or plenty of Hamiltonia, etc., for exchange.

S. SMYTH

1 BRANDON ST. CLOVELLY 2031, AUSTRALIA.

= =

Schoolboys' Own Library for sale: Rebel and Lancaster series. Write for titles.

S. PERRY

2 HEATH ROAD, LANGLEY, MAIDSTONE, KENT.

JACK, SAM and PETE

by W. T. THURBON

We tend to call ourselves old boys' book collectors, but we forget that the Harmsworth weekly papers of the early years of this century referred to them as intended for boys and young men.

Readers of the "Digest" and the "Annual" are familiar with Sexton Blake and with the Charles Hamilton school of writing that continued so long, to survive until Hamilton's death. They are also familiar with St. Franks - though perhaps fewer now remember the earlier Nelson Lee of Maxwell Scott, then among detective stories the only possible challenger to Sexton Blake's pre-eminence, than they do the St. Franks series merging the detective into the school story, with some borrowing from Hayter's Looseley-Lobangu themes. It is an interesting thought whether Nelson Lee might not have lasted as long as Sexton Blake had not Brookes fallen for the lure of the school story.

Sexton Blake and Greyfriars have passed outside the limited world of old boys' books into the general world. Sexton Blake is probably only second to Sherlock Holmes as a widely known fictional detective, while Bunter has appeared in the pages of the "Sunday Times", seriously discussing the problem of overweight children, as "The Bunter Syndrome", while Michael Parkinson in the same paper has enlivened one of his entertaining cricket articles with a series of Greyfriars illustrations. Similarly the heroes of the Thomson papers from time to time find mention in the pages, especially the sports pages, of the Press.

But three characters, who in their heyday in the early years of the century were, as Bill Lofts has told us, the A. P's greatest money-spinners are now to a large extent forgotten save by a few of the older generation.

S. Clark Hook was already a well-known contributor to boys' papers when in 1893 he was selected by Harmsworth to write the first story in his new weekly paper "The Marvel". Clark Hook's early writings were very much in the mould of the ordinary minor writer of Victorian boys' stories, and his name would probably have been forgotten, with those of many others, but for his creation of Jack, Sam and Pete. Clark Hook, a bearded character who had travelled extensively in his younger days, was a fluent Spanish linguist, which explains his many stock Spanish-American characters and settings. Bill Lofts has told us that a former Editor of the Marvel once told him that Hook took more liberties with the authentic settings and regions of his stories than any other writer he ever knew.

But in spite of this Jack, Sam and Pete were favourite characters with a host of readers, and the "Marvel" was often referred to in my young days as "Jack, Sam and Pete". So popular were they that when the Boys' Friend Library was launched it was originally intended to be the Jack, Sam and Pete Library, and the first three stories were all J. S. & P. tales. They were also serialised in the Boys' Friend, reprinted in the first "Penny Popular", and even appeared in the back pages of one of

the early Comics. The settings of the stories might vary from any period from 1890 to 1920; the comrades found stores and mining camps in all sorts of wild places, never met linguistic difficulties, found Red Indians, and forest Indians at that, in such places as the Canadian Rockies, never seemed to carry or require much camping equipment, generally found all sorts of game, sometimes very exotic, wherever they were in the wilds - yet, in spite of all improbabilities Clark Hook wrote with such gusto that he got away with situations other writers would have found it incredible to attempt, and his readers loved him.

Jack, Sam and Pete who for over twenty years were to appear regularly in the Marvel, and from 1904 to 1911 were to dominate it, made their first appearance in Halfpenny Marvel No. 385 in a story called "The Eagle of Death", followed by a sequel "The Death Sentence" in No. 387.

When on 30th January, 1904, the Marvel became a penny paper (a date the late beloved Herbert Leckenby always recalled as being in the week in which he commenced work as an errand boy at a book shop) a Jack, Sam & Pete story "The Island of Fire" opened this. During the first 20 issues of The Marvel, Jack, Sam & Pete stories appeared irregularly, but from No. 21 onwards they were regular weekly features. The bulk of these early stories were reprinted, in shortened form, in the Penny Popular (first series) including most, but not all, of the Halfpenny Marvel stories. It is interesting to compare the 1912-13 reprints with the original Halfpenny Marvel versions and see how some of the crudities of the originals were toned down in the reprints.

Clark Hook reused much of the material from his early stories in the Boys' Friend Library tales, and in later series in the Marvel tended to repeat themes from earlier stories.

The "Eagle of Death" and its equal told of a mining camp in Bolivia where Jack Owen, an Oxford graduate, and Sam Grant, an American hunter and crack shot are in partnership with another Englishman, an ex-soldier who has come abroad to drown his sorrow at the death of his wife. The camp has a strange superstition about a giant eagle which is often seen soaring over the camp. Anyone who shoots at it and misses will die. The Englishman has shot at the bird, and in a brawl is stabbed and killed by a Spaniard. Sam now shoots the eagle, and finds on its leg a gold plate bearing a message dated a hundred years before saying the writer was starving "amid untold gold", and giving the bearings of the treasure. After Sam has wounded the Spaniard in a duel the two partners decide to seek the treasure; they are joined by Pete, a negro; after many adventures the treasure is found and the three comrades set out on their travels. Jack, Sam and Pete must have been popular with readers for Clark Hook wrote some twenty stories about them in the Halfpenny Marvel and then began his twenty year saga in the second, Penny, series.

In the early stories the three characters are well drawn; Pete is the strong man; we learn of his boyhood, his schooldays, of his adventures at eighteen, that he has been a professional strong man in a circus, a sailor, a champion boxer, a ventriloquist (Clark Hook played this up as much as Hamilton did Bunter). From the start he supplied the humorous element in the stories. Sam, the American, is a crack shot, fine tracker, and experienced in dealing with savages; we are told he

was a fine hunter; perhaps he had been an Indian fighter in the West. Jack is an Oxford graduate, though we do not know what subject he had read; but he is apparently a qualified sailor and engineer, presumably with a Master Mariner's certificate. In the "Eagle of Death" there is a hint of a love tragedy in his background. He emerges as a fine fencer, as strong a man as Pete, and as the leader of the party in action and in business.

From the early penny Marvels until his death in 1919 the illustrator of the stories was J. Abney Cummings. He created the three characters in picture form, after the very crude illustrations in the Halfpenny Marvel, and since Clark Hook was already in his decline as a writer, by 1919 Cummings loss was irrepairable. A poor artist succeeded him. Cummings had a great gift in his illustrations of suggesting "far away places with strange sounding names" - forests, mountains, small harbours and sailing ships.

When we meet Jack, Sam and Pete they are described as young men, Clark Hook sometimes makes someone call them "lad", but the experience all must have had suggests they must have been somewhere in their late twenties. So we have this picture of three close friends, fond of adventure and travel, experienced travellers in wild places, generous to anyone in trouble, ready to risk their lives for one another. Altogether attractive to the boys and young men of the period before 1914, brought up in that period of the high noon of empire, when the explorer, the frontiersman and the prospector were still settling in the colonies, and the last secrets of the earth were still to be unveiled.

Unfortunately Clark Hook wrote too long. Artistically the series should have finished around 1911. But the earlier success of The Marvel, with the pick of the early Jack, Sam and Pete stories and the additional popular series of Boxing and Theatre stories naturally made both Clark Hook and the publishers reluctant to end the series.

The trouble was that Clark Hook's adventure settings, which he used superbly in his earlier stories had become anachronistic by 1912. Clark Hook was a writer of adventure stories, and never really escaped from the spirit of his earlier tales. In the 1890's and the first decade of the present century the setting of adventure among Red Indians and Savages was still popular. When Clark Hook wrote his first Jack, Sam and Pete tales, the opening up of Africa was still in progress. Campaigns in the Soudan; with the Zulu's; Matabele, and other tribes were vivid, recent memories. Parts of South America were still very little known. Some of Clark Hook's earlier tales were contemporaneous with such books as Hesketh Pritchards account of his expedition "Through the Heart of Patagonia"; Baden Powell was writing his account of the Matabele War, Paterson was writing of "The Man-eaters of Tsavo". Buffalo Bill's Wild West Circus was touring Europe. The last Indian Wars were recent memories. By 1912 a new generation of readers had come along and a new style of writing. The touches of grim realism in the early tales when Jack, Sam and Pete will shoot to kill, drink Whisky and gamble have disappeared. Clark Hook could write his earlier balloon, submarine and flying series without getting too outdated. Occasionally topical events such as the Somali troubles with the Mad Mullah or the Antarctic expedition of Captain Scott would give him an opportunity to

introduce contemporary happenings, but Red Indians or Bushrangers by 1912, let alone 1920 were completely outdated. Already Clark Hook had interspersed various series of slapstick stories, and was beginning to play up Pete at the expense of Jack and Sam. The Harmsworth papers were now becoming more boy-orientated, with the rise of the Hamilton school of stories. So Clark Hook introduced a boy hero, Algy, who more and more came to dominate the series, with Pete as his stooge and Jack and Sam as lay figures. The earlier generation of readers for whom Clark Hook wrote preferred adventure stories, but in the last decade of the Marvel these became few and far between; among those Clark Hook did write few had contemporary settings, and many were re-hashes of earlier tales. Among the stories from 1912 onwards there are few worthy of recall.

But what fine stories Clark Hook could write at his best. Among the Halfpenny Marvels apart from the "Eagle of Death" and its sequel there were "The Black Horseman", "A leap for Life", "The Phantom Raiders" and "The Deathless Horseman". In the early Penny Marvels good stories were "The Phantom Chief", "The Outcast", "The Wraith of Dismal Swamp", "Comrades True", set in a central American buried city. Nos. 23 and 24, "The Mystic River" and "The Rifled Bank" were stories of cattle rustlers and bank robbers respectively. "Through Fire and Tempest" was a good story of diamond robbers in a setting of forest fire and floods. From time to time Clark Hook brought the comrades back to England, the idea of characters visiting various towns being used as a promotion gimmick. These series were in general not very successful; readers preferred tales of adventure. Right up to 1911 Clark Hook provided many of these. Among them some of his most successful series in the balloon, submarine, steam man (an idea perhaps borrowed from the American Frank Read stories) and the aeroplane series, where Cummings showed he had seen the early Wright Brothers aeroplanes.

The number of us who recall Jack, Sam and Pete in their heyday is now small, and gradually diminishing. To those who look at the later Marvels the defects in his work are only too apparent. But those early stories were written by a man who must himself have loved adventure, and who gave great joy to a generation of men and boys.

---

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

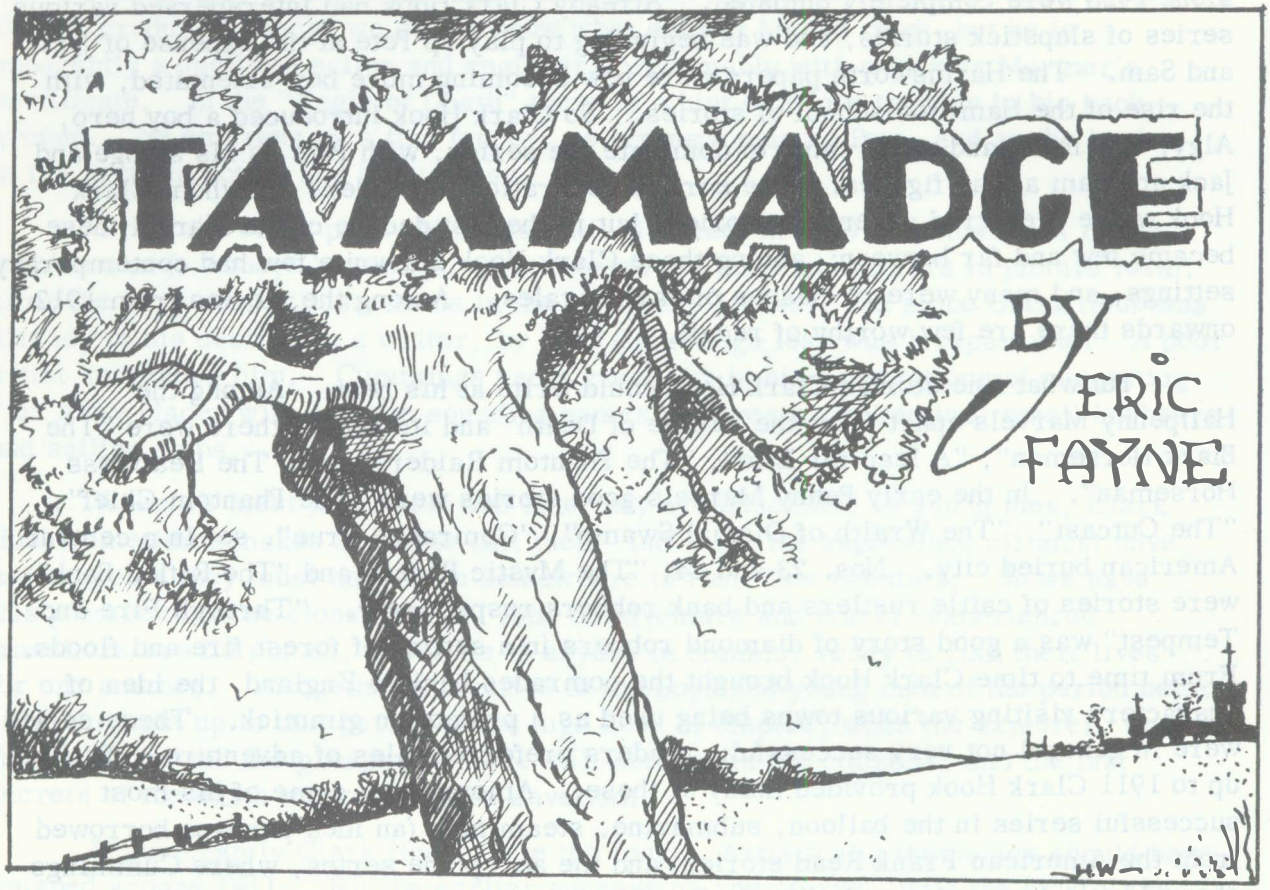
Christmas Greetings to Club Members and Friars everywhere, particulary to those who have done so much to make our hobby the enjoyable pastime it is, and long may they continue to do so.

BOB AND BETTY ACRAMAN AND THEIR SONS

= =

WANTED: Champion Libraries, particularly by Herbert McRae, B. F. L's by Hedley Scott and Cpt. Robert Hawke.

J. ASHLEY, 46 NICHOLAS CRESCENT, FAREHAM, HANTS.



A Story of Slade

Tammadge was unique.

He had only been at Slade a few months. He entered in the September, and was placed in the Transitus Form. Though his handwriting was abysmal, and a Tammadge exercise-book looked as though it had been attacked by spiders which had crawled through ink, he was intelligent. Mr. Marsh, the master of the Transitus, soon decided that Tammadge was worthy of a higher form of life than he was enjoying in the Transitus, and suggested to the Head-master that so bright a pupil should be offered more competition.

So, in January, Tammadge was promoted to the Third Form, under the charge of Mr. Drayne. The Third did not specialise, but Mr. Drayne soon discovered that Tammadge was exceptionally good at English and at mathematics. All the same, Tammadge's shockingly untidy and smudgy exercises frequently caused Mr. Drayne to tear what was left of his hair. The scrawl which Tammadge produced was beyond belief.

Mr. Drayne entered his form for an essay contest run by a local newspaper. It was with some misgiving that Mr. Drayne included the essay which Tammadge had written. Nevertheless, Tammadge won the competition, and carried off the first prize of £10.

Thereupon Mr. Drayne, in his

turn, suggested to the Headmaster that Tammadge was generally above the standard of the Third Form, and should be promoted yet again. It was not totally unknown for a boy to rise in the school so speedily, but it was rare.

So in May, at the beginning of the summer term, Tammadge was moved up into the Lower Fourth, and he came under the direction of a master named Mr. Buddle. Mr. Drayne was not unhappy to say farewell to a pupil whose handwriting was so execrable. After all, Mr. Drayne's eyesight was precious to him.

So Tammadge found himself the youngest boy in the Lower Fourth. Mr. Buddle was puzzled, in many ways, by Tammadge, and Mr. Buddle had vast experience of boys of all shapes and sizes. Before half-term Mr. Buddle was decided on one thing.

Tammadge was unique.

. . . . .

"Good-bye, Maggie," said Mr. Buddle.

He replaced the telephone in its cradle and rose to his feet.

The telephone had rung at ten minutes to two that May afternoon, and Mr. Buddle had answered it. He had been on the point of leaving his study to take an English session with his own form, the Lower Fourth at Slade, and most callers would have been dealt with summarily. This caller, however, happened to be a lady - one to whom Mr. Buddle had proposed marriage and been rejected some twenty-five years ago. He did not cut the conversation short. They chatted away for quite a time.

The subject matter of that conversation is nothing whatever to do with this particular story, but the result was that, after replacing the instrument in its cradle, Mr. Buddle glanced guiltily at his clock, and found that he was eight minutes late for class.

It was time for the skies to fall. Mr. Buddle was never - well, hardly ever - late for class. Hastily donning his gown, Mr. Buddle hurried away to the Lower Fourth Form-room on the corridor below. As he approached the form-room he could hear distinct sounds of merriment and chatter. When the cat was late, as it were, the mice saw no reason why they should not enjoy themselves.

The form-room door was a foot open. Mr. Buddle gave it a gentle push, and moved forward quickly, expecting it to swing wide on its well-oiled hinges. On this occasion, for some reason, it only opened slowly, and Mr. Buddle, moving forward, found his nose and chin bumping on a panel of the door. He said something under his breath, and, putting his hand up again, exerted more strength, and the door swung wide under his heftier push.

The chatter and laughter died away. Mr. Buddle heard a sibilant whisper - "The Gump!" - from different parts of the room.

With a grim face, he entered. For a moment that grim face was turned on the now silent class. One or two boys looked nervous, one or two were grinning covertly, some were staring at their desk-lids.

Breathing deeply, Mr. Buddle turned to close the door. He pulled it. Once again it did not move easily. Slowly it swung round heavily, and gently closed with a click of the latch.

Then the reason for the sluggish movement of the door became clear. More than half-way

up the door a peg had been screwed. It was a peg which was seldom used. It was, however, in use now. A boy was hanging on it.

He was not really an attractive-looking boy. He was on the plump side. He had a greasy complexion, and a pimple or two on his forehead. He was a trifle shorter than the average Fourth-former, which was not surprising as he was a trifle younger. His name was Tammadge.

His blazer had been removed, and he was suspended to the door by the triangle, formed where his brace ends met the two buttons at the back of his trousers, having been slipped over the peg. His grey trousers, spotted with ink, were drawn tightly round his ample thighs.

Clearly Tammadge had not hung himself on the peg. Some person or persons, at present unknown, had lifted him and placed him there.

Mr. Buddle eyed him for a moment. Then he turned his angry gaze on the Lower Fourth.

"Who is responsible for this?"

There was a pregnant pause. Then two youths rose from their seats.

"Meredith! Shovel!" Mr. Buddle's voice was not loud, but it was very, very deep. "I have told you before that I will not tolerate bullying of this boy in my form."

"Oh, sir, we weren't bullying," protested Meredith. He had golden hair, an innocent expression, and looked angelic in his Slade blazer of mauve piped with white. "It was just fun, sir. Harmless fun. Tam enjoys it as much as we do, sir."

"Yes, sir," said Shovel, in support. He had a mop of dark hair, and his school uniform was less immaculate than Meredith's.

"Tammadge enjoys it, don't you, Tam?"

Tammadge continued to hang on the door. His mouth opened in a vacant smirk. He did not speak.

"Lift that boy down at once," ordered Mr. Buddle. "No, not all of you -- " as there was a concerted movement through the form. "Meredith and Shovel, take that boy down from the door - and do it quickly."

Meredith and Shovel left their places, and moved over to the door. Apparently it was easier to hook Tammadge up than to unhook him.

"Can we have some assistance, please, sir?" panted Shovel. "This chap weighs a ton."

Pilgrim and Rainbow lent a hand, and Tammadge was lifted from the door. In the process his heels kicked against the panels with resounding thumps, and one of the buttons flew from the rear of his trousers. On the floor at last, he donned his blazer, which had been thrown over the back of a desk. He stood sheepishly, his currant-eyes on his form-master.

"Go to your desks," said Mr. Buddle abruptly.

They went to their desks.

Mr. Buddle spoke again.

"Meredith and Shovel, you are detained for an hour when classes end. I shall set you a suitable English exercise to occupy that hour. You, Pilgrim, will also join them in an hour's detention."

"Pilgrim had nothing to do with it, sir," ventured Meredith.

"Pilgrim is my Head Boy. He should have had something to do with it. He should have kept order when I was a few minutes late due to important business. You understand me, Pilgrim?"

"Yes, sir," answered Pilgrim

glumly.

It was nearly an hour later that another disturbance occurred. Mr. Buddle's English class was studying Wordsworth, with particular attention that afternoon to "Intimations of Mortality".

Shovel had been on his feet, reading aloud. He wound up:

"Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy."

Shovel sat down. The next moment Shovel was understudying the Shepherd-boy, and shouting. In fact, his shout rang through the form-room. It startled everybody, including Mr. Buddle.

"Shovel, how dare you make that din --?"

Shovel was on his feet at his desk, his face contorted with pain.

"Oh, sir, I'm stung. I've sat on a wasp. Oh, sir, the agony --" He twisted round in an effort to inspect his rear. "Oh, sir, it's a big drawing-pin - it's not a wasp --"

There were delighted chuckles in the class. Mr. Buddle compressed his lips with annoyance.

"Step forth, Shovel!" he commanded.

Shovel stepped forth, still twisting himself round.

Embedded in the seat of Shovel's trousers was one of the large, flat-headed drawing-pins which were used in Mr. Lidbetter's art class. It was clear that Shovel was hurt. Nobody could sit on a large drawing-pin without being hurt.

"Oh, sir," panted Shovel. "It's in me - right up to the hilt."

"Remove it, stupid boy," ordered Mr. Buddle.

"Oh, the agony, sir --"

With an impatient ejaculation, Mr. Buddle stepped down from his platform.

"Bend forward, Shovel," he said.

Shovel bent forward. Mr. Buddle managed to get the head of the large drawing-pin between the nails of his thumb and his second finger, and prized out the pin, to the accompaniment of panting and wailing from Shovel.

Mr. Buddle gazed at the pin for a moment. Then he turned his eyes on the class.

He said sternly: "This is beyond a jest. Somebody must deliberately have placed this drawing-board pin on the seat for this boy to sit upon."

There was a murmur through the class. There were still a few smiles in evidence, but for the most part the hilarity had changed to sympathy. Mr. Buddle spoke to the boy whose desk was immediately behind that of Shovel.

"Did you place this pin on Shovel's seat, Tammadge?"

Tammadge's mouth opened wide and he looked foolish. He shook his head.

"I wouldn't do a thing like that, sir."

"Did you see any boy place that pin so that Shovel would sit on it?"

Tammadge showed the whites of his eyes as he stared upwards in thought.

He said: "Somebody bent over there a little while ago, sir. I didn't notice who it was. Somebody came up to your desk with a pile of books at the time."

"That was me!" said Pilgrim ungrammatically. He added vigorously: "I wouldn't do a daft thing like putting a pin on a man's seat."

"Tammadge never notices anything," said Garmansway, with a

sniff. "Anybody could plant a bomb under a desk and Tammadge would never notice it."

There was a wail from Shovel.

"Oh, sir, the blood - I'm losing a lot of blood --"

Mr. Buddle inspected Shovel's rear once again. A reddish-brown patch was forming on his trousers round the spot from whence the drawing-pin had been withdrawn.

"You had better go to the matron, Shovel, and ask her to bathe the injury with an antiseptic."

"Oh, sir," protested Shovel. "That wouldn't be modest. I couldn't go to matron and ask her to bathe a spot in that place."

"Then sit down immediately, and be silent," rapped out Mr. Buddle.

"Oh, sir, the agony --"

"Shovel, go to the matron at once," roared Mr. Buddle.

And Shovel went to the matron at once.

. . . . .

That evening, after tea, Mr. Buddle sent for Meredith and Shovel. Both boys looked sullen when they presented themselves in their form-master's study. They were wearing white trousers and white shirts, and had obviously been at the nets for cricket practice when the summons came to them that their presence was required by their form-master.

Meredith was holding a crushed straw-hat, from which the Slade hat-band was hanging.

Mr. Buddle was standing by his window, through which the rays of the setting summer sun were streaming. He indicated the hat which Meredith was holding.

"You have had an accident with your hat, Meredith? You should take care with your clothing."

Meredith looked indignant.

"It wasn't my fault," he protested. "I brought it specially to show you, sir. When I went to the cloak-room after tea I found my boater had been taken out of my locker, and somebody had stamped in it. Look at it, sir - squashed to a pulp."

Mr. Buddle frowned with distaste.

"It must have been an accident, Meredith, surely --"

"A hat couldn't get squashed like that by accident, sir. Somebody has stamped all over it. My mother paid fifteen bob for that hat, sir - and the ribbon has been cut with scissors --"

"A malicious act," said Mr. Buddle. "Have you any idea who did it?"

"No, sir. There was only Tammadge in the cloakroom. He had seen some fellow going out fast, but he couldn't guess who it was. Tammadge never notices anything or anybody, sir. He's the most unobservant fellow I've ever met. Too green for words."

"You did not suspect that Tammadge himself might have damaged your property?"

"Oh, no, sir." Meredith answered with amused assurance. "It wasn't Tammadge. Tam isn't that sort, sir. He's too simple, in any case, and there's no go in him. But I wish he'd seen who had done it."

Mr. Buddle nodded. There was a curious expression on his face for a moment. He sat down at his table, and regarded the two boys.

"It was of Tammadge that I wished to speak to you both. You were mainly responsible for that disgraceful scene in the form-room

this afternoon. On several occasions this term it has seemed to me that Tammadge was the victim of a persecution of a sort. It is something which I will not allow in my Form. If it continues, you will be severely punished. Do you understand?"

"Oh, sir, you've got it wrong," said Shovel earnestly. "It's not a persecution, sir. It's only fun. We rag Tam, and get plenty of fun out of it, but he enjoys it as much as we do."

"No boy could enjoy being hung on a hook by his braces in the form-room," said Mr. Buddle tartly. "Don't talk nonsense."

Meredith shook his golden head, and looked the picture of innocence.

"Tammadge doesn't mind, sir. He gets a kick out of it, too. It makes him feel important."

"A boy who is bullied can hardly feel important," said Mr. Buddle.

"It's not bullying, sir," insisted Meredith, patiently. "Tam would feel a nonentity if we took no notice of him, sir."

"That's right, sir. He'd feel a nonentity," echoed Shovel. "That's a good word," he added to Meredith, with approval.

"You see, sir. Tammadge is just a piece of furniture. Nobody notices him. Everybody sits on him." Meredith smiled, happy with his metaphor.

Mr. Buddle spoke sharply.

"I hope I do not detect you smiling, Meredith. This is a serious matter. I do not believe that you two boys are bullies at heart, but your treatment of Tammadge is disgraceful. If I see any further persecution of Tammadge from either of you, I shall ask the Headmaster to administer corporal punishment to impress upon you that such conduct is not permitted at Slade."

For some time after Meredith and Shovel had gone, Mr. Buddle sat thinking about Tammadge. To some extent the form-master agreed with the cheerful Meredith and Shovel. Tammadge was undoubtedly a nonentity, but it was quite possible that he disliked being a nonentity. He was a boy who could only obtain attention by allowing himself to become a butt for his companions.

Mr. Buddle often tried to find a comparison with his real-life problems in the school stories to which, to some extent, he had allowed himself to become addicted. Of the fictional schools, he liked St. Jim's the best, though he had a nodding acquaintance with Greyfriars and had lingered, now and then, in the highways and byways of Rookwood. He wondered whether, in any of those schools, he could find a youth exactly like Tammadge. He thought not.

Skimpole of St. Jim's was a freak - a lad of pseudo-scientific bent. One who never used a short word if he could find a long one with the same meaning. The boys laughed at him, but seemed to like him. Definitely a character in fiction. It would be difficult to find Skimpole's duplicate in real life.

Alonzo Todd was one with good intentions and a smug self-satisfaction. Given the right circumstances, Alonzo was more likely to be overbearing than overborne.

Mr. Buddle's thoughts turned to Clarence Cuffy. Cuffy was more of a nuisance than a nonentity. He persisted in calling his form-fellows by their christian names, much to their annoyance. He was extremely gullible, and would believe that black was pink if somebody told him so.

Mr. Buddle shook his head. None of those boys of fiction was anything like Tammadge of Mr. Buddle's form at Slade. Tammadge was lazy and slovenly, but preferred work to sport, providing that it was work which came easily to him. Any form of sport he would avoid if he possibly could, and that trait alone did not make for popularity in a sporting school. Mr. Buddle did not believe, all the same, that any persecution of Tammadge was due to that youth's dislike of and non-participation in sport. A boy is liked or disliked at school more for what he is than for what he does or does not.

Tammadge was not gullible in the slightest, in Mr. Buddle's opinion. In that way, he was unlike Cuffy. Also, unlike Cuffy, he had no particular affection for the human race.

Probably Meredith and Shovel had partly arrived at the truth when they suggested that Tammadge played the fool because it was the only way he could get attention. Possibly Tammadge loved the limelight, but had an inferiority complex. It could even be that Tammadge covertly encouraged the boisterous activities of his form-fellows against himself, not because he liked to see them enjoying themselves but because he liked to be the focal point of such activity.

Mr. Buddle gave a vexed grunt, and dismissed the matter from his mind. He was to be reminded of it again the next evening.

. . . . .

It was after eight o'clock on that next evening when Scarlet of the Sixth, a prefect, and, incidentally, the son of the Headmaster of Slade, approached the junior sports pavilion. Loud sounds of merriment were proceeding therefrom.

Cricket practice was long over, and it was Scarlet's duty on that evening to see that the junior pavilion was left in order, that all the equipment had been tidily packed away, and that the doors were locked up for the night. All juniors should have been away from the pavilion by that time, but the noise indicated that some of them were still remaining.

Scarlet - known to all and sundry as Pinky-Mi - entered the pavilion. Only five boys were in evidence, and they surrounded a very large hamper. One boy, Shovel of the Lower Fourth, was holding aloft a big watering-can from which he was spraying water over the lid of the hamper. The basket was closed, but, from the squeals which proceeded from its interior, it was not empty. The shrieks of merriment which Pinky-Mi had heard as he approached the pavilion were coming from the onlookers.

"Stop that!" shouted the prefect, hurrying up to the group.

Shovel shook a final spray from the can, and set it down on the floor. He turned a rosy face to the newcomer.

"What on earth are you young lunatics doing?" demanded Pinky-Mi. "Where did you get that watering-can?"

"It was by the gardener's shed," admitted Shovel. "I only borrowed it. Shall I take it back?"

Pinky-Mi threw open wide the lid of the hamper.

Crouching down inside, very wet indeed, was Tammadge. Slowly he rose to his feet. He shook himself like a drenched terrier. A ripple of hilarity ran through the

onlookers, as he stepped out of the basket.

"What were you doing in that basket?" demanded the prefect angrily.

"We told him to get in," explained Shovel. "We took all the gear out, and put Tam in. Then we closed the lid and turned the watering-can on it."

There was a chuckle at the ingenuous explanation.

"Bullying this kid again," remarked Pinky-Mi. "It's not the first time, is it?"

"It's not bullying," said Shovel indignantly. "Tam enjoys it, don't you, Tam?"

Tammadge opened his mouth wide and looked foolish.

"Did you enjoy it?" rapped out Pinky-Mi.

"Oh, no, Scarlet," murmured Tammadge.

"Then why did you get in the basket?"

"They told me to get in the basket," answered Tammadge. He grinned owlishly.

"Would you sit on a bonfire if they told you to?" asked Pinky-Mi.

"No, Scarlet."

"What are you doing here at all? You weren't at cricket practice, were you?"

"I just came down to watch the practice, Scarlet."

"You're just a stupid young ass, aren't you?" said Pinky-Mi, impatiently.

"He's wet!" suggested Rainbow, and his wit earned a burst of laughter.

"Give me a plimsoll," ordered Pinky-Mi.

Shovel, not grinning any longer, handed him a plimsoll.

"You, Shovel, are going to bend over that basket and take six. The rest of you will bend over and take three each. It will teach you not to take advantage of a young donkey just because he's not all there. As for you, Tammadge --"

"May I go, Scarlet?" asked Tammadge hopefully.

"Yes, you can go. First of all, though, bend over that basket."

"It wasn't his fault, Scarlet," said Shovel, generously. "He only did what we told him."

"He must learn not to do what you tell him," said Pinky-Mi, genially. "It'll be good for his soul. Bend over, Tammadge."

Gingerly, Tammadge bent over.

Whack!

Tammadge let out a yell. It was not a heavy smite, but it stung through his wet trousers.

"Now you can go," said Pinky-Mi, pleasantly. "The next time you act the fool you'll get a full six like Shovel is going to get. Now clear out."

And Tammadge cleared out hastily.

Half an hour later Pinky-Mi reported the matter to Mr. Buddle, and the little master shook his head dubiously. He was not easy in his mind concerning the adventures of Tammadge.

. . . .

The next day was Saturday, and the First Eleven had a home fixture on the cricket field. Mr. Buddle went down to the ground after tea to watch the closing couple of hours or so of the game. He didn't know a great deal concerning the finer points of cricket, but it was pleasant to sit in a deck-chair, near the main pavilion, in the sunshine of the late afternoon.

Beside Mr. Buddle, in another deck-chair, sat Antrobus, Captain of Slade. Earlier, Antrobus had opened the Slade innings, partnered by Tomms, and had been dismissed, caught at wicket, for 18. He was not unduly concerned. The visitors, batting first, had made 128, which was not a big score on the good Slade wicket.

After getting out, Antrobus had joined Mr. Buddle, and had been explaining some technical details connected with the game, to which Mr. Buddle listened with polite interest. Two more wickets had fallen fairly cheaply, but Antrobus was confident. Pinky-Mi was to go in at fifth wicket down, and he was a reliable bat.

Pinky-Mi came out of the pavilion, padded up and carrying bat and gloves. He crossed over to stand beside his skipper while waiting for the fifth wicket to fall. He watched the game as he exchanged short scraps of conversation with Mr. Buddle and his skipper.

"Can I get you a chair, Scarlet?" asked a plumpish youth near by.

"Thanks, kid," said Pinky-Mi, and Tammadge scudded off to the shed near the pavilion where the chairs were stacked. He was back very shortly carrying a folding chair of metal frame with wooden slats to form a seat. Tammadge opened out the chair carefully, and Pinky-Mi sat down.

He had been seated for something like five minutes when he gave a sudden exclamation.

"What the dickens -- I'm all black -- I'm all over tar --"

He jumped up. There was an involuntary laugh from Antrobus and an ejaculation of consternation from Mr. Buddle.

Pinky-Mi was staring at black hands, and black which had been transferred by those hands to a white shirt and the knees of white trousers. Antrobus got up, and looked with dismay, mingled with amusement, at his friend's nether regions.

"Your trucks, Pinky - they're smothered --"

Pinky-Mi twisted himself in an effort to view his own rear. Black stripes zigzagged across the seat of the white trousers.

"There must have been something on the chair," said Antrobus.

Pinky-Mi was seething with annoyance.

"It must be tar. How on earth did tar get on a chair --?"

Antrobus bent forward and sniffed at the black smears and dabs on several of the slats of the chair.

"It's not tar - it's boot-polish - Cherry Blossom --"

"That fool Tammadge brought me this chair. The noodle hadn't the sense to see it had boot-polish on it. I must go and change --"

Antrobus spoke with authority.

"You can't change. There isn't time. Restarick is just out. I want you out there to stop a collapse --"

"I can't go in to bat like this --"

Antrobus spoke tartly now.

"Nobody will take any notice of black on your bags. They just want to see you play a good innings - and I want it, too. Get out to the wicket."

Pinky-Mi stared hard at his skipper for a moment. Then, with a gesture of resignation, he grabbed at his bat and gloves, and strode out towards the wicket.

A ripple of applause changed to a wave of laughter as he progressed and more and more spectators noted the black and white effect of his cricket clothing. Visiting fielders looked surprised as he passed them, and

politely tried to suppress their smiles. The Slade fellows looking on were not so polite. They laughed loud and long. Never before had a senior Slade cricketer gone in to bat with striped trousers. It was a sight to remember. Irony at the other end of the pitch gazed at him with amused amazement. Pinky-Mi's face was flushed and grim as he took middle and off from the umpire.

"How on earth did all that stuff get on his chair?" Antrobus was saying to Mr. Buddle. "We can't blame the youngster who fetched him the chair, can we? He wouldn't be looking for shoe-polish on a seat any more than we were."

Mr. Buddle did not speak. He looked round, but there was no sign of Tammadge. Mr. Buddle recalled something that either Meredith or Shovel had said recently. "Tammadge is a piece of furniture. Nobody notices him." Nobody ever blamed Tammadge for anything. It was taken for granted by everybody that Tammadge was innocent and guileless. But Mr. Buddle was wondering.

It is pleasant to add that, gritting his teeth, as the novelists say, and red with annoyance, Pinky-Mi did not collapse as he might well have done. He hit out like fury, and played one of the most memorable innings of his life.

When he eventually returned to the pavilion, accompanied by Irony, who had supported him admirably, the game was won. He received an ovation which cheered him up enormously and which was probably the reason that he made no further enquiry into the matter of the blackened chair.

. . . . .

To celebrate their seniors' victory, or for some other reason, or for no reason at all, the Lower Fourth Form tossed Tammadge in a blanket in the dormitory when they retired to bed that night. Everybody, with the possible exception of Tammadge, enjoyed it more or less, and when Tomms arrived with a prefectorial ashplant, he was assured by Meredith that Tammadge had enjoyed it too. After administering a few stinging cuts here and there among the apparent ring-leaders, and having addressed a few words to Tammadge for not standing up for himself, Tomms said good-night, and withdrew.

Nearly four hours later, at about two o'clock in the morning, in the silence of the summer night, the fire-bells rang out over Slade with a raucous and incessant peal.

Masters and prefects rushed hither and thither to make sure that every dormitory was cleared, and did not pause till it was certain that every boy, every master, and every member of the resident domestic staff was assembled in the quadrangle. It all went like clockwork, just as it had always done in the fire-drill rehearsals which were conducted at least once every term.

The only difference was that the fire-alarms at Slade were connected with the Fire Station at Everslade. When rehearsals were conducted, the alarms were disconnected from the Fire Service. Now, however, it was the real thing. Parmint, the lodge-keeper, had flung wide the school gates in readiness for the arrival of the fire-brigade, as was his first duty should the fire-alarm be sounded in the school.

Within ten minutes of the alarm being rung, the fire-brigade could be heard approaching in the lane, and within a few seconds more the fire-

engine dashed into the quadrangle at a brisk pace, its siren making a hideous din and its lights cutting brilliantly through the darkness.

So everybody and everything was assembled in the quadrangle. More than two hundred boys were there, assembled in forms with their respective masters in charge; the resident domestic-staff was in a group under the wing of Mrs. Cleverton, the school housekeeper; and the fire-brigade was there, all the way from Everslade.

The only thing missing was any sign or smell of a fire. Firemen and some of the staff searched the buildings for that fire. It was conspicuous only by its absence. There was a babble of chatter, and everybody was asking everybody else what was up. Clearly, very soon, it was a false alarm.

Though it was a summer night, the air was cool, and boys and staff, who had mainly only stopped to don dressing-gowns over night attire, were shivering.

At long last, the fire-brigade departed, the boys went back to their beds, the masters and prefects made final rounds, lights disappeared one after the other, and the school was silent again.

In the meantime, it had been discovered where the false fire-alarm had originated. There was a fire-switch, in a small mahogany box, on every corridor throughout the school. The boxes were placed at a height of six feet above the floor. Each of these boxes was locked, and a key to same was clipped on the side of the box. This was to ensure that the alarm could not be set off accidentally by, for instance, a cleaner. In case of emergency, the key could be unclipped, inserted in the keyhole of the box which could then be opened, and the switch pulled down. This would set all the fire-bells in the school ringing as well as in the lodge at the gates. And, as we have said, it would also set off the alarm down at the fire-station in Everslade, except when the town connection was severed in readiness for fire-drill which was carried out without previous notice at least once every term.

There was a fire-alarm box immediately outside the dormitory of the Lower Fourth form. That box was open now. The switch had been pulled down, thus setting off the fire-alarm.

Now, outside the silent Fourth Form dormitory stood an angry-looking Headmaster, and a worried Mr. Buddle.

"This false alarm has been caused by a boy in your form, Mr. Buddle," said Mr. Scarlet coldly.

"It would appear so, sir." Mr. Buddle spoke reluctantly. "I suppose someone from another dormitory could have --"

The Headmaster interrupted him.

"Be reasonable, Mr. Buddle. Your form's dormitory is the only one on this corridor. Why should anybody from elsewhere in the school come down this corridor to switch on an alarm, when there is an alarm-box on every corridor?"

Mr. Buddle couldn't answer that one. He shook his head without speaking.

"We shall discover in the morning who switched on this alarm. It must have been a boy in your form. Let us go to bed now. We have lost much sleep as it is."

The Headmaster, who had partially dressed when roused by the

alarm, went away in dignified annoyance towards his own quarters. Mr. Buddle, very worried indeed, made his own way to Master's Corridor, and his own bedroom.

. . . . .

On Sunday morning, masters and prefects conducted a full enquiry. Boys throughout the school were questioned. Nothing was discovered. Nobody admitted to having set off the fire alarm in the night. Nobody, apparently, had seen anything or knew anything.

On Monday morning, the Headmaster entered the Lower Fourth Form-room. He was accompanied by Mr. Buddle. The form was busy with mathematics under the direction of Mr. Greenleaf, the maths master.

Boys rose respectfully as the Headmaster came in, and Mr. Greenleaf stood in silence by his blackboard as Mr. Scarlet mounted the platform. Mr. Buddle stood on one side, his face grave and concerned.

Mr. Scarlet's eyes roved over the form.

He said: "You may be seated."

The boys sat down.

"I have no need to tell you why I am here," went on Mr. Scarlet. "During Sunday night, the fire-alarm was sounded. The false alarm was given from the box outside your dormitory. That point is certain. It is not feasible to believe that anyone but a boy in the Lower Fourth dormitory was responsible for that false alarm being sounded. The entire school was roused - the boys, the staff, myself. Worst of all, the fire-brigade was given a fruitless journey to Slade from the town. A genuine call might have come through to them while they were out answering the false call to Slade. The matter may well get into the local newspapers." He paused, and then added, very grimly: "I trust that I do not observe any boy smiling at this disgraceful episode."

If any boy was indeed guilty of a lurking grin, that grin was speedily wiped away.

"So far, no boy has admitted to sounding the alarms. From that fact alone we are entitled to deduce that the matter was not due to any boy acting in error, but that it was an obscene jest. For the last time, I order the guilty boy to stand forward and admit his guilt, in order that I may be able to give consideration to any mitigating circumstances."

Boys looked at one another dubiously. There seemed to be genuine puzzlement in every face. No boy spoke. No boy stood forward.

A full minute passed.

Mr. Scarlet spoke again.

"Any boy who knows who pulled the alarm switch is commanded to step forward."

Once again, nobody spoke. Nobody moved.

"Very well!" Mr. Scarlet's tone suggested that everything was far from well. "I regret that it is necessary to punish the innocent in order to deter the guilty. Unless," he added, scathingly, "every boy in the form is guilty and this was a concerted act of stupid mischief." Again a pregnant pause before he resumed. "The Wednesday half-holiday is cancelled for the entire form for the remainder of this term. Every Wednesday afternoon, the Lower Fourth will assemble in this form-room at 2 o'clock, for classes under various masters who will take charge in turn. Next Wednesday, I

myself will give you an examination in Latin. That is all, except --"

Mr. Scarlet's voice was deep and vibrating - "except that the way is still open for the guilty boy to come to me to confess his wrongdoing. That is all."

There was dead silence as the Headmaster hitched his gown over his shoulders, stepped down from the platform, and rustled from the room. And Mr. Buddle, who had not spoken a word, followed him slowly, with deeply troubled face.

. . . . .

After classes that afternoon, Mr. Buddle was seated in the Mulberry Walk, between the main school house and the gymnasium, when Pilgrim, the Head Boy of the Lower Fourth, came up to him.

Mr. Buddle, on the seat which surrounded Slade's famous old mulberry tree, was enjoying the open air after a couple of wearing English sessions with the Upper Fourth and the Fifth forms respectively. The sky was overcast, and the dark clouds looked threatening, though, so far, no rain had fallen.

Mr. Buddle eyed Pilgrim.

"Well, Pilgrim?"

Pilgrim sat down beside his form-master, as Mr. Buddle indicated the seat. The Head Boy spoke miserably.

"That detention, sir. Every Wednesday half-holiday till the end of term. It's not fair, sir, for the whole form to be penalised for what just one fellow did."

"The Headmaster regards it as fair, though he regrets it as much as I do," said Mr. Buddle gently.

"It might have been anybody from another form, sir --"

"No, Pilgrim. There are no grounds for such a supposition. No boy from another form would have any reason to come into the Lower Fourth-form dormitory corridor to sound a fire-alarm. There would be a much nearer switch for him."

"I suppose so, sir, unless someone wanted it to appear as though some Lower-Fourth chap had done it, and get our form into a row."

Mr. Buddle raised his eye-brows.

"Have you any reason to believe that any boy from another form would be so wicked?"

Reluctantly, Pilgrim shook his head.

"Well, no, sir. I reckon it must have been one of our own men. But we have no idea who it was."

"Somebody must know," reasoned Mr. Buddle. "It is certainly hard that the entire form has to suffer when only one boy, perhaps, is guilty. But there is nothing that can be done about it."

"It will mess up the term's cricket fixtures, sir. We have a fixture at Plymouth with the Grammar School for next Wednesday. I suppose I must ask Mr. Crayford to ring up and cancel it, sir --"

Mr. Buddle nodded, his brow wrinkled.

"That will probably be necessary," he said. "I should, however, wait until tomorrow before you ask for the match to be cancelled."

"You think the Head might change his mind, sir," ventured Pilgrim, hopefully.

Mr. Buddle smiled faintly.

"Oh, no, the Headmaster will not change his mind. It is just possible, though, that the guilty boy may decide to come forward and speak.

It could be that his conscience may take a hand, could it not, Pilgrim?"

"Anything's possible, sir." Pilgrim did not sound optimistic. "I won't ask the sportsmaster to cancel the match until tomorrow, at any rate, sir."

. . . . .

That evening there was gloom in the Lower Fourth Common Room. It was a wet evening, so cricket practice was off. Once preparation for the next day's class-work had been completed, the Lower Fourth Formers gathered to air their grievances.

Under the chairmanship of Pilgrim, they held yet another enquiry, without much hope. The result was the same. Every boy claimed to have been asleep until the fire-bell had rung out. It seemed impossible to believe that, among all those convincingly innocent youths, one boy must be guilty.

"It must have been a short circuit on the alarm," remarked Thornton, with an original thought. "Has anybody thought of that?"

"A short circuit wouldn't put the key in the box, leave it open, and pull the switch down," said Shovel.

"It's grossly unfair," commented Garmansway with that touch of high-flown language for which he was noted. "Old Pink's taking the line of least resistance. I bet the Gump doesn't like it. Old Pink is killing the dog to get rid of the fleas on its back."

In spite of the solemnity of the occasion, there was a chuckle at Garmansway's lively metaphor.

"We've got to bite on the bullet," put in Meredith. "If we're going to be detained for every Wednesday afternoon of the term, it'll play old Harry with the cricket and mess up the whole summer."

. . . . .

It had turned eight o'clock when there was a tap on the door of Mr. Buddle's study. Mr. Buddle, busy marking exercises - a frequent occupation of his - looked up from his work, and called out to the caller to enter.

The door opened, and Tammadge came in, closing it carefully behind him. He did not look tidy. Tammadge seldom looked tidy. His grey trousers were baggy at the knees and shapeless. His mauve blazer was spotted with ink, there was a greasy smear on one lapel, and the white piping was grubby. His skin looked shiny.

Mr. Buddle regarded him thoughtfully.

"You had better hand that blazer to the school matron, and ask her to have it cleaned. Wear your other blazer for classes tomorrow," said Mr. Buddle.

"Yes, sir."

"And what do you want with me, Tammadge?"

Tammadge clasped his hands behind his back.

"I've come to confess, sir."

"To confess?" Mr. Buddle threw down his blue pencil, and gave this hopeful pupil his full attention. "To confess what, Tammadge?"

"I'm sorry, sir." Tammadge looked beyond Mr. Buddle and out through the window at the drizzle of rain which was falling in the quadrangle. "I let off the fire-alarm on Saturday night, sir."

Mr. Buddle stared at him in silence.

"I'm sorry, sir," repeated Tammadge.

"I see," said Mr. Buddle. He sounded matter-of-fact. He allowed no surprise to be evident in his voice. Perhaps he was not surprised. "And you have come to me to tell me what you did."

"Yes, sir."

"And why, Tammadge, did you do such a senseless thing?" asked Mr. Buddle sternly.

"I don't know, sir."

"You don't know?" Mr. Buddle's voice rose almost an octave. "You pulled the switch outside your dormitory in the middle of the night, rousing the entire school, and bringing out the fire-brigade from Everslade, and you say that you don't know why you did it? Are you out of your senses?"

"I don't know, sir," reiterated Tammadge. There was a placid smile on his podgy face.

"Don't smirk, Tammadge! This is no laughing matter, as you will discover."

The placid smile vanished and Tammadge looked woebegone.

He said: "I always wanted to pull one of those fire-alarm switches, and see what would happen. So on Saturday night I did it."

For a moment Mr. Buddle asked himself whether this placid youth was mentally deficient. He dismissed the thought at once. If this was madness, there was method behind it, Mr. Buddle felt assured.

"I expect I smelt burning," murmured Tammadge.

"And did you smell burning, Tammadge?"

"I don't know, sir." Again that vacuous smile, with the mouth open.

"Why have you come to tell me this now, Tammadge?"

Tammadge looked up at the study ceiling.

"I didn't want the other boys in the form to suffer for what I had done," he explained piously.

Mr. Buddle stirred uneasily in his chair. He almost wriggled. He said, with some irony: "And you feel affection for the other boys in your form, Tammadge? Is that why you have come to me to confess?"

"I don't know, sir," said Tammadge. "I like to do what is right, sir."

Mr. Buddle wriggled again. This sounded more like Alonzo Todd. Would Tammadge mention an Uncle Benjamin?

"You realise, Tammadge, that you have confessed to a most serious misdemeanour?"

"Yes, sir."

"You realise there is a possibility that the Headmaster may decide to cane you severely, or, more likely, to expel you from Slade?"

"Oh, no, sir, he couldn't do that." The placid expression gave way momentarily to one of mild alarm, though the smugness was still there as he spoke. "The Head has named the punishment already, sir. The boys were to miss all their Wednesday half-holidays, sir. He couldn't make it more severe for someone who has come forward voluntarily and confessed, and saved him from being unjust, could he, sir? I wouldn't like to be expelled from Slade, sir. I'm going to be a doctor, sir, when I grow up. I would not like my career to be ruined."

"I hope that you will learn to attend more carefully to personal hygiene before the time comes for

you to develop your beside manner," said Mr. Buddle. "Your finger-nails are unclean at the moment. You will give them attention. You are a slovenly boy, Tammadge."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Buddle paused. He hardly knew what to think or what to say. He asked:

"Will it be any punishment to you to miss games on Wednesday afternoons, Tammadge?"

"Well --" The placid smile was back. "I shan't mind going into class, sir. After all, we are sent to Slade to work."

Again Mr. Buddle wriggled. He rose to his feet.

"You will remain here, Tammadge, while I inform the Headmaster what you have told me. I believe he may be still in his study."

"You'll tell the Head that I have confessed of my own free will, won't you, sir?" Tammadge's gaze was on the carpet now. "After all, nobody would ever have known if I hadn't confessed. Everybody was asleep. Nobody saw me. Nobody could ever have found out. It would have remained a big mystery, sir."

"Perhaps!" said Mr. Buddle. "You may sit on that chair against the window. Do not move away from it."

"Oh, no, sir."

"I shall return within a few minutes to take you to the Headmaster."

Tammadge seated himself on the chair by the window, and Mr. Buddle left the study.

The form-master walked down Masters' Corridor towards the green baize door which separated the corridor from the Headmaster's private quarters. The Headmaster's study was the last one on the corridor before the green baize door was reached.

Mr. Buddle tapped on the study door. He hoped that Mr. Scarlet might not yet have left his study, and he was glad when he heard the Headmaster's voice bidding him enter.

Mr. Scarlet was sitting at his desk writing, and he looked up as Mr. Buddle entered.

"Can I be of service to you, Mr. Buddle?" he enquired, with old-fashioned courtesy.

Mr. Buddle closed the door, and dropped into a chair which Mr. Scarlet indicated.

"Headmaster, a boy has come to me within the last fifteen minutes to confess that he was responsible for setting off the fire-alarm in the small hours of Sunday morning."

"Ah!" Mr. Scarlet expelled his breath noisily. He was obviously pleased. "You relieve my mind very much. I was far from happy at being obliged to punish the entire form in order to make sure that the culprit did not escape scot-free."

"Quite so, sir!" murmured Mr. Buddle.

"Who is the boy?"

Mr. Buddle told him.

"The boy who has come to me and confessed, Headmaster, is Tammadge!

"Tammadge!" Mr. Scarlet's eyebrows shot aloft. "Tammadge was the boy who --- Mr. Buddle, this is quite impossible."

"He has confessed, Headmaster. I agree that, on first thoughts, it is incredible."

Mr. Scarlet was staring at the form-master.

"I would think him the last boy in your form likely to be guilty of so foolhardy an act," he said forcibly.

Mr. Buddle made no comment.

"Why does he say he did such

a thing?" demanded the astonished Headmaster.

A grim smile flickered on Mr. Buddle's face.

"I think we can only guess at his reason, sir. He says he had a kind of urge to pull down the fire-alarm switch, to see what would happen. Tammadge came to my study to make the confession. I have left him there, while I confer with you, before bringing him to you."

Mr. Scarlet nodded.

"I'm glad you did that." He drummed on the desk with his fingers. After a further pause, he said: "I believe that this boy has allowed himself to be used as a scapegoat for the rest of the form. Pressure has been put upon him. He is not a boy of strong character."

Mr. Buddle said, weighing his words as he spoke: "It is possible that he is being used as a scapegoat, but I think it unlikely. As for Tammadge, it is on the cards that he has more in his shop than he displays in his window, as my grandmother used to say. My grandmother always said --"

Mr. Scarlet had no interest whatever in Mr. Buddle's grandmother. He interrupted ruthlessly.

"Tell me, Mr. Buddle. I daresay that you are better able to assess Tammadge than anyone else at Slade, and I will be guided by your opinion. Do you believe that he is guilty, and that we must accept he is guilty?"

Mr. Buddle stroked his chin. He spoke slowly, his eyes fixed on a spot over the Headmaster's right shoulder.

"I am not sure, Headmaster. I admit that. But, in my own mind, I believe that he is speaking the truth. I believe that he did set off the fire-alarm. As for accepting it, what else can we do?"

"Why should Tammadge commit such an act of imbecility?" demanded Mr. Scarlet. "Is the boy mentally retarded?"

"No, sir, quite the reverse. He is a bright boy and a deep-thinking one, in my opinion. Nevertheless, he lacks personality. He likes to be in the limelight, but he is inadequate as a person. His schoolfellows make a butt of him, and he allows them to do so - indeed, I would go further and suggest that he encourages them to do so - as the only means by which he can gain attention. He does this stupid thing of sounding a false fire alarm. In the middle of the night he slipped from his bed, pulled down the switch outside the dormitory, and was back in his bed before anybody else in the dormitory was roused from sleep by the ringing of the bell."

Mr. Scarlet breathed very deeply.

"What possible limelight or satisfaction could that boy obtain by ringing the fire alarm, when nobody knew that he had done it? The boy must be mental."

"But everybody will know that he has done it," said Mr. Buddle very softly. "At first, possibly, it was the secret pleasure of causing so much disturbance with no risk to himself. Boys can be cruel to one another, and some boys of my form have been thoughtlessly cruel in their behaviour to Tammadge. But a victim - any victim - is rarely entirely blameless. Tammadge is the type of boy who invites thoughtless behaviour. We cannot be certain, but I think that he may have been happy to see his form punished en bloc for what he had done. But

he has second thoughts. He comes forward and confesses. He will be something of a hero to the form. He will secure the limelight."

"He will be punished severely," exclaimed Mr. Scarlet, the colour mounting in his face.

Mr. Buddle shook his head.

"I suggest, Headmaster, that you can hardly punish him beyond the detention for every Wednesday afternoon for the rest of this term. And that --" Mr. Buddle shrugged his shoulders. "-- that, Headmaster, will be but little punishment for a boy who hates games but enjoys English and mathematics."

Mr. Scarlet sat in silence for a while, gazing fixedly at Mr. Buddle. It was the Headmaster who broke the silence.

"There must surely be malice in the make-up of a boy who can act in such a way, Mr. Buddle."

"I agree, sir - to some extent. On occasion, I have wondered - "

"You think that I might be wise to send him away from Slade, Mr. Buddle?"

"No, sir. That would be admitting defeat. These are early days. The boy has been in my own form only a few weeks. He may yet become a credit to Slade. If I may venture to offer advice --?"

"Please do, Mr. Buddle."

"The boy does not want to leave Slade. I suggest, Headmaster, that you warn him he will be watched closely for the remainder of the term, and any repetition of malicious conduct will result in his expulsion. I suggest, too, that you arrange for his detentions to take place under the language masters. He has a hearty dislike of learning foreign languages. It might be a plan, too, on some occasions, to put him in charge of the sports master. Mr. Crayford is not umpiring every Wednesday. On some Wednesday afternoons, Mr. Crayford will be coaching for athletics --"

Mr. Scarlet clasped his hands across his extensive waistcoat, and leaned back in his chair. He nodded his head a few times. He said: "There are occasions, Mr. Buddle, when you display Machiavellian qualities. I will take your advice. Please bring Tammadge to me."

. . . . .

Thirty minutes later Mr. Buddle entered the Lower Fourth Common Room. He was followed by Tammadge.

The aura of gloom still hung over the Common Room. Four boys were playing a listless game of table-tennis; a couple were poring over a chess board; but a dozen stood morosely near the window talking, and their overcast countenances made it clear that their conversation and their outlook were not optimistic. In fact, they were still discussing the havoc which would be wrought to the junior cricket season by the detention for the form which was to be a feature of every Wednesday half-holiday for the rest of the term.

Silence fell as Mr. Buddle entered and he was sighted by those in the room. Those who had been seated rose to their feet in the presence of their form-master.

"I have good news for you, boys," said Mr. Buddle.

There was a movement, a wave of emotion, as it were, among the listeners. Boys pressed forward in order not to miss anything.

"Is the detention off, sir?"

asked Pilgrim, speaking for the rest, but not daring to hope for a favourable reply.

"I am pleased to say that the Headmaster has cancelled the detention which --"

The rest of Mr. Buddle's speech was lost in a roar of applause. Boys clapped, they laughed, they smacked one another on the back, they cheered. For a few moments the uproar was great, until it slowly died away as Mr. Buddle raised his hand for silence.

"Has someone owned up, sir?" chirped Shovel delightedly.

"Who was it, sir?" asked another.

"I bet it was Shannon of the Sixth, making a scoop for the school magazine," remarked a third. "Was it Shannon, sir?"

Mr. Buddle frowned.

"Do not be absurd, Rainbow," said Mr. Buddle. "A Lower Fourth boy has accepted your Headmaster's invitation to make a clean breast of his foolish action. Tammadge has admitted that it was he who rang the fire-alarm. He has confessed in order that the rest of the form should not suffer as a result of what he did."

"Tammadge!"

As breaths of surprise were expelled in the Common Room, it was almost as though a long drawn out whistle was being sounded.

"Tammadge!"

The name passed from lip to lip. Mouths opened in disbelief. Every gaze was turned on Tammadge.

As for Tammadge, he stood there with a vacant smirk on his face. His hands hung loosely at his sides. Modestly he lowered his eyes. Silence fell for a moment as the Lower Fourth tried to digest this remarkable turn of events.

Mr. Buddle spoke.

"In view of Tammadge's manly confession, the punishment of detention for every Wednesday half-holiday for the rest of term will fall solely on him, and the other members of the form will be able to enjoy their half-holidays in the normal way."

Mr. Buddle turned to leave the room. As he did so, a babble of chatter arose, and Tammadge was surrounded by his form-fellows.

As Mr. Buddle was moving through the doorway, he heard someone - it sounded like Shovel - call out: "I don't believe a word of it, but three cheers for Tam."

And, as Mr. Buddle walked along the passage with a wry little smile on his face, he heard the three cheers being given with gusto for Tam.

. . . . .

More than an hour later, Mr. Buddle was seated in his study reading a story from his volume of Gems, lent to him by a parent who was a Gem enthusiast.

There was a light knock on the door, and Mr. Buddle rose hastily, placed his book on his chair, and covered it with a cushion.

"Come in," called out Mr. Buddle.

Meredith entered, and Mr. Buddle glanced at his clock.

"What is it, Meredith? You should be in your dormitory by this time. It is after ten."

"Yes, sir, I was just going." Meredith nodded his fair head. "Can I say something to you in confidence, sir? I wouldn't like the Head to suspect."

Mr. Buddle's expression

became grim.

"To suspect what, Meredith? What have you done now?"

"Oh, I haven't done anything, sir. It's just about Tammadge, sir. Wasn't it wonderful of old Tam to get us off detention like he did, sir!"

Mr. Buddle raised his eyebrows.

"I am glad that he confessed," he said.

"Oh, he just made that up, sir. Tammadge didn't ring that fire-alarm."

"You think not?" Mr. Buddle regarded him curiously.

"Of course he didn't do it, sir. We all know that. We haven't any idea who actually did it, but Tam wouldn't have thought of doing anything like that in a thousand years. He wouldn't have the brains or the nerve."

"Then why should he come forward and confess to something he did not do?' asked Mr. Buddle mildly.

Meredith gave a quiet chuckle.

"It sounds like the Gem, doesn't it, sir? 'A Schoolboy's Sacrifice' by Martin Clifford, or 'For the Sake of the Form' by Owen Conquest. Tammadge is a good chap at heart. He must be. He can't help being a bit of a nut. He likes work, so he doesn't mind the detention. So he made out he rang the fire-alarm, and he got the form off detention." Meredith went on a little doubtfully: "I suppose it's all right for us to let him do it, sir? That's really what I wanted to ask you, sir."

"You are asking me, I presume, whether it is in order to condone Tammadge telling lies in order to save the rest of his form from detention?" enquired Mr. Buddle drily.

Meredith looked deflated.

"It's a bit wrong, isn't it, sir? I mean --"

"I know what you mean, Meredith." Mr. Buddle gave a frosty smile. "You can hardly accuse Tammadge of lying blatantly. That would be ungrateful. Therefore you must accept - er - 'A Schoolboy's Sacrifice'."

Meredith nodded with satisfaction.

"Good! We know Tam is lying, but we can't insult him by telling him so. We'll make it up to Tam, sir. We won't rag him for at least two months. If anyone tries to rag old Tam, he'll have me to deal with."

"That is a good resolution," agreed Mr. Buddle.

"We're having a collection, sir. We're going to stand Tam a form feed. He'll be the hero of the hour. It's certainly like the Gem, isn't it, sir?"

"It would be advantageous, Meredith, if you gave a little less attention to the Gem, whatever the Gem may be, and a little more to your studies. Bear that in mind, will you? Good night, Meredith." Mr. Buddle opened the door.

After Meredith had departed, Mr. Buddle extracted his volume of Gems from its concealment beneath his cushion, sat down in his armchair, and resumed his reading. The story was entitled "Algy of St. Jim's", and told of the adventures of a simple youth named Blenkinsop, who stuttered, and who was persuaded by his companions that the normal salute from a new boy to his form-master was for the boy to place his thumb to his nose and extend his fingers.

Mr. Buddle did not quite approve of that story.

He wondered, later, whether

there was any similarity between the simple Blenkinsop of St. Jim's and Tammadge of Slade. Very definitely, Mr. Buddle decided, there was not. There was nothing simple about Tammadge.

Tammadge was a far cry from Alonzo Todd, Skimpole, Clarence Cuffy, or Blenkinsop.

Tammadge was unique.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Merry Xmas to all. Especially our Editor and London Book Club. Cheers.

BOB MILNE, 21 DURHAM TERRACE, BAYSWATER, W2.

= =

WANTED: Bunter hardbacks, first editions with jackets; Monsters, S.O.L's, Greyfriars Annuals, Little Folks, Elsie Oxenham Books.
FOR SALE: four Howard Baker Magnets, Gems, £3 each. Dandy Books, 1954, 1955, 1957. Beano Book, 1952, 1954, £3 each. 20 Gems, 1936, 1939, £1 each.
Wishing all readers and customers a Happy Christmas.

MR. JAMES GALL

49 ANDERSON AVENUE, ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND.

= =

A Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to one and all. Can anyone help with the new address of Jerry Slater and family who lived in Victoria (Australia). They moved about eighteen months ago. Thanks! From:-

JIM SWAN

108 MARNE STREET, QUEEN'S PARK ESTATE, PAD., LONDON, W10 4JG.

= =

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS to all Club Members from Golden Hours Club, especially to the C.D. editor for his indispensable labours on our behalf; to Derek and Will, Uncle Ben, Les Sutton, etc., from

STAN NICHOLS, ERNIE CARTER

RON BROCKMAN, BOB WHITE and SYD SMYTH

= =

WANTED: "Betty" stories in "Young Folks Tales". Have for exchanges - Comics, Jester, Chips, Rainbow, Puck, Funny Wonder, Comic Cuts, Tiger Tim, Sparkler, Film Fun.

W. HALL

80 WALDER RD., HAMMONDVILLE 2170, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

Morcove Abroad: Turania

by RAY HOPKINS

For the Summer Hols in 1922 Morcove went to Turania. "Turania?" you say. "Sounds familiar." Well, yes it does. I can't tell you where it is, but I can tell you what it looks like.

"It is a land of great mountain ranges and huge lakes; a land of great old castles and vast forests."

So Jack Somerfield describes this place which is somewhere in Europe, though he makes it sound like a combination of present day Western Canada and Southern England in the Middle Ages.

Still puzzled? Well, while you're figuring it out I'll give you the plot which is the basis of this exciting holiday series.

A year previously. Revolutionaries had killed the King of Turania. The Queen and Princess had managed to escape to another country but had returned in secret in order to retrieve the hidden royal treasure. Unfortunately, they had been recognized and were made prisoners in the Castle of Carona, built on a rock in the middle of a lake. Those in power in Turania have warned the caretaker of the castle to keep any strangers away from Carona. This is why when Jack Somerfield, brother to Morcove's Headmistress, and Jack Linton, Polly's brother, arrive five days ahead of the Morcove girls, they are attacked in the heart of the mountains on their way to Carona and made prisoners. Thus they are unable to meet the Morcove travellers when they arrive at the village of Solfrino, 50 miles inside the frontier of Turania.

The cast of the Morcove holiday-makers is, as usual, huge. It comprises Betty Barton. Polly Linton. Paula Creel, Madge Minden, Tess Trelawney, Dolly Delane, Trixie Hope and Bluebell Courtney. The three intrepid grownups who accompany them are Miss Somerfield, Miss Ruth Redgrave and that unique and interesting character who came to their rescue so many times in their Moroccan adventures: Rose of the Desert. She is at it again in the first story in the series. The Morcove party is forced to spend a night in the forest because of two extraordinary happenings. The weird-looking farm wagons in which they are travelling from Solfrino to Carona are halted by a huge tree which has fallen across the mountain road. Miss Somerfield believes this was caused by an explosion which startled them earlier that day. They decide to press on as there are but 12 miles left for them to traverse in order to arrive at Carona, where they hope to find the two Jacks. They reach a fork in the road and a rough signpost tells them to take the right hand fork to Carona, but two hours later. the road suddenly ends. It is 7 p.m. and getting dark and Miss Somerfield says they can go no further but will have to camp there overnight. And here is where Rose of the Desert does her stuff.

A brown mountain bear is attracted to the firelight and becomes confused when the girls attempt to shoo him off with lighted brands from their fire. But Polly ventures too near him. trips and falls, and the bear pins her to the ground. Rose of

the Desert stabs him between the shoulder blades. The bear dies instantly and Polly's life is saved!

The two acts of treachery recounted above are proof that someone is trying to keep them from getting to Carona.

The following morning they retrace their steps to the signpost to find it now points along the left hand fork, and in two hours the prospect of Carona lies before them. Here is how the author describes what they see:

> "There was the lake! There, too, was the lakeside village ... quaint, out-of-the-world Carona, the charm of which Jack Somerfield had said he had never seen excelled by any other place which had happened upon in his travels. There, too was the island - a dark oval of forest clad rocks, set in the very midst of the lake with the wonderful castle poised upon a great rock falling sheer to the placid waters."

The Morcovians become aware that all is not right at Carona when they see flashes of light coming from the castle which spell out S.O.S.

They see a man leave the island in a boat and row to Carona. Rose overhears his conversation with another who meets him and is able to tell Miss Somerfield that he is Barolla, the offical caretaker of the castle in the middle of the lake. His assignation is with petro Consartino who had met the Morcove party when they arrived at Solfrino and attempted to dissuade them from venturing further into Turania. They suspect it was he who engineered the blasting of the fallen tree and the moving of the signpost which sent them in the wrong direction. Rose of the Desert overhears Barolla tell Consartino that the castle also houses his wife Martha and two once-royal ladies!

Miss Somerfield agrees to let the girls row out to the castle the following day. None of them know that Consartino has followed Rose and in his turn has been listening to all that they have been saying and can therefore make further plans to thwart them.

The island is a mile across the lake from the village of Carona. They have a picnic meal on the beach during which they hear the flutter of approaching wings. A bird lands near them and they find a tiny scrap of paper tied around its leg. The paper contains a message in several languages excluding English. Miss Somerfield says, "There is a line of French. It says - oh, merciful goodness, listen to this! 'Whoever finds this, show pity! We are prisoners in the Castle!'" Miss Somerfield decides to leave the island at once to place the note in the hands of reliable authorities, but again Consartino has outwitted them. Their boat has vanished! They hear a faint wailing cry from the castle and Miss Somerfield says, "Help those prisoners we must. Save them we will, if we can."

Consartino returns to the castle and tells Barolla it is imperative that he imprison the English travellers when they knock for admittance at the castle door. They are bound to come to the castle if not for shelter, then to see who is crying out.

When Miss Somerfield and Co. appear at the castle door, Barolla lets them in and is gratified to observe that they all appear to be apprehensive. Miss Somerfield says there is still one more to come and calls Rose's name. When she still doesn't appear, Barolla steps closer to the door and the girls change from frightened children into tigresses and pull him to the ground by his ankles. In quick succession Miss Somerfield snatches his lantern; Miss Redgrave grabs his bunch of keys and the girls pull a towel tightly around his face and head. Rose enters swiftly and ropes Barolla's ankles and wrists together. The author says, "And there he lay, a helpless captive on the ground, and so far there had not been a sound to create alarm amongst any companions of his inside the castle."

The castle door opens into a courtyard and as they approach a door leading into the castle proper, Barolla's wife, Martha appears, wondering why everything has gone silent. They push her out into the courtyard and lock themselves inside the castle. Next they hear Consartino calling out to Barolla from upstairs and they put out the lantern hoping he will not observe them, but he blunders right into them. Their heads whirling with success they bundle him to a dark doorway and hear him bump down the steps into a cellar. Miss Somerfield locks the cellar door and the Morcovians raise a cheer as they realise with a feeling of triumph that they are in possession of the Castle of Carona. In the author's words, "Once again, through the great old stronghold, that piteous wailing cry of distress was plainly audible."

Locked in a tower room they find "a beautiful golden-haired girl lying in the centre of the floor." When they revive her she confirms that she is the Princess Inez of Turania and her mother the Queen is imprisoned in another room. Their captors have threatened that others will come who will torture them until they reveal the secret hiding place of the royal treasure - and they may be on their way tonight.

Mother and daughter are reunited, but their sobs of joy are cut short when Miss Redgrave and Rose of the Desert, who have been detailed as sentinels, call out that a boat containing a dozen men is approaching the island. Soon after the boat lands, a battering ram crashes against the castle's outer gate. Miss Somerfield tells them to do their worst and Barolla shouts back that she has until sunset to let the men in. The Queen, who has been known as Madame Estorelle since her secret return to Turania, tells Miss Somerfield she will show the attackers where the treasure is in order to preserve the safety of the Morcovians. In effect, Miss Somerfield replies, 'Don't you dare.' She says they must do all possible to save themselves. The Queen says, "In all my life, I have known nothing to equal this - no, no, nothing so great and magnificent as your superb courage." Miss Somerfield replies, "You give it a big name, Madame. We call it simply - grit."

The rogues attacking the castle are led by a man called Rozelli, and at this point it might be well to make the observation that all the villains in this long series have names that sound Italian, which might send your minds in a more Southerly direction in your quest for Turania. The Queen refers to these attackers as "bandits".

The Morcovians prepare the tower for a siege by Rozelli and Co. Pieces of masonry are carried up to barricade the door and Inez shows Betty and Polly where the pumps are in the dungeons so they will have water. As they go down the last flight of dank steps they hear a moaning sound. They find Jack Somerfield and Polly's

brother locked in the dungeons, both weak from lack of food, but Jack Linton much weaker than Somerfield. They have been imprisoned for five days with no light and very little air. Because of his weak state, Somerfield will not let Linton to help with the preparations to withstand the invaders. So he is detailed to help Madge Minden in the kitchen where she is making cakes. Inez, seeing their cameraderie, makes the romantic comment: "They are ver' good friends, those two - yes? They are king and queen to each other, anyone can see that!"

The attackers' battering ram finally smashes through the castle's outer door and they pour into the inner courtyard with wild shouts of victory.

The Morcovians, the two Jacks and the two royal ladies retreat to the tower and bolt the door at the bottom. Then the blocks of masonry are placed behind for reinforcement. Jack Somerfield's left foot is crushed beneath one of the blocks but he keeps the knowledge of the terrible pain to himself. The air of defiance and the laughter of the schoolgirls amazes the royal pair and they lose their own terrors. The Queen makes the comment, "We are not calm in danger as are these English!" but she is able to pull herself together enough to retrieve the treasure which consists of small portable jewellery.

Rose of the Desert, realizing that Somerfield has injured his foot and is therefore unable to do anything about rescuing them from their plight suggests she be allowed to descend by a rope to the lake where she will swim to the attackers' boat and return with it so they can all descend the rope and escape in the boat. And here comes another of the author's romantic touches. Jack Somerfield holds Rose's hand in his and wishes her the best luck in all the world. Rose says, "It is fated that I should be the one, and truly I am glad! Now is the hour when I may indeed repay thee and thine for all that I owe in gratitude! Kismet - it is fate!" This is a reference to the fact that Someffield has saved Rose's life in the desert and his sister has given her a home in England. Rose says she must hurry. Rozelli and the bandits are at the Tower door. Rose accomplishes her task and though Barolla's wife is guarding the boat, the fog is too thick and Rose too silent for her to realize it has been taken. Rose is pulled back to the Tower battlements and Jack Linton is sent to tell Somerfield to leave his watch on the Tower steps - Rozelli and Co. are almost through the door - for they are ready to make their escape. With the help of a pulley, two persons can descend on the rope at the same time. The two Jacks are the last to leave, and as they reach the boat, Rozelli and his men burst out onto the battlements to find the birds have flown.

This is by no means the end of the story, though it is where the truncated SCHOOLGIRLS OWN LIBRARY reprint finishes. After their escape to the shore they are almost captured by Rozelli and Co. in the mountains, but Somerfield uses some explosives he has found in a deserted chalet on their travels and blows up the side of the lake that is at the summit of the mountain. There is a tremendous explosion and the sky is black with falling rocks. As they subside they see the lake at the summit roaring down the mountains - while Rozelli and Co. stare in baffled bewilderment from the other side of the rushing waters knowing their prey is about to slip through their fingers, for the water will continue to rush down the mountain for several hours and there is no way to get around the avalanche.

Arrival at Carona places them all out of the reach of Rozelli and his fellow bandits. The new government promises to round them up and throw them in jail. The ex-Queen and her daughter accompany the Morcove party to England and decide to make their home in London. "AMAZING PLUCK OF BRITISH SCHOOLGIRLS" is a headline in the newspapers and they are thrilled to see their pictured likenesses in print.

And thus ends Morcove's first trip to Turania. These stirring adventures are related in THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN 76 - 81 (15 July - 19 August, 1922). I must tell you that right through this series there is no evidence as to where the author meant to place his mythical country. However when, nine years later in 1931, the author revived the country as the basis for another holiday series, he states that "Turania (is) a tiny, mountain-girt kingdom tucked away somewhere in the south-east corner (of Europe)." Later on it is referred to as the "little Balkan country of Turania." So now you know as much as the author and I do.

---

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: Modern Boys, 272, 286, 287, 289, 296, 297, 298, 323, 335, 336, 451. Magnets 1197, 1206, 1207, 1263, 1272, 1274. Fair price, some items for exchange.

MAURICE HALL

26A SIDNEY ROAD, WALTON-ON-THAMES, SURREY.

= =

Merry Christmas to all, especially Eric, Roger, Josie, George Davidson. Wassail to whoever will sell me Thrillers 95, 118, 141, 177, 187, 204, 215, 238, 243, 353, 408. Sexton Blake Annuals 1, 3, 4. SPC's 1 to 9, 11, 15, 23, 25, 29.

HOWARD SHARPE

P.O. BOX 204, ST. KILDA, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA 3182.

= =

Howard Baker collector now disposing of 224 original Magnets, near mint, China Series, 1175-1185, near mint, 1126-1169 and average 1516-1683 and 1921 G.H.A., £170 the lot. Less than cost. Enquiries:-

"COURTFIELD", 49 KINGSEND, RUISLIP, HA4 7DD.

Telephone RUISLIP 31025

= =

Merry Christmas. Happy reading to all Greyfriars, St. Frank's, Sexton Blake and William fans.

CEDRIC RICHARDSON

INTRODUCTION TO
'Morcove Reunion - Christmas 1945'

by MARY CADOGAN

Elizabeth Blenman, a kind reader of YOU'RE A BRICK, ANGELA!, wrote to Patricia Craig and myself to say how pleased she was to read once again about Morcove School. She lent us a letter which she had received from Horace Phillips (Marjorie Stanton), the Morcove author, soon after THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN ceased publication. The text of this letter is reproduced here. Sadly Horace Phillips never did write that story about Betty & Co. when they were grown up, so I have made an attempt at it. Some readers may not agree with my interpretation of events and relationships, but I have endeavoured to remain faithful to the style and characterizations of Horace Phillips in this story.

LETTER FROM HORACE PHILLIPS TO ELIZABETH BLENMAN

The Steps Cottage,
St. Margaret's Bay,
Dover,
Kent.

15th February, 1938

My Dear Friend and Reader,

I have only just received your very charming letter, sent on to me from Fleetway House.

Do let me thank you most sincerely for all the nice things you say about my 'Morcove' stories, from which I am at last taking a rest.

If you are going to miss "Betty & Co.", then how much more am I likely to miss them!

You deserve to be told something about the origin of the word "Morcove". I made it up as a kind of variation of the name-place Mortshoe, in N. Devon.

And, letting you into another little secret, "Marjorie Stanton" is only my pen-name. I used it for No. 1 of the Series, and so I had to stick to it!

You have my very best wishes for the years that lie before you, and I cannot help hoping that it will be many a day before you quite forget The Chums of Study 12.

Someday I may write about Betty & Co. - all grown up!

Again thanking you for the great pleasure of your letter.

Yours sincerely,

sgd. HORACE PHILLIPS

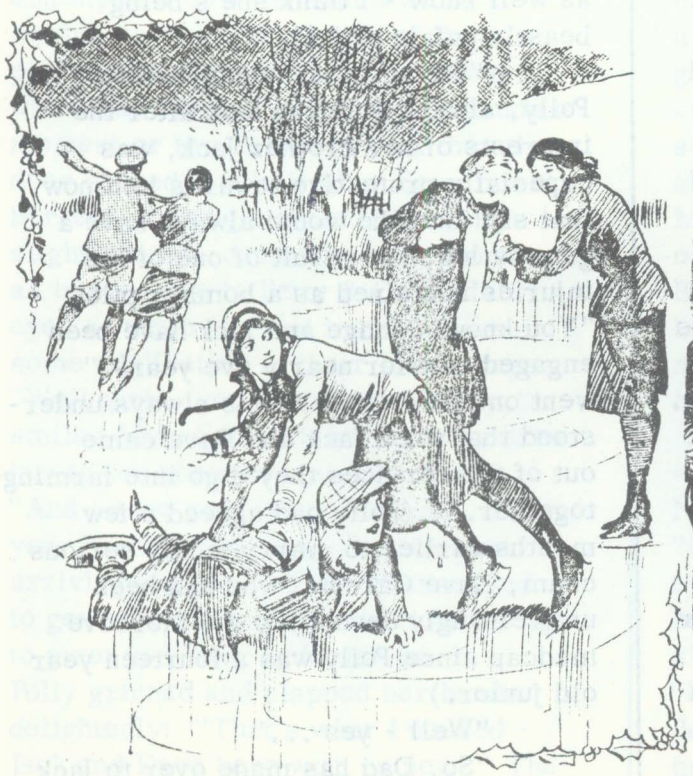
MORCOVE REUNION - CHRISTMAS 1945

by Mary Cadogan

Every room and corridor of Morcove School was pervaded by end of term expectancy as clusters of laughing girls exchanged cards and small parcels, hugging to themselves thoughts of Christmassy surprises and holiday plans. Their excitement was enhanced by the knowledge that after over five years of war the traditional message of Christmas - 'Peace on Earth' - might at last have some meaning again.

Even the dignified atmosphere of the Head-mistress's study was brightened by garlands of holly and sprigs of mistletoe - as well as by the cheerful faces of four young women in colourful dresses who sat round the crackling fire roasting chestnuts. They were talking nineteen to the dozen, for this was the first time that Betty Barton, Polly Linton, Naomer Nakara and Tess Trelawney had been together since their Morcove school-days had ended in that fateful autumn of 1939. Miss Somerfield had invited them, with a few more of their friends, to spend the last two days of the Christmas term at Morcove before they travelled on to Pam Willoughby's home, Swanlake, for the holiday. Naomer - Queen now in far distant Nakara but still the same endearing dusky imp - kept jumping up excitedly, drawing back the curtain and peering out. "Ooh - gorjus'. What ze diggings - eet snows - just like I say eet would. Look'."

And Betty & Co. delightedly watched the large flakes falling - in the light from their window seeming



almost luminously white against the dark evening sky. Within minutes a light powdering had transformed grey roofs, sombre elms and hockey fields into scenes of wonder, matching the mood of this specially memorable Christmas.

Betty sighed contentedly. "Oh girls. It's almost too much! Miss Somerfield is a dear to ask us all here: what a grand start to the holidays! More than that really - it's - well - the symbolic start of our new life, isn't it?"

Polly broke in impulsively. "You mean now we're absolutely finished with our war work and bursting to get on with our proper jobs ..."

"Oo, queek, queek - another car, he draws up!" Naomer was at the curtains again doing a little dance of pure joy. "Eet is ze dear old duffer - bekas, I go and give my Paula a beeg hug and a kiss."

And the young Queen shot out of the room with as little dignity as in her fourth-form days, when her high spirited antics constantly disturbed and dishevelled her pretty but rather vain chum, the languid Paula Creel. Tess Trelawney, the artistic chum of the old Study No. 12 coterie, laughed with Betty and Polly, but her eyes were suspiciously moist. "Naomer hasn't really changed much - even though she's worked so hard and achieved so much for Nakara since she came to the throne. It's wonderful that she's managed to get to England for Christmas!"

"Pictures in the fire, Tess?" suggested Betty softly, "What can you see for all of us?"

Tess smiled dreamily: "Happier pictures anyway than some of those I've been painting during the war. You know, I sometimes felt guilty to be going on with my painting - with you away working for Intelligence, Betty, Polly in the W.A.A.F., Pam and even dear old Paula in the W.R.N.S."

"But Tess dear, you were in Civil Defence, and it would have been foolish to ignore your special talent!" cried Betty. "It's the same with Madge ..."

Betty broke off as she noticed that Polly, her particular chum, had flushed at the mention of Madge Minden's name. What was wrong, wondered Betty - and why was the normally live-wire Polly so subdued?

"Madge's music is everything to her - the only thing that matters!" muttered Polly, almost fiercely. "Oh, I know she gave a lot of happiness to people during the war with her concerts all over the country. But - but ..."

"Yes?" prompted Betty gently. "What's the matter, Polly?"

Polly looked uncomfortably at her two friends. "I suppose you'll think I'm down on Madge - but you may as well know - I think she's being beastly unfair to Jack!"

"So that's it," thought Betty. Polly, always quick to look after the interests of her brother Jack, was especially protective towards him now that she knew he would always have a gammy leg, the result of one of his injuries sustained as a bomber pilot. "You know, Madge and Jack have been engaged now for nearly two years," went on Polly, "and it was always understood that when Jack and Dave came out of the services they'd go into farming together." (Polly had agreed a few months earlier to marry Jack's serious chum, Dave Cardew, who had been unswervingly devoted to the Morcove madcap since Polly was a fourteen year old junior.)

"Well - yes ..."

"So, Dad has made over to Jack

and me the Devonshire estate, and the idea was that the four of us would make our home there and build up a really terrific organic farm. But after all - it won't suit Madge," snorted Polly. "She's told Jack that though she wants to marry him, she has no intention of giving up her career as a concert pianist. And Jack - well, the old chap feels it badly, with his stiff leg ..."

"And his stiff-necked pride?" suggested Tess, with more truth than tact. Polly's sharp retort was checked by Naomer's explosion into the room, with a slightly flustered but almost formidably elegant Paula in tow. "Paula - darling," breathed Betty, as she ran to greet her. "But - you're so beautiful now!" Paula had the grace to blush becomingly, beaming as Betty, Polly and Naomer bestowed kisses on her undeniably lovely face.

"Well geals - I'm actually a twifle wumpled just at this moment. Naomer is - aw - wobust as usual, and my hair is an absolute wuin!" At that so familiar phrase of Paula's, peals of laughter broke the tension which had existed in the Head's study a moment or two before. And then the door opened to admit Miss Somerfield herself, looking a little older, and slightly tired, certainly - but almost as impressive to Betty & Co's adult eyes as when she had inspired awe-some admiration in their junior days. "Well girls, you sound very happy," smiled Miss Somerfield, as Betty drew her to the chair nearest the fire. "And I have good news for you. Polly, your brother and Dave Cardew are arriving shortly. They've managed to get over after all, instead of having to meet you later at Swanlake." Polly grinned and clapped her hands delightedly: "That's what I needed - Jack and Dave here with us now. The best Christmas wish of all come true!"

° ° ° °

The following day brought another new arrival to Morcove as well as Dave and Jack. Betty & Co. had eagerly awaited this visitor, Clara Trevlyn, an ex-pupil of the famous Cliff House School. Still a stranger to them, she was a friend whom Polly had made in the W.A.A.F., who was, apparently, 'absolutely wizard' in every way. As soon as they met Clara the girls knew that Polly's enthusiasm was justified. Clara exuded vitality and friendliness. Betty had experienced an unusual pang of jealousy before meeting this chum who meant so much to Polly, but Clara, tawny-haired, vibrant and honest as the day found an instant and very special place in Betty's generous heart. She noticed too that Clara seemed to have a good effect on Jack Linton, who, in spite of larking about with his sister, as always, was apt to fall into rather morose silences when he thought he was unobserved. "It's not only Madge," guessed Betty accurately, "He's very cut up about his leg. It worries him so - he feels less of a man somehow and that doesn't help him to understand Madge's needs." Polly was terribly over-protective now with Jack, decided Betty. She went to great lengths to keep Madge's name out of the conversation, and never to refer, even indirectly, to Jack's gammy leg.

In the afternoon, when the chums were considering a walk before tea, Naomer's excessive energy spilled over. "Bekas! Why should we walk?" she ejaculated. "When ze pond - he must be frozen. Queek, queek, Paula, ze skates! Where can we find them?" "Er - that is - I don't know, exactly," demurred Paula, patting her immaculate hair nervously, "Isn't skating a twifle

too exhausting, geals?"

But Paula's objections were drowned by the general enthusiasm and ten minutes later the party assembled by the side of the pond adjacent to the old school buildings. Polly and Clara were whizzing across the ice before any of the others had got their skates on, and they were soon followed by Betty and Tess. In their different ways, Dave and Naomer were laughingly encouraging the reluctant Paula, but Jack made no attempt to get on to the ice. "What's up, old fellow?" asked Dave suddenly, as he became aware of this. Jack kicked one skate disconsolately into the snow-covered grass at the pond's edge. "It's no good, Dave. I - I'll just be a wet blanket at this. I think I'll go back indoors."

Polly realized what was happening, that Jack was embarrassed to take a turn on the ice with his now permanently stiff leg. "Oh poor Jack!" she sighed under her breath. "He was such a wonderful skater too."

"Why isn't he skaing, then?" demanded Clara, as she and Polly stopped a few yards away from Jack. "He's not at all badly disabled, and the sooner he jolly well comes to terms with it, the better."

"But - " began Polly.

"Hey, Jack! Why don't you come on the ice with us?" yelled Clara, skating towards him. "It's absolutely tophole." Jack reddened. "Um - I don't think I'd be much good, the way things are," he mumbled.

"Oh, piffling rot!" retorted Clara, her eyes aglow. "Come on, Polly, you take one arm and I'll take the other, and we'll soon get him going."

And, hardly knowing what was happening to him, Jack found himself yanked on to the ice, his embarrassment about his leg soon forgotten, and having the time of his life!

. . . .

"Clara's doing Jack good," said Polly.

"Yes, but where are they?" whispered Betty. "I haven't seen them since tea-time." Miss Somerfield, Dave and the girls were having their evening meal, from which Clara and Jack were noticeably absent. "They're in the library - talking," replied Polly. "About an hour ago Tess took me in there to show me a book someone had done about her war paintings - and Jack seemed to be unburdening his heart to Clara. I only hope he doesn't get too fond of her - I mean - there's Madge --- oh dear!"

Betty squeezed her chum's hand reassuringly. "Don't worry, Polly darling. I'm sure no-one will ever separate Jack and Madge. But it's grand if Jack can sort himself out talking to Clara. She's a splendid girl, isn't she? I can see why you like her so much." Polly's eyes twinkled with their old madcap lustre. "She's almost the best chum anyone could have, Betty. But not quite - there's you, dear. You always understand." Betty glowed. "Thanks Polly. And - don't worry about Madge. Things will work out: you'll see ... we'll manage!"

° ° ° °

In the library Jack was feeling better than he had done for some weeks. It was so easy to talk about things to Clara, who made no bones about his disability. Consequently he never felt awkward with her. He even found himself telling Clara about Madge's decision not to give up her musical career.

As soon as he had finished speaking, Clara chimed in. "Jack - I want to tell you something. You know, you remind me of my own Jack - my brother. He was a R.A.F. pilot like you, and he was killed in the Battle of Britain. But before he died he spent a long time in hospital - and in great pain. He knew then that even if he lived he'd never walk again. But he wanted to go on living, whatever the problems! That's - that's what we all fought for, Jack. To live our lives in freedom, as fully as we can. And for Madge - surely - that means her music."

"Yes," said Jack slowly. "But marriage after all is sharing. And she's known all along how I feel about us doing the farm together."

"Oh, stuff!" burst out Clara. "You can hire someone to milk a cow, but girls like Madge - concert pianists who can also compose - don't exactly grow on trees. Dash it, Jack - can't you see you're being pig-headed? Why don't you accept Madge as she is - as she was when you fell in love with her, after all?"

Something snapped in Jack then. Clara was right, of course, and suddenly he knew what he had to do. "Clara - thanks - I think I understand things better now. I'll tell Madge it'll be all right. And - well - thanks again." Clara grinned and touched his arm in a comradely gesture. Jack, for a moment overcome with gratitude, leaned forward and touched Clara's lips with his own. But at that moment the door swung open, and there, open-mouthed, stood Madge Minden, ashen-faced at the scene that met her eyes. Before Jack could say anything she turned and fled.

° ° ° °

Jack stood rooted to the spot, overcome by conflicting emotions, but Clara had much more presence of mind. "You ninny!" she cried, "Go after her straight away: otherwise it'll be much more difficult to put things right later on. Hurry up - before Madge decides to take off again!" Jack ran as quickly as he could after Madge. His mind was working now and he guessed that she had just arrived by taxi. If the car had left it wouldn't be easy for Madge to get away from Morcove immediately: she might have gone to Miss Somerfield's study to telephone for another car. He went straight there - and sure enough Madge was already dialling a number. Jack strode into the room, took the receiver from her and banged it down.

"Madge - you've got to listen to me," he panted. "Things aren't like you're imagining. Clara and I were just talking, and she helped me to sort out something ..."

His voice trailed off as he saw that Madge was crying softly. "Jack, I think I do understand. I'm not the girl you want after all, because my - my career will always be important ... So you've found someone else'. Jack took her in his arms. He wasn't articulate at the best of times - but something more than words was needed now. "Madge darling. Look at me. Can't you see I love you more than I've ever done - you, and your music. Yes, I know you must go on with it. And I'm glad, Madge, really I am."

Smiling tremulously Madge whispered to him ... "It will be a wonderful Christmas, after all, Jack."

. . . .

Later that evening the chums were assembled again in Miss Somerfield's study. They had been discussing old times, and future plans. Miss Somerfield was visibly moved by the eager young faces. "You know girls, the war is over and we have to look forward now," she said. "But I must say how proud I am of all that Morcove has contributed towards the war effort. Your form particularly ... such splendid achievements. Your sister Judy" turning to Dave, "has just written to tell me that she, Helen Craig and Dolly Delane intend to continue with nursing as a permanent career. And you, Betty, will be starting here next term as Junior English mistress. Polly - Madge - Tess - Naomer - the future for all of you seems mapped out, doesn't it? Now Paula, dear, what are your plans?"

Paula's attractive face became rosier than ever. "Well - actually - I do have news for you all." "Bekas - queek, queek, tell us!" demanded Naomer, jigging up and down in anticipation.

"Well, geals - look!" And Paula extended one of her beautifully manicured hands. There on the third finger was a glistening diamond ring.

"Oh Paula! You spoof!" laughed Polly, "You weren't wearing this till just now ... why didn't you tell us?"

"I was wather nervous about how you would weceive my news, geals. But I'm weally too excited to keep it a secwet any longer. I'm going to be mawwied in the New Year to one of Lady Lundy's nephews ... Lord Wingdene. I met him at Portsmouth six months ago." Naomer leaped upon Paula and crushed her elegant chum in a wild embrace: in the general melée of congratulations that followed Miss Somerfield turned to Clara, who smilingly stood a little apart from the Morcove group. "And you, my dear, what are your plans? Polly told me you were thinking of training to teach physical education: I'm sure you'd be most suitable for this, and maybe we could tempt you to join us then in the west country, teaching at Morcove?"

Clara listened attentively, but shook her head. "Thanks, Miss Somerfield, but I've done a lot of thinking since I was demobbed and I've got a new plan." Jack, Dave and the Morcove chums were listening now, as Clara continued. "I did want to be a P. E. teacher - but the war, and all the sacrifices people made, set me thinking. I've decided I'm going to do the most useful thing I can, though it won't be easy, and I absolutely dread the swotting! I'm going to be a physio-therapist, and I start my training at St. Thomas's in London after Christmas. Marjorie

Hazeldene's there - my old chum from Cliff House. She was nursing all through the war, and now she's a Sister - fearfully efficient and high-up. She's promised to help me with the grind of anatomy and all that. I really can't wait to get started!"

Miss Somerfield smiled at Clara's determined expression. "You'll succeed, Clara, and our good wishes will go with you. And now girls, I give you a Christmas toast!" There was silence then, as everyone stood. Glasses were raised, and all eyes turned towards Miss Somerfield.

"It's the age-old wish - A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! But something else. Girls - I can wish you nothing better than that the splendid promise of your past will be fulfilled in your future! And I am sure it will! Girls - Jack - Dave! I toast - The Future!"

. . . .

And there we leave Betty Barton and her chums - happy in the knowledge that Miss Somerfield's wish for them will almost certainly come true ...

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: Collectors' Digest Annuals 1947, 1948, 1949; also monthly numbers 1-11, 13, 15-21, 23-26, 31, 33, 72, 181, 200, 207, 217, 245; S.B.L's first and second series; Union Jacks; S.O.L's; Detective Weekly; offers with price to

L. YOUNG, 211 MAY LANE, KING'S HEATH

BIRMINGHAM, B14 4AW.

Special thanks to Mrs. Josie Packman for help given. Seasonal Greetings to all fellow collectors.

= =

Greetings to the Editor, Derek Adley, Norman Shaw and all who enjoy our wonderful hobby. May 1977 bring health and happiness -

PHIL HARRIS

= =

Seasons Greetings to all our friends - always interested in Hamiltonia to buy or swop -

VALE AND JOYCE

3 MAIDA AVENUE, LONDON, W2 1TF.

= =

Yuletide Greetings to all friends of the Golden Hours.

BEN BOLT

TOWER HAMLETS, E2 0EG.

STORMY ?

by CRYIL ROWE

Over the years in Collectors' Digest we have heard much discussed in Blakiana of the mysterious author, Michael Storm - who he was, his lineage, when and where he died and whether he was one person or two. Whether, in fact, he (or they) may have been man and wife indeed, with occasionally one using the pen name and occasionally the other taking up the authorship. Nowhere, though, does it appear suggested that it was a joint effort. Nor is this article intended to show that it is. The idea behind it is to discuss the whole of the Michael Storm ouvre as produced in the several Amalgamated Press journals and elsewhere.

It is an endeavour to produce a bibliography as far as one can, but unfortunately it is not quite in my knowledge to make it complete.

At the time of his writing, in the middle of good King Edward's reign, he was apparently of middle age or over, a well-built man with, according to some writers (gathered from A. P. editorial sources, etc.) of rather Bohemian habits. It appears from these sources that some of the A. P. staff who knew him were not prepared to disclose what they knew.

He is supposed to have died circa 1910-1912 and Mrs. Storm, in her own name and in association with G. H. Teed, produced work under the Storm name for which she or Teed (or both?) received payment.

This introduction to A. P. spheres was the beginning of Teed's career as an A. P. author, and he later took over Storm's famous character, George Marsden Plummer, and chronicled many turbulent events in his duel with Sexton Blake.

One wonders whether there was any irregularity in the marriage or association, either of the Storms or Mrs. Storm and Teed that created a closed-mouth attitude from A. P. editors, who may have known.

Nowadays (alas!), anything of the sort would make a field day for the press, but times and policy were different over sixty years ago.

I wonder if Burke's landed gentry might disclose names of Sempill or Semphill or Forbes-Semphill or even of Duncan Storm, who by one account was related by marriage, which I believe to be an airy invention, if Duncan Storm really was Gilbert Floyd, as is reputed. Dates of birth and death therein would help solve much.

In addition to the 'who' tangle we have the 'why' - that is, why were some tales printed under Michael Storm's name, why were some anonymous, and why were others printed under pseudonyms and later reprinted under different pseudonyms? Truly the Amalgamated Press editorial policy was haphazard. Could it be that the author, having been paid once, would notice his own name again but would be less likely to notice the same story under a different title and different author's name? Or did various editors of various A. P. papers just locate some mss or tss in various files

and just go ahead merrily?

However, with this I fear wordy preamble may I get on to the bibliography of Michael Storm, with the work appearing in Pluck, The Marvel, The Union Jack, Boys' Friend Library, Boys' Realm, Chuckles, Cheer Boys Cheer, Sexton Blake Annual, Boys' Friend 4d Lib., Boys' Journal, Dreadnought, Penny Popular, Gem, Detective Weekly, Penny Pictorial, Answers, and with Messrs. Blackie & Sons.

THE GEM

No. 15		A tale of Alan Wayward. (see Note 1)
No. 18		Another tale of Alan Wayward.

PLUCK

The Ravenscar Series. (see Note 2)

No. 155	19 Oct 1907	Brooks of the Lower Fourth
158	9 Nov 1907	The Moor Men
160	23 Nov 1907	The Head Versus the School
165	28 Dec 1907	The Rise of the Lower Fourth
173	22 Feb 1908	The Wild Man of Pringle Island
176	14 Mar 1908	The Ghost of the Dominican
184	9 May 1908	The Fight for Pringle Island
198	15 Aug 1908	Fortune of War (see Note 3)

All the above were by Michael Storm.

THE BOY DETECTIVE SERIES (see Note 4)

247	24 Jul 1909	Bob and Harry's Trap
248	31 Jul 1909	The Jasper Casket
249	7 Aug 1909	John Stark's Sacrifice (anon.)
250	14 Aug 1909	The Man of the Mask

The above four were by Detective Inspector Coles, except for 249, which was unnamed. These tales were not the first in which Bob and Harry appeared, for they had appeared also earlier in THE MARVEL (see below) and in BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY (see below).

THE MARVEL

The Abbottscrag Series (see Note 5)

203	14 Dec 1907	Lionel Andrade - Jew
207	11 Jan 1908	The Overthrow of Blundells
216	14 Mar 1908	The Value of the Red Cap
237	8 Aug 1908	The Fight for the Captaincy
238	15 Aug 1908	The Revolt of the Fifth

All the above were by Michael Storm.

THE BOY DETECTIVE SERIES (see Note 6)

254	5 Dec 1908	The Boy Detective's First Case
255	12 Dec 1908	The Mystery of the Taxicab
256	19 Dec 1908	The Quest of the Elephant Tusk
257	26 Dec 1908	The Disappearance of Doctor Glyn
258	2 Jan 1909	The Strange Case of Lieutenant Forester
259	9 Jan 1909	The Football Conspiracy (anon.)
260	16 Jan 1909	The King's Messenger
268	13 Mar 1909	The Company Promoter
269	20 Mar 1909	The Crimson Crocus

cont'd ...

270	27 Mar 1909	The Treasure of Drayton Manor
271	3 Mar 1909	The Cat's Eye
272	10 Apr 1909	Defending His Home

All the above were by Det. Insp. Coles (pseudonym for Storm) except 259, which had no author given.

THE UNION JACK

222	11 Jan 1908	The Man from Scotland Yard (see Note 7)
238	2 May 1908	The Master Anarchist
262	17 Oct 1908	The Mount Street Mystery
269	5 Dec 1908	The Ghost of Rupert Forbes (see Note 8)
273	2 Jan 1909	The Vendetta
277	30 Jan 1909	The Road Hog
299	3 Jul 1909	The Blue Room Mystery
302	24 Jul 1909	In Deadly Grip
303	31 Jul 1909	The Stepney Mystery
307	28 Aug 1909	The Mystery of Duchy Hollow
312	28 Oct 1909	The Mystery of the Scarlet Thread
315	23 Oct 1909	The Swell Mobsman (see Note 7)
316	30 Oct 1909	The Jewel Thieves
324	25 Dec 1909	The Great Conspiracy
329	29 Jan 1910	Found Drowned
334	5 Mar 1910	The Problem of the Yellow Button (see Note 7)
342	30 Apr 1910	The Mystery of Room 11 (see Note 7)
357	13 Aug 1910	Plummer versus Blake (see Note 7)

All the above were anonymous.

BOYS' REALM

?	Dick Mascot's Schooldays. Alan Cale serial?

BOYS' FRIEND 3d LIBRARY

43	Brooks of Ravenscar	March 1908
70	The Captain of Abbotscrag	Jan. 1909
90	The War Lord	July 1909
96	The Mervyn Mystery	Sept. 1909 (see Note 9)
97	The Rope of Rubies	Oct. 1909
183	Dick Mascot's Schooldays	Feb. 1912 (see Note 10)
248	The Ghost of Rupert Forbes	Dec. 1913

No. 43 by Michael Storm, No. 90 by Det. Insp. Coles
No. 183 by Alan Cale. Others anonymous.

CHUCKLES

52	The War Lord	Serial commenced

This was ascribed to Michael Clifton

CHEER BOYS CHEER

No. ? or Nos. ?	A Contribution of Rupert Storm

BOYS' JOURNAL

No. 52 Sept. 12, 1914 to No. 64 Dec. 5th, 1914
The Mystery at Craghurst. John Michael. (see Note 9)

DREADNOUGHT

No. 27	Nov. 1912	The Man from Scotland Yard	(serial commenced)
61	- 1913	The Great Conspiracy	(serial commenced)
?	- 1914	The Mystery of the Scarlet Thread	(serial)

These were reprints of Union Jack titles, 222, 324, 312.
I am unaware if they had an author's name.

DETECTIVE WEEKLY

369 The Mystery Millionaire

This is a re-hash of a Storm tale but which?

ANSWERS

1136 March 5 1910 The Affair of the Burcravian Attache (anon.)

Perhaps there were others in the series which provided.

PENNY POPULAR

110-111	1914	No Proof and Caught Redhanded.	Reprint U.J. 262
140	1915	Reaping the Whirlwind	Reprint (part of) U.J. 299
141	1915	Unveiling the Past	Reprint (part of) U.J. 303
148-149	1915	Through Prison Bars	Reprint U.J. 302
152-153	1915	Partners in Peril and Fugitive from Justice	Reprint U.J. 315
156-157	1915	The Secretary's Ruse and Tinker's Daring	Reprint U.J. 307
174-175	1916	Man on the 4.15 and The Squire's Secret	Reprint U.J. 329
192-193	1916	Birds of Prey and The City Conspiracy	Reprint U.J. 342

I don't know if these had an author's name.

SEXTON BLAKE ANNUAL

No. 2 1939 contained The Man from Scotland Yard

This was under the alias of Mark Osborne.

PENNY PICTORIAL

490	1908	The Case of the Missing Minister
491	1908	The Mystery of the Egyptian Bonds (see Note 11)
499	1908	Lady Molly's First Case
545	1909	Well Matched
546	1909	The Bara Diamond
547	1909	Parried
548	1909	Quits!
549	1909	The Removal of Mr. Soames
550	1909	The Case of the Louis Quinze Snuffbox
551	1909	Abducted
552	1909	Blake Scores
604	1910	Trapped
606	1911	The Great Bridge Tunnel Mystery
607	1911	Found Guilty

All the above are anonymous tales as were all in Penny Pictorial.
My list in Collectors' Digest, September 1971, gives what I personally believe are other Michael Storm efforts.

BOYS' FRIEND 4d LIBRARY

194 Second series 1929. The Death Drums (anon.)

This was reissued later as the hardback below
Published by Blackie & Sons
circa 1945 The Grey Messengers Michael Storm
Crown 8vo Grey cloth 224 pages with four illustrations
by John de Walton.

Bill Lofts says that the records show B.F. Lib. 194 was paid for to Innis Hale, whom I have never seen as the author of any book anywhere. Messrs. Blackie & Sons' records of the time have disappeared and they can only assume it was published by agreement with Amalgamated Press and not negotiated from any author.

PLUCK

249 7 Aug. 1909 One page of a serial called Game to the Last
The adventures of Alan Wayward, a young Britisher in his quest for a fortune (anon.) See Note 1.

The information comes from my incomplete collection and from letters from Bill Lofts and Chris Lowder providing more information for which I give my grateful thanks. Mulling over old C.D's and C.D. Annuals set the idea going in my mind. The item in Answers comes from a note from the head of the old Blake stalwart, S. Gordon Swan. Any errors and foolishness are, of course, all my own.

Storm, whoever he was, wrote with a much more adult poised developed style than probably anyone else in that field, and I believe that if he had performed in the twenties and thirties he would well have found a market and a public to compare with the detective masters of the time, the leaders of the genre. Certainly the hardness and the cruelty that on occasion came through would have fitted in with today's hard-boiled attitudes. I feel that he was only incidentally writing for boys and that had he so desired he could well have risen into the accepted English literature field as known by the savants. Perhaps it was this haphazard character we seem to hear of that kept him from being more assiduous, either in this field of writing or another.

The portrayal of Dom; and of Andrade, the Jew at Abbotscrag, together with Mr. Davidson, a Jewish master at the school, shew great sensitivity throughout, and the double character of Brooks at Ravenscar and in The Rope of Rubies, ambiguity expressed in a most sensitive manner reveal great ability to probe and portray character.

Similarly with the villains; and Blake; in the Blakian saga, G.M.P., Rupert Forbes, John Marsh and Marston Hume all are depicted and deliniated in a manner to bring them right home to our consciousness.

The two ladies, Maxwell and Dom, are also recognisable people in their own right, and reveal how it was possible, and in character, that they should find a responsive Blake. I would say genuine people and not made in the mould of the other Blake heroines who, begging the other authors' pardon, were too much the femme fatale however well-drawn within that genre. Dramatic and melodramatic, of course, but that was what the market sought; but beyond that there was a certain

something.

Chucking a spanner or a red herring into the works, Storm had an affection for Jews. Storm is a Jewish name - was he one? And not a Semphill at all?

To conclude, I have left a 'Ravenscar' item in The Rocket in the twenties as unknown to me whether it is new or a genuine reprint of earlier Pluck or a fake. I have seen the 'Nigel Dom' tales that appeared in early issues of The Champion and they most certainly are by a substitute hand, and that S. Gordon Swan states that 'Great Conspiracy' in Dreadnought was not a repeat of U. J. 324 but quite new and not by Storm.

NOTES

1. Chris Lowder cannot now locate the titles on from 15 and 18. He believes they were both substitutes in a series that S. Clark Hook was compiling in The Gem (and was paid for) but Storm was paid for these. They tell of Alan Wayward's adventures in Turkey and amongst the Arabs. 'Game to the Last' in Pluck 249 brings in Sheikh Jellaludden and the instalment I possess takes place at Gultik near Tabriz. I wonder if this is a serial of the two Gem tales or a further adventure. Anyone who has read Hook would know it was not by him. The style is entirely different; a much more cultured performance. I would like to see and purchase the Gems and more of the Pluck serial to give them more study.

2. The Ravenscar series occupied half the weekly issue of Pluck. I only possess and have read No. 184.

3. 'Fortune of War' was a Foreign Legion tale set in Morocco. I have not seen this.

4. The Bob and Harry tales also occupied half the weekly issues both in Pluck and in Marvel. I only have, and have read, Marvel 256 and Plucks 247 and 249.

5. The Abbotscrag series occupied half the weekly issues of The Marvel. I only possess, and have read, 203 and 207.

Incidentally 207 gives to me clear indication that there were incidents after 203 that had been written (?) and not published, to wit:

Andrade has now become a prefect again after being deposed in 203 and a certain Clay is ruminating over his fright when he had recently nearly caused the loss of life of two juniors, Simons and Larkins. There is also reference to earlier trouble over Pringle Island, unexplained.

6. The boy detective series opened in The Marvel and ended with four tales in Pluck. 'The Warlord' in the Boys' Friend Library 90 reprinted in Chuckles as by Michael Clifton is an original tale.

7. U. J. 222 is the first appearance of Plummer. To read his saga consecutively one needs to read U. J. 222, follow with The Mervyn Mystery in B. F. L. 96, then U. J. 315 - 334 - 342 - 357.

Forbes, the partner of Plummer, dies in the B. F. Lib. 90, 'The Mervyn Mystery' and a new colleague, John Marsh, comes in with 342 and 357.

8. 'The Ghost of Rupert Forbes' in U.J. 269 was a double Christmas number and was reprinted unabridged in B. F. Lib. 248.

9. 'The Mystery at Craghurst' by John Michael, with second instalment Paul Michael in error was an absolute reprint of 'The Captain of Abbotscrag' from BFL 70, word for word except reading Craghurst for Abbotscrag throughout. I was so disappointed when I bought Boys' Journal Vol. III to secure what I believed to be a new Storm for my collection, to find this was so. Incidentally, if anyone knows Salcombe in South Devon and Bolt Head and Bolt Tail round to the Dart I believe this is the true setting of Abbotscrag.

10. I am unaware if 'Dick Mascot's Schooldays' did run as serial in Boys' Realm, so cannot say when or if the BFL 183 was abridged. I do not have it nor have I read it.

11. 'Egyptian Bonds' in Penny Pictorial 491 introduces Rupert Forbes and explains how he comes to be in prison in 'The Ghost of Rupert Forbes', U. J. 269 and how he is the second time in prison in 'The Mervyn Mystery'. I possess all the P. P's I have referred to. I have seen no Populars or Dreadnoughts, nor the Detective Weekly item, the Blake Annual item, the Answers tale. But I do possess two copies of 'The Grey Messengers'. (Blackie)

I possess all the Union Jacks bar 357 and all Boys' Friend Libraries except 248 and 183, and I would be glad if any other collector could provide me with any, or all, of the missing material for further study.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

WANTED: Magnets, Bullseyes, Sexton Blakes. Merry Christmas to all readers.

MARRIOTT, 27 GREENVIEW DRIVE, LINKS, NORTHAMPTON 711874

= =

A very merry xmas and a happy and prosperous New Year is the good old fashioned wish of STUART BUCKLEY WHITEHEAD, 12 WELLS ROAD, FAKENHAM, NORFOLK, to all his friends, pen pals, dealers and colleagues of Old Boys' Book Club - not forgetting "ye glorious Editor" of C.D. - your friend and mine - Eric Fayne.

= =

WANTED: "St. Jim's" stories in Goldhawk paperbacks and in hardbacks, published by Mandeville Publications. Also wanted, "Tom Merry's Own" Annuals.
FOR SALE: Bunter Books (without dust jackets) and "Billy Bunter's Own" Annuals; Howard Baker Facsimiles, including out of print items "Billy Bunter's Christmas" and "The Joker of Greyfriars". D. SWIFT

22 WOODNOOK CLOSE, LEEDS, LS16 6PQ.

Telephone: LEEDS 671394

PEARL JUBILEE MEMORIES. Written 28 years ago by Herbert Leckenby, the first Editor of Collectors' Digest and its Annual.

Streets of Memories

by HERBERT LECKENBY

In a letter to me recently, Mr. Goodyear, that good friend of our hobby circle, said to me:

"It just occurs to me that an article on the York shops which sold the mags. you loved would have a quaint interest, many perhaps being in Stonegate, near by Bootham Bar, and similar historic quarters. I guess you knew them all."

So far as his last sentence is concerned, how right was he. I did know them all and to tell the truth I oft-times wander about the ancient streets close by the stately Minster in the evening's dusk. I pause by certain shops and picture them as they used to be. In imagination I put back above the windows the names that were once there, and fancy I can hear the jingle of the hansoms and the clippety-clop of the horses' hooves as they pass along cobbled streets.

There was, for instance, the shop of Peter Lawson, in narrow Petergate. Peter was a gaunt, black-bearded man, tall and shabby in appearance. He lived alone behind his shop, one with two large windows. If you had chanced to pass that way some fifty years ago you would almost certainly have seen a line of boys - and adults - with their noses pressed to the window, gazing awestruck at the pink pages of the "Police Budget" and the "Police News" strung right across one of the windows, front pages, back pages, centre pages portraying the latest murders and other crimes of violence. If they happened to be murders with a "sex interest" depicting some buxom damsel sprawled on her back, bespattered with her life's blood, and with a frilly petticoat displayed coyly about her boot-tops, then the spectators were before the window the live-long day. Yes, Peter was a good window dresser.

I looked at the "Police Budget", of course, for I was just an average boy, but I can honestly say I was more interested in the papers more suitable to my age, and these were displayed in profusion on the sloping boards in the bottom of the window - Bretts "Jack Harkaway's Schooldays", "Rubert Dreadnought", "Ned Nimble among the Indians", the "½d. Pluck", "Marvel"; the gaily covered "Aldines", the "Boys' Friend" and the rest of the papers which gladdened the hearts of boys when the century was very young.

Black Peter got to know me well, for many's the penny I've passed over his counter. The inside of the shop was dark, dirty and untidy, usually lit by one single gas jet. I well remember, once, how he brought out for me from somewhere about a dozen ½d. "Boys' Friends", numbers then quite a few years old and some I had never seen before. I thought them quite a find even then. Now, forty years on, a complete run of that once popular ½d. series has been offered in the pages of the "C. D."!

One morning the shop remained closed; and when later the door was broken open, Black Peter was found hanging from a beam, or was it with his throat cut?

Anyway, he was unquestionably dead.

And the "Police Budget" and the "Police News" fluttered on in the window until they became back numbers, and the murders shown thereon forgotten. I am not sure whether the death scene in Peter's shop was ever considered worthy of a place in one of the later pages!

The shop is still a bookseller's and stationer's, but of a more dignified type. They would disdain to show in their windows the "Police Budget", "Aldine Dick Turpins" and "Jack Harkaway's Schooldays", even if they could; but I often see them there in fancy as I pass that way.

Not far away is the tiny street quaintly named Whip-ma-Whop-ma-Gate, a name almost as long as the street itself. Just at the corner there was once the little shop kept by an ancient dame named Miss Lambert. Oft-times she could be seen trotting along the streets nearby in old-fashioned garb, a pathetically small supply of the morning papers under her arm. Could she return today dressed as she was, maybe in view of the "New Look" she would be considered quite a lady of fashion! Miss Lambert added to her meagre income by means of the "Aldines" - not second-hand copies, but the new ones as they came out. In the narrow window there was always a display of glossy "Dick Turpins", "Robin Hoods", and Claude Duvals, lending a splash of colour to the drab little street. Oh, the "Aldine" covers, how attractive they were to the devotee of the "penny bloods"!

Now Miss Lambert had a sister who was blind and she, poor soul, sometimes had to look after the shop whilst the other was on her rounds, and thereby hangs a tale, one of which I am not exactly proud. However, one day, I entered the shop, a penny in my moist palm. The blind sister, dressed in rusty black, emerged from the living quarters and in response to my request for a "Dick Turpin" turned to a shelf behind the counter, passed her hands along the little piles, and in some uncanny fashion found the right ones. I picked out the four new numbers, examined each one critically, and could not decide which of two to take. Meanwhile the old lady stood patiently waiting, her sightless eyes staring over my head. Temptation came to me, I thought "She can't see, - she wouldn't know." I dropped the penny into her hand saying, "I - I'll take this one". Then a voice inside me seemed to say, "Rob a blind woman - Shame on you". I hurriedly put down one of the copies, and made for the door with scarlet cheeks.

It is a radio shop now. I fancy I can hear the voice of little Miss Lambert saying from the shadows: "Radio - what's that?" Dear old lady, I have often been glad I didn't rob you that day. May your soul be resting in peace.

A few yards away in Colliergate there stood the shop I knew best of all. I pushed open the little door and heard the tinkle of the bell every week for more than thirty years. I witnessed the owner, Mrs. Walker, advance from a stout, pleasant looking person in her thirties, to one with bent shoulders and hair of snowy white, and when first I became a customer she would eye me disapprovingly through the window as I pulled up outside with the pram containing the youngest member of the family. In after years she saw me draw up with another pram - with my own off-spring inside. By that time, however, we had become good friends, and she would

sometimes say, with a smile, "You've been coming here a good many years, now, haven't you?", and I would reply, "I have an' all".

Oh, what a grand shop it was, a mecca, a magnet, to the "blood hunter". Always there were piles in the window a foot high, the many Aldines, Henderson's "Wild West", and "Budget" Story Books; ½d. "Union Jacks", "Plucks" and "Marvels" and later the 1d. ones; red-covered "Magnets" and blue-tinted "Gems" and the rest of the complete story papers. In the days when I was a printer's apprentice I passed the shop many times a day, often when I shouldn't. One day I spotted a pile of "True Blues". Inside I went and found that they were almost all numbers I hadn't seen before. I bought a dozen. When I got into the street again I saw my boss in the distance. I hurriedly rammed the papers under my waistcoat. My employer stopped to speak to his not very industrious apprentice. I stood, my arms across my chest, fearfully expecting every moment the "True Blues" would slide down from their place of concealment to the pavement at my feet. However, they remained hidden, but only until he, with a kindly nod, had passed on and turned a corner.

On another occasion Mrs. Walker had purchased a huge quantity of 1d. "Plucks" and its companion numbers, going back several years. I reduced her stock somewhat. One "U.J.", showing an exciting scene on the gas-bag of a balloon, particualrly took my fancy. Among some copies of the same papers I bought only a few weeks ago I found the very same story. I haven't seen it in all the forty years between!

Not long ago one of my collector friends paid me a visit. We talked "shop" all the afternoon, then went off in search of a meal. The cafes were busy, but at last we found one, an unpretentious sort of a place, but where, at least, we were able to satisfy the inner man. Whilst we were waiting for the meal to be served, I stopped talking, - for the first time - and, no doubt, my friend wondered why. Well, the reason was my thoughts were far away in the past. Just by where we were sitting I fancied I saw a counter laden with "penny dreadfuls"; on the window to my left instead of eatables I saw more piles of "bloods" of yester-year. I turned my head, almost expecting to see Mrs. Walker come along from the back in response to the tinkle of the shop bell. For we were seated in the place I had entered hundreds of times in the years that were gone, in quest of another kind of meal!

I pause before a bookseller's in one of the main streets. It's a different kind of bookshop; never in its long history have "bloods" appeared in the windows or on the counters inside, unless you include "Chums" Annual and the B.O.P. among "bloods". Nevertheless, that shop has memories for me, and my thought travels back through the years. I had just left school and was looking round for a job. One evening I saw in the local evening paper two advertisements for errand boys, one by a confectioner, the other by a bookseller. Not being very ambitious, I made up my mind to apply without saying anything to my people. Thought I to myself, "Buns or Books?" Which shall be first? Books won! I got the job and was told to start on the morrow. I have often wondered what my future life would have been if the other shop had got my services instead.

A few months as the most humble member of the staff; then I took a most important step. I became a printer's apprentice to the same master and set off each day to the little old-world office in the street nearby. Each Christmas season, however, I had a temporary change. I was "promoted" to shop assistant, and took my place behind the counter in the shop to help cope with the Christmas rush. One 23rd December I well remember; my master and I were holding the fort together during the quiet of the lunch hour. A lone customer came in, a boy wearing the cap of one of our oldest schools, St. Peter's of York, the school of Yardley, captain of England. The boy came up shyly to the counter and asked my employer, "Have you a book by S. Walkey, please?" My master knew not Walkey, and answered with a shake of his head, "Walker? - No, I am afraid not, my boy!" But I knew better, I cut in, "Oh, yes, sir, we have one, came in this morning." (Tactful, the last sentence.) I darted to the back of the shop - I had a fellow feeling for that boy - and snatched up a book from the bottom of a pile, leaving the others all in a heap, hurried back and placed before him - "Kidnapped by Pirates". Even now, years on, I can see that boy's eyes as they lit up and hear him say, "Oh, just what I wanted." He placed down his 3/6d. and went out with beaming face. His hair will now be tinted with grey; I wonder if he still remembers that little incident as does the boy behind the counter that far off day.

Next day was Christmas Eve and as I was going to lunch the boss said to me, "I'll give you your Christmas Box now, my boy". I paused in anticipation. Now, though just and kindly, that first employer of mine was not usually a very generous one. My wage at the time was 4/- a week, and the previous year my Christmas Box had amounted to just one fourth of that sum. However, on this occasion he wrote on the till roll, withdrew a coin, and placed it in my hand without letting me see what it was. Then he proceeded to tell me how pleased he was with the way I had worked during the year. I had made good progress, he assured me; and then went on to make special reference to the incident of the day before, it had impressed him very much, and so on. All the time he was talking I was fingering the coin in my palm - for I couldn't very well look at it - and thinking, "Pooh, a measly "tanner" - worse than last year. Might show a bit more appreciation if I have been as good as that." Then, with a little salute, he said "Now off you go to dinner; get back as soon as you can, and a Happy Christmas." "Same to you, sir," I muttered and darted off. The moment I was off the doorstep I opened my hand. Then my eyes popped out of my head, my heart gave a great jump, for I had not been fingering a measly "tanner" but a glorious, gleaming, golden half-sovereign. Oh joy, I nearly did a hornpipe on the pavement and then made a bee-line for - yes, I daresay you have guessed it, my favourite shop just around two corners. I bought a goodly pile, and Mrs. Walker looked at me suspiciously as I handed her the precious coin. "It's all right," I grinned, "It's mine, it's my Christmas Box."

Oh, good old Walkey! Kind old boss! Happy Christmas, Mrs. Walker! Did I have a Merry Christmas? I'll say I did! Buried in bloods!

Boys of today with their generous pocket money may not fully appreciate my excitement in the long ago. No, perhaps not, but with all their weekly wealth, they've never had the thrill of handling a gleaming, golden half-sovereign.

The other evening I had an urge to visit the suburb in which I had spent my schooldays. I hadn't been that way for years. I paused before a newsagent's that once had been "Fatty" Glover's, the shop at which, each week, I had bought my "Boys' Friend". I recalled the Saturday when, a child of six or seven, I had sat on the pavement all the afternoon awaiting the coming of the new "Books for the Bairns", and how Mrs. Glover, at long last, came out and tapped me on the head with it. Why does one remember tiny incidents like that throughout the years, when more important events are forgotten?

I passed the house where "Dicky" Clarke, with whom I used to swop, once lived. Poor "Dicky", he never knew the "Champion" and the "Rocket", for he was killed in the Kaiser war.

I came to the shop once kept by a grumpy sort of man called Millard, who wore a trimmed pointed beard like Captain Kettle. The same name was above the shop, but it belonged to a different generation. There were "Hotspurs" and "Wizards" in the window, but I knew it best when Aldine "Tip-Tops" and "Comic Home Journals" were displayed there.

I reached my old school - Park Grove. The scholars had all gone, and the shadows were stealing across the playground. I looked through the railings at the shelter in which I had sat and read many a yarn. My gaze travelled to the first floor, and I counted the windows. Yes, that would be the room in which one afternoon "Sammy" Mills, the burly teacher, had confiscated my "Jack, Sam and Pete". I recalled, with a smile, how I had returned to the room after prayers in search of it, and how I found "Sammy", who never attended prayers, sitting with his feet on the desk reading it, and how he waved me away with an impatient gesture and told me to ask for it in the morning. Often after that he would say to me with a grin "How's Jack, Sam and Pete getting on?"

Poor Sammy, he weighed about sixteen stones then, but years later I read in an evening paper how he had been found dead in a ditch and a verdict had been returned, "Died of Starvation".

I wended my way home that evening of my visit to the suburbs wondering what on earth I should think about if I weren't a nostalgian.

Yes, indeed, Mr. Goodyear, the ancient streets of York hold many golden memories for me, of the days when a humble penny bought happiness and contentment.

Postscript: Lest it be thought that I spent all my boyhood days immersed in "bloods", let me hasten to say it was not quite as bad as that. I played quite a lot of cricket in the manner that boys do and I could in its proper place write quite a lot about Grace and "Ranji"; Jessop and Fry; Hirst and Haigh and other giants in the golden age of the summer game with the lovely name.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Happy memories and Christmas with prosperous New Year everyone. Read and remember.

LAURENCE S. ELLIOTT

PEARL JUBILEE MEMORIES. Written by two never-to-be-forgotten stalwarts of the early days of the hobby: Tom Hopperton assisted by Gerry Allison. A massive piece of research work, and one of the finest articles ever to feature in Collectors' Digest Annual. Written 16 years ago.

A Charles Hamilton TAG-LIST

by TOM HOPPERTON
(with assistance from Gerry Allison)

There is a story of a man who read Shakespeare for the first time in middle life, and announced that the stuff was very fine, but that he had never read anything so full of quotations. The same can be said of Frank Richards. The following list derives from the innumerable quotations used in his various articles, his "Autobiography" and of course, from his stories. It ranges from Horace to patent medicines, from the classical to the cliche, and even yet the mine is far - very far - from being exhausted. Over a hundred of those discovered by the compilers have been omitted, in order to shorten this article somewhat.

Much as we take these quotes for granted, in providing some of the savour in Mr. Richards' writing, their distribution is most unequal. Rapid narrative, and dramatic scenes are naturally fairly free, as such embellishments tend to hold up the action, but even in their main usage - in humorous and descriptive passages, there is much variation. Some lighter stories bristle with them; others, of just the same cast, are almost bare.

The two great sources are the Bible and Shakespeare. This would be so with any of us, of course; so much of them has passed into the language that we talk about 'the apple of his eye' or 'not wisely but too well' without realizing often that we are quoting. But the range, and often striking or quaint nature of Mr. Richards' quoting proclaims a deep and retentive study of both. Of "Hamlet", in particular, he must at one time or another have quoted everything except the stage directions!

His poetic quotations are highly selective, and appear to be almost entirely pre-1900. Whether by accident or design, this is a happy arrangement, as very little verse after this date has become common property. Just as a parody loses its point if the reader has not some knowledge of the original, so it is not much use using a quotation unless it is, no matter how dimly, recognisable as such. Everyone can spot "Casabianca" and appreciate the point, but it would be a dead loss to heave a chunk of E. E. Cummings, or of Gertrude Stein at the head of the ordinary reader - always assuming that those worthies ever said anything worth quoting.

Coleridge was quite wrong in his assertion that not twenty lines of Scott's poetry would come down to posterity. At least that number have, if only because Frank Richards persists in quoting them! For a poet with so small an output, Gray is well represented: Wordsworth, with a huge one is not. There is abounding Byron, but no Shelley and Burns. Among the humorists, Carroll and Gilbert 'come thick and fast', but - queer! - no Lear! Tennyson outnumbers the combined Augustans.

Matthew Arnold only just manages to creep in. Then the main stream dries up, barring an amazing variety of oddments.

It is possible to draw some conclusions from this, but it would perhaps not be wise to do so. Keats, for example, makes a solitary entry into the stories with "A thing of beauty", but yet Mr. Richards is a passionate devotee of Keats's poetry. His absence then, is not the result of distaste or lack of familiarity, but merely perhaps because his work, no matter how lovely as a whole, is lacking in the compelling line which lends itself to apposite quotation.

We make a nodding acquaintance with various languages in the stories, but foreign quotations to a juvenile audience would obviously be misapplied energy. They also occur frequently in non-fictional work, but as they are non-repeaters best examined in their context, they have in the main been excluded here. There are a score from the Italian which, to my meagre knowledge of that tongue, seem to be exclusively from Dante. The dozen French ones, apt and illustrative, call for no remark except the prominence of Stendhal, whilst German is Greek to me, and I can only record that there are six or seven. Latin, of course, abounds everywhere, but out author forestalls comment by kindly providing a running translation as he goes. He strays little outside Virgil and Horace.

Greek finds small place. This seems rather odd, when the "Iliad" (quoted in Pope's translation) crops up continually, although the "Odyssey" is hardly mentioned. All the foregatherings of the Head and Quelch to discuss Sophocles only gives us the odd word - such familiar tags as 'inextinguishable laughter'.

Frank has mentioned having translated "Don Quixote", but I have only come across one indirect reference to it, and no Spanish quotation at all. In the travel stories, there is sufficient phrase-book Italian, Spanish, or Portuguese sprinkled about to lend versimilitude to a narrative which is by no means bald and unconvincing native tongue. It would be interesting to have a sample of those mysterious sounds which are likened to the cracking of nuts!

It is hoped, however, that this list will save time, trouble, and perhaps frustration to those who wish to track down some quotation which has been worrying them. But even the erudite, who scorn such aids, should derive at least one benefit from it. For it is not until they are separated from the text which they so unobtrusively ornament, that one realises just how far-ranging and multitudinous the quotations of Frank Richards really are.

THE QUOTATIONS

ADVERTISING: C. 1900

1.	Grateful and comforting	Cadbury's Cocoa
2.	Worth a guinea a box	Beecham's Pills
3.	Since then he had, so to speak, used no other	Pear's Soap

ANONYMOUS:

4.	(Quelch) a beast, but a just beast	First said of Dr. Temple Headmaster of Rugby 1857-69

ARABIAN NIGHTS:

5. "What a jolly old feast of the Barmecides" said Bob — The Story of the Barber's 6th Brother

ARNOLD, Matthew: 1822-88

6. "What some jolly old poet has called 'the stripling Thames" said Bob Cherry. — The Scholar Gypsy. St. 8.

AURELIUS MARCUS: 121-180 A.D.

7. -- various sins of omission and commission. — Meditations Book 9, Sect. 5.

BACON, FRANCIS, Lord Verulam: 1561-1626

8. Riches take unto themselves wings and fly away. — "Of Riches"
9. As the mountain had not gone to Mahomet, Mahomet was coming after the mountain as it were! — "Of Boldness"

BAYLY, THOMAS HAYNES: 1823-87

10. Absence is said to make the heart grow fonder. — "Isle of Beauty"

BIBLE - OLD TESTAMENT:

11. The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. — Gen. 27, 22.
12. In pursuit of money, Fishy, like Nimrod was a mighty hunter. — Gen. 10, 9.
13. The study was like unto a land flowing with milk and honey. — Exodus 3, 8.
14. Bunter looked this way and that way, but there was no man. — Exodus 2, 12.
15. Gussy's remittance was like corn in Egypt in the lean years. — Exodus 9.
16. Like Pharoah of old, Wharton hardened his heart. — Exodus 14, 8.
17. Bunter, like the Israelites, yearned for the fleshpots. — Numbers 11, 4.
18. It was, to Prout, as the apple of his eye! — Deut. 32, 10.
19. Like Moses of old, he viewed the Promised Land. — Deut. 34, 4.
20. The stars in their courses fought against Bunter. — Judges 5, 20.
21. Under Mossoo, the Remove followed the example of the ancient Israelites, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. — Judges 17, 6.
22. Smithy walked delicately, like Agag of old. — 1 Sam. 15, 32.
23. - slain his thousands and tens of thousands - (of mosquitoes!) — 1 Sam. 18, 7.
24. "Tell it not in Gath, whisper it not in Askelon" — 2 Sam. 1, 20.
25. "How are the mighty fallen" chortled Pankley. — 2 Sam. 1, 19.
26. Fishy was in the hands of the Amelekites. — 1 Sam. 15 etc.
27. Hang him as high as Haman if you like. — Esther 7, 10.
28. The laws of the Swedes and Nasturtiums! — Esther 1, 19.
29. The wicked had ceased from troubling, and the weary Owl was at rest. — Job 3, 17.
30. Lowther was born to japing as the sparks fly upward. — Job 5, 7.
31. ... in the role of Job's comforter. — Job 16, 2.
32. Coker's voice would have done credit to the Bull of Bashan! — Psalms 22, 12.
33. Look not on the wine when it is red. — Psalms 23, 31.
34. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. — Psalms 13, 12.
35. Manners' camera was the apple of his eye. See 18. — Psalms 17, 18.
36. "Pride goeth before destruction" murmured Skinner. — Prov. 16, 18.
37. Though you bray a fool in a mortar ... — Prov. 27, 22.
38. Once again, Pon found the way of the transgressor was hard. — Prov. 13, 15.
39. As if he valued Popper's approval far above rubies. — Prov. 31, 10.
40. Like the voice of the turtle was heard in the land. — Song of S. 12.
41. Bunter, like Lucifer, had fallen from his high estate. — Isaiah 14, 12.
42. Lovell stopped finally, and all was peace, perfect peace. — Isaiah 26, 3.
43. There was still balm in Gilead, Tubby found. — Jer. 8, 22.

44.	Like Rachel, of old, Bunter mourned for what was lost and would not be comforted.	Jer. 31, 15.
45.	"Can a leopard change his giddy spots?"	Jer. 31, 23.
46.	Like Ishmael, Wharton's hand was against every man, and every man's against him.	Jer.
47.	Humble pie was gall and wormwood to Cardew.	Lam. 3, 18/19.
48.	The glory had departed from the House of Israel!	Ezek. 10, 19.
49.	"True, O King", said Raby.	Dan. 3, 22.
50.	... ventured, like Daniel, into the lion's den.	Dan. 6.
51.	Quelch was angry, and felt that he did well to be angry.	Jonah 4, 4/9.

BIBLE - NEW TESTAMENT:

52.	Ratty's anger, like the rain, fell alike on the just and unjust.	Matt. 5, 45.
53.	Coker spake as one having authority, saying, "Do this", and he doeth it!	Matt. 8, 9.
54.	Jimmy's proceedings savoured more of the wisdom of the serpent than the innocence of the dove.	Matt. 10, 6.
55.	... said of old that a prophet has no honour in his own country.	Matt. 13, 57.
56.	Loder's last state was worse than his first!	Matt. 12, 45.
57.	Solomon in all his glory had nothing on Gussy.	Matt. 5, 28.
58.	'The strait and narrow path' (almost).	Matt. 7, 14.
59.	... crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.	Matt. 15, 27.
60.	Coker was as one crying in the wilderness.	Matt. 3, 3.
61.	Which being interpreted. (occurs six times in N. T.)	Matt. 1, 23.
62.	Bunter's sins - and their name was legion. See ...	Mark 5, 9.
63.	Trimble's complaint fell upon stony ground.	Mark 4, 5.
64.	Courtenay's study was new swept and garnished.	Luke 11, 25.
65.	... shake the dust of Greyfriars from his feet.	Luke 9, 5.
66.	There was now a great gulf fixed between Wharton and the rest of the Famous Five.	Luke 16, 26.
67.	No study to call his own, nowhere to lay his head.	Luke 9, 58.
68.	The Classicals had acted like good Samaritans.	Luke 10.
69.	Understudying Doubting Thomas of ancient times.	John 20.
70.	Like Gallio, Bunter cared for none of these things.	Acts 18, 17.
71.	Lived, moved, and had his being ... (In soot, etc.)	Acts 17, 18.
72.	Like Peter, - silver and gold had they none!	Acts 3, 6.
73.	Jabs with a boathook, more pleasant to give than to receive, had their due effect on Cutts.	Acts 20, 35.
74.	The Owl's uncommon gifts as an Ananias ...	Acts 5.
75.	Like the jolly old Athenians, running after something new.	Acts 17, 21.
76.	Of the earth, earthy. Of the ink, inky, etc.	1st Cor. 15, 47.
77.	"Suffer fools gladly", whispered Potter.	2nd Cor. 11, 19.
78.	Quelch had let the sun go down on his wrath.	Eph. 4, 26.
79.	Bunter, like a lion, seeking what he might devour.	1 Pet. 5, 8.
80.	That alone saved him from the vials of wrath.	Rev. 16, 1.
81.	He thinks he's the beginning and the end of footer wisdom.	Rev. 1, 8.

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER:

82.	... refused to hear the voice of the charmer.	
83.	Harry Wharton, once his own familiar friend.	Psalt. 55, 14.
84.	Keep your hands from picking and stealing.	Catechism.
85.	The iron had indeed entered into his soul.	Psalt. 105, 18.
86.	Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.	Collects.
87.	"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" murmured Smithy.	Psalms, 8, 2.

BOOTH, WILLIAM, (GENERAL): 1856-1929

88. Why should the devil have all the good tunes?

BREWER'S READERS HANDBOOK:

89. Like Mahomet's coffin, suspended between heaven and earth. (It isn't, of course) Used in 1713 by Prior.

BROWNING, ROBERT: 1812-89

90. Roses, roses all the way. — The Patriot
91. Recapture the first fine careless rapture. — Home Thoughts

BYRON, GEORGE GORDON NOEL, 6th LORD. 1788-1824

92. Bunter understudied the Dying Gladiator, who heard but heeded not. — Childe Harold. Can. 4.
93. Echo answers who, said Lowther. — Bride of Abydos. St. 27.
94. "Roll on, thou fat and frabjous Bunter, Roll" said Bob, parodying Bryon. — Childe Harold. Canto 4.
95. Silent rows the songless gondolier. — " " " 4.
96. The blue shirts came down like wolves on the fold. Merry shot ... — Hebrew Melodies
97. Quelch had heeded not the sounds of revelry. — Childe Harold. Canto 3.
98. Time is a great healer. — " " " 4.
99. A change came o'er the spirit of his dream. — The Dreamer
100. Fare thee well, and if for ever, all the better misquoted Monty Lowther. — "Fare thee Well"
101. Like Mazeppa's wild steed, to shake it off. — "Mazeppa"

CAESAR, GAIUS JULIUS: 100-44 B.C.

102. They had come, and seen, and conquered. — "Veni, vidi, vici"

CALVERLEY, CHARLES STUART: 1831-84

103. Not all beer and skittles. — "Contentment"

CAMPBELL, THOMAS: 1777-1844

104. Like Iser in the poem, Bunter rolled rapidly. — "Hohenlinden"
105. Distance lends enchantment to the view. — "Pleasures of Hope"
106. What about the mariners of England? — "Ye mariners of England"

CARLYLE, THOMAS: 1795-1881

107. "You should read Carlyle on the dignity of labour", said Skinner. "He never did any, of course". — "Past and Present"
108. "How golden silence is" reflected Potter. — "Sartor Resartus"

"LEWIS CARROLL" (C. L. Dodgson) 1832-98

109. Curiouser and curiouser. — "Alice in Wonderland"
110. Thick and fast they came at last, and more, and more, and more. — "Through the Looking-Glass"
111. "Come to my arms, my beamish boy" said Bob. — " " " "
112. But answer there was none. (Misquote)

Carroll was parodying Scott's Bridal of Triermain.

113. Suddenly, silently vanished away! — "The Hunting of the Snark"
114. As large as life, and twice as natural — "Through the Looking-Glass"

CERVANTES, MIGUEL DE. 1547-1616

115. ... seemed to be understudying the Knight of the Rueful Countenance. — "Don Quixote" 1, 19.

CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS: B.C. 103-43

116. The sword of Damocles impending over Bunter. (A sword suspended by a single hair by Dionysius of Syracuse over the head of Damocles.)

COOPER, JAMES FENNIMORE: 1789-1851

117. "On the trail like jolly old Chingachgook" — "Deerslayer"

COWPER, WILLIAM: 1731-1800

118. Bunter's plump brain worked in mysterious ways its wonders to perform. — "Light Shining out of Darkness"

119. O Solitude, where are thy charms? — "Alexander Selkirk"

120. Coker ... monarch of all he surveyed. — " "

121. Coker's friends felt that with all his faults, they loved him still. Aunt Judy's hamper ... — "The Timepiece" L. 203.

CRABBE, GEORGE: 1754-1832

122. Bunter's vacant eye wandered over ... — "The Lover's Journey"

DIBDIN, CHARLES: 1745-1814 (Composer)

123. "All in the Downs our fleet was moored, When Black-Eyed Susan came aboard" sang Bob. — "Black-Eyed Susan"

DICKENS, CHARLES: 1812-70

124. He became rather less of a Gradgrind. — "Hard Times"

125. The faintest breeze was too rough to fan his cheek. (Spoken of Little Nell in:- — "The old Curiosity Shop"

126. -- as immortal as Mr. Pumblechook. — "Great Expectations"

127. Bunter was like Mr. Jagger's witness, who was prepared to swear 'in a general way anythink' — "Great Expectations"

128. Like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, was extensive and peculiar! — "The Pickwick Papers"

DISRAELI, BENJAMIN, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD: 1804-81

129. On the side of the angels. — Speech on Evolution 1864.

DRYDEN, JOHN: 1631-1701

130. The builders were with want of genius curst
The second building was not like the first. — "To ... Mr. Congreve"

ENGLISH, THOMAS DUNN: 1819-1902

131. "If he expects us to understudy Sweet Alice, and tremble at his frown." — "Ben Bolt"

FIELD, EUGENE: 1850-95

132. Pon's scheme, like the little peach, grew and grew. — "The Little Peach"

FOOTE, SAMUEL: 1720-77

133. "The Great Panjandrum himself" (Wharton) — Lines to Macklin

GARRICK, DAVID: 1717-79

132. A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind. — Prologue on Quitting the Stage in 1776.

GAY, JOHN: 1685-1732

133. A veritable Black-eyed Susan! — "Sweet William's Farewell"

GILBERT, WILLIAM SCHWENK: 1836-1911

134. "Supposing, like Gilbert's sentry, that he's got any." — "Iolanthe"

135. Quelch's frown was frightful, fearful, and frantic! — "The Mikado"

136. All centuries but this, and every country but his own. — " "

137. It was necessary for a victim to be found. — " "

138. No possible probable shadow of doubt. — "The Gondoliers"

139. The life of a humorist, like a policeman's was not a happy one. — "Pirates of Penzance"

140. This was indeed to make the punishment fit the crime. "The Mikado"
141. Something lingering - with boiling oil in it! " "
142. Like Mr. McClan, Figgins wandered into several keys. "The Bab Ballads" Ellen McJones Aberdeen
143. An accepted wit has but to say, "Pass the Salt" "The Yeomen of the Guard"

GOLDSMITH, OLIVER: 1728-74

144. Remote, unfriended, solitary, slow, Lovell wandered. "The Traveller"
145. And still the wonder grew, that one small head could carry all he knew. "The Deserted Village"
146. Like the gentleman in the poem, there was "pride in his port, defiance in his eye". "The Traveller"

GRAY, THOMAS: 1716-71

147. Urge the flying ball. "On a Distant Prospect of Eton College"
148. Kept the noiseless tenor of their way. The Elegy
149. Wasted his sweetness on the desert air. " "
150. Like the ploughman, Bunter plodded, etc. " "
151. Ye distant spires, ye antique towers, quoted Frank. "Eton College"
152. Coker was in the same state of blissful ignorance. " "

GREEK MYTHOLOGY:

153. Quelch's look was worthy of the famed Medusa. One of the Gorgons
154. Mr. Ratcliffe seemed as amiable as Rhadamanthus A Judge of Hell
155. Bob's stentorian roar. Stentor, Greek herald in the Trojan war
156. Bound like Ixion, on his jolly old wheel. King of the Lapithea
157. -- on Bunter that it had on Antaeus of old. Giant, son of the Earth
158. as the fabled gadfly urged on Io. Zeus turned Io, his mistress into a white cow. Hera, in jealousy, set a gadfly to sting Io, and chase her through the world.

HANKEY, CATHERINE:

159. "Tell me the old, old story", chanted Bob. Methodist Hymnal

HARRIS, JOEL CHANDLER: 1848-1908

160. Like Brer Fox, Trimble laid low and said nuffin. Uncle Remus.
(Wasn't it Tar Baby who said nuffin?)

HARTE, FRANCIS BRET: 1839-1902

161. Do I sleep? Do I dream? Do I wonder and doubt? Are things what they seem? Or is visions about? "Further Language from Truthful James"
162. His language was painful and free. "His Answer"
163. He was not understudying Truthful James "Plain Language ..."
164. The subsequent proceedings interested him no more. "The Society upon the Stanislaus"
165. "It was August the First? and quite soft was the skies" quoted Bob. (August the Third) "The Heathen Chinee"

HEMANS, FELICIA DOROTHEA: 1793-1835

166. They grew in beauty, side by side. "Graves of a Household"

HERMAN, PHIL:

167. "O where, and O where can he be" "Mein Leetle Dog"

HOME, JOHN: 1722-1808

168. My name is Norval: On the Grampian hills... "Douglas Act 2"
(Mostly at Rookwood)

HOMER:

169. The wrath of Achilles, to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered was nothing to Coker's. — "The Iliad" Pope's trans.
170. Had the same effect as Vulcan's performance as head-waiter on Lympus - inextinguishable laughter! — Iliad 1, 599.
171. Lovell retired, like Achilles to his tent. — Iliad 1.
172. Like Ajax defying the lightning. — Odyssey 4.

HOOD, THOMAS: 1799-1845

173. They raised him (Prout) up tenderly, treated him with care, although he was not fashioned slenderly, young, and so fair. — "The Bridge of Sighs"

HORACE. (HORATIUS FLACCUS, QUINTUS) 65-8 B.C.

174. To pile Pelion upon Ossa — Georgics 1, 281
175. A day worthy to be marked with a white stone. — Several quotes.
176. Disposed to strike the stars with his sublime head. — Odes 1, 1.
177. The Golden Mean that old Horace talks about. — Odes 2, 10.

HOWARD, ROWLAND: Fl 1876

178. Let their chances, like the sunbeams, pass them by. — "You Never Miss the Water"

HOWARD, SAMUEL: Fl 1770

179. "Gentle shepherd, tell me where," grinned Bob. — From a song.

HUXLEY, THOMAS HENRY: 1825-95

180. The Modern Side, merely a superfluous appendage. — Essays.

IRVING, WASHINGTON: 1783-1859

181. Rip van Winkle was a fool to Bunter. — "The Sketch Book"

KEATS, JOHN: 1795-1821

182. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever. (Gussy) — Endymion.
183. Like Chapman speak out loud and bold. — "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"

KINGSLEY, CHARLES: 1819-75

184. Life just then seemed one grand sweet song. — "Be Good, Sweet Maid"

LE SAGE, ALAIN RENE: 1668-1747

185. Being no Asmodeus, he did not know. — "The Devil on Two Sticks"

LINLEY, GEORGE: 1767-1835

186. Gone from Chunky's gaze like a beautiful dream. — "Thou Art Gone"
187. Tho' lost to sight, to Bunter's memory dear. — "Tho' lost to sight"

LOVELL, MARIA, ANNE: 1803-77

188. Two minds with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one. — Song from Ingomar. (Trans.)

LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH: 1807-82

189. His brow was black, his eye beneath,
Flashed like a falchion from it's sheath.
(Note: he uses 'black', 'bent' and 'set indiscriminately.) — "Excelsior"
190. ... imitated the Arabs, and silently stole away. — "The Day is Done"
191. "Speak for yourself, John", murmured Cardew. — "The Courtship of Miles Standish"
192. Coker's large and sinewy hands. — "The Village Blacksmith"
193. "Let the dead past buwy it's dead, you know"
said Arthur Augustus. — "A Psalm of Life"

LYTTON, EDWARD GEORGE EARLE LYTTON, 1st Lord. 1803-73

194.	That, like Peter McGrawler, in Lytton's novel deserves a chapter to itself. (MacGrawler)	"Paul Clifford"
195.	As Eugene Aram left, with gyves upon his wrists. (See also Thomas Hood's poem)	"Eugene Aram"

MACAULAY, THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD: 1900-59

196.	Those behind cried 'forward', and those before cried 'back'.	'Horatius - Lays of Ancient Rome'
197.	As a nineteenth century author remarked, "I would rather have a Dutch peasant by Teniers, than his Majesty's head on a signpost". Misquote.	"Moore's Life of Byron"
198.	Frank, like the Tuscans of old, could not forbear a cheer.	'Horatius - Lays of Ancient Rome'
199.	Prout's tread, like the huge, earth-shaking beast in Macaulay ...	'The Prophecy of Capys - Lays of Ancient Rome'
200.	When the agony abated, as the youthful Macaulay remarked. ("Thank you madam, the agony is abated")	Trevelyan's "Life"

MACKLIN, CHARLES: ?1697-1797

201.	Welcome as the flowers in May	"Love a' la Mode" 1759

MARRYAT, FREDERICK: 1729-1848

202.	Like the baby of Mrs. Easy's nurse, a very little one.	"Mr. Midshipman Easy"
203.	"In confidence - between a housemaster and a junior boy?" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "No, sir," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity, "between one gentleman and another." (Hardly a quotation, but a straight 'pinch'!	See "Peter Simple" Chap. VII.

MILTON, JOHN: 1608-74

204.	Lines fell thick as the leaves in Vallombrosa.	"Paradise Lost" 1. 302.
205.	That ancient philosopher's performance on Etna.	"Paradise Lost" 111, 471.
206.	Hide your diminished heads.	"Paradise Lost" IV, 34.
207.	As Orpheus with his lute, drew iron tears.	"Il Penseroso" 105.

MONCKTON, LIONEL:

208.	"Oh, listen to the band," murmured Bob.	"The Soldiers in the Park"

MOORE, THOMAS: 1779-1852

209.	Like a fat Peri at the gates of Paradise.	"Lalla Rookh"
210.	Bunter indulged in the luxury of woe.	"Anacreontic"
211.	Wow, bwothahs, wow!	"Canadian Boating Song"
212.	Slumbers chain had bound the fat Owl.	"Oft in the Stilly Night"

MISCELLANEOUS

213.	Not in these trousers.	Street catch-phrase. C 1900
214.	It was Pike's Peak or bust.	Slogan of American gold hunters
215.	Alarums and excursions.	Elizabethan stage direction
216.	Like the ancient King who never smiled again.	(King Henry I, after Prince William was lost in the White Ship)
217.	Our noble selves.	The Army Mess toast on Wednesdays
218.	... playin' the Roman parent now.	Junius Brutus, Roman Consul
219.	And all was calm and bright.	Sunday school Hymn "A Little Ship"
220.	"Bye-bye, Bluebell"	Popular Boer War Song
221.	Quelch found all quiet on the Remove front.	1914-18 communique
222.	Peine forte and dure	Former death penalty

NAPIER, SIR CHARLES JAMES: 1782-1853

223. - a telegram, worded like that of the invader of Sind. "Peccavi" (I have Sind!)

PARNELL, THOMAS: 1679-1718

224. "Pretty Fanny's way" said Cardew. "Elegy to an Old Beauty"

PATRIDGE, ERIC HONEYWOOD: B. 1894 (Dictionary of Slang)

225. "When father says 'turn', we all turn. Catch-phrase 1906.

226. Fat Jack of the Bone House. "A very fat man" C. 1840 on.

PERRAULT, CHARLES: 1628-1703

227. "Sister Anne, sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?" "Bluebeard"

PLINY, GAIUS PLINIUS, THE ELDER: 23-79 A.D.

228. When it came to sleeping, Epimenides had nothing on Bunter. "Natural History"

PLUTARCH: 46-120

229. Bunter sat like Marius among the ruins of Carthage. "Lives".

POE, EDGAR ALLAN: 1811-49

230. Unmerciful disaster followed fast and followed faster. "The Raven"

231. Mauly was not thinking of the grandeur that was Rome. "To Helen"

POOLE, JOHN: 1786-1872

232. "Up to snuff" said Skinner. "Hamlet Travestie" 11, 1

233. "Hope I don't intrude" said Mr. Banks. "Paul Pry" 1, 1.

234. "The Paul Pry of the Remove" "Paul Pry"

POPE, ALEXANDER: 1688-1744

235. Hope springs eternal in the human breast. "Essay on Man"

236. Mr. Chard was in the position of the gentleman who was willing to wound, and afraid to strike. "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"

237. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. "Essay on Criticism"

PRIOR, MATTHEW: 1664-1721

238. Grew smaller by degrees and beautifully less. "Henry and Emma"

PROCTOR, ADELAID ANN: 1825-64

239. Quelch's fingers ceased to wander over the noisy keys - of his typewriter. "The Lost Chord"

"PUNCH"

240. You pays your money and you takes your choice. 1846

241. Like the curate's egg in the story - good in parts. Cartoon Joke.

RUSSELL, JOHN, 1st EARL: 1792-1878

242. Bunter was conspicuous by his absence. "Election Address 1859"

SAVAGE, RICHARD: 1698?-1743

243. "The tenth possessor of a foolish face" murmured Monty. "Weally, Lowthah!" (Transmitter correct) "The Bastard"

SCOTT, SIR WALTER, BART: 1771-1832

244. But answer there was none. "Bridal of Triermain"

Also Carroll's parody of Scott, "Walrus and the Carpenter"

245. Beard the lion in his den. (the Douglas in his hall) "Marmion"

246. The occasion when dark lightnings flashed from Roderick's eye! (Quelch) "The Lady of the Lake"

247. "Come one, come all" said Jimmy. "The Lady of the Lake"

248. Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive. "Marmion".

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM: 1564-1616

249.	Like an unsubstantial pageant faded.	"The Tempest" IV, 1.
250.	A very ancient and fishlike smell. (Pegg)	" " II, 1.
251.	Vanished like a vision, leaving not a wrack, etc.	" " IV, 1.
252.	Bunter seemed to have melted into thin air.	" " III, 3.
253.	Just a looker on in Vienna as it were.	"Measure for Measure" V, 1.
254.	"It is toppin' to have a giant's stwength, but bad form to use it like a giant, or somethin' like that" said Gussy.	" " " II, 2.
255.	His nose, like Marion's in the ballad, was red and raw. (and not a ballad!)	"Love's Labour Lost" V, 2.
256.	The course of true love never did run smooth.	"Midsummer Night's Dream", I, 1.
257.	"Well roared, Lion" said the Bounder.	" " " V, 1
258.	A Daniel come to judgement.	"Merchant of Venice" III, 5.
259.	A little harmless and necessary fun.	" " " IV, 1.
260.	Hobson was like the man that had no music in his soul, but he put up with Hoskins.	" " " V, 1.
261.	That strange eventful history. (Greyfriars)	"As You Like It", II, 7.
262.	The fair, the chaste, the inexpressive she.	" " " " III, 2.
263.	Bunter did not emulate Shakespeare's schoolboy, who had a shining, morning face!	" " " " II, 7.
264.	"Like patience on a monument" murmured Nugent.	"Twelfth Night", II, 4.
265.	A snapper-up of unconsidered trifles. (W. G. B.)	"Winter's Tale", IV, 2.
266.	Sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the death of kings.	"Richard II", III, 1.
267.	Something had come between the winds and his (Mornington's) nobility.	"Henry IV Pt. I", I, 3.
268.	Witch the world with noble horsemanship.	" " " " IV, 1.
269.	Pon like many a rake had heard the chimes at midnight.	"Henry IV, Pt 2", III, 1.
270.	Discretion was the better part of valour.	" " " " V, 4.
271.	The unknown figure that drew the curtains at dead of night would not have startled King Priam more!	" " " " I, 1.
272.	The die was cast ...	"Richard III", V, 4.
273.	Bore his honours thick upon him.	"Henry VIII" 3, 2.
274.	"My sainted aunt!" and variants. (My sacred aunt)	"Troilus & Cressida" IV, 1.
275.	Like Coriolanus, alone he did it.	"Coriolanus" V, 5.
276.	Strew the hungry churchyard with his bones.	"Romeo and Juliet" V, 3.
277.	Quelch, like Brutus, had paused for a reply.	"Julius Caesar" IV, 3.
278.	... as Cassius, had an itching palm. (for gold)	" " IV, 3.
279.	If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.	" " III, 2.
280.	"Pway lend me your yahs, deah boys"	" " III, 2.
281.	The unkindest cut of all.	" " III, 2.
282.	Age could not wither, nor custom stale, his infinite variety. (Bunter's lies)	"Antony and Cleopatra" II, 2.
283.	Bunter stood not upon the order of his going. He went at once!	"Macbeth" III, 4.
284.	... little of the milk of human kindness in Ratty's composition.	" I, 4.
285.	Can such things be, and over come us like a summer's cloud, without our special wonder?	" III, 2.
286.	Hunger, like Macbeth, had murdered sleep!	" II, 2.
287.	The ghost of Banquo did not startle Macbeth more.	" III, 4.
288.	Quelch's voice was not loud, but deep!	" V, 3.

(See also Montaigne's "Essays" Book 2, Ch. 5)

289.	It alarmed Smithy like the knocking on the door in Macbeth!	"Macbeth" Act 2. Sc 2 & 3
290.	The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.	"Hamlet" III, 1.
291.	Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind.	" III, 3.
292.	The glass of fashion, and the mould of form.	" III, 1.
293.	Coker's hair resembled the quills upon the fretful porcupine. (Porpentine)	" I, 5.
294.	For this relief, much thanks.	" I, 1.
295.	More in sorrow than in anger.	" I, 1.
296.	In the dead waste (vast) and middle of the night.	" I, 1.
297.	A hit, a very palpable hit!	" V, 1.
298.	"We must be cruel, only to be kind" said Lovell.	" III, 4.
299.	His fat brow was sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.	" III, 1.
300.	The rest was silence.	" V, 1.
301.	'Twas now the very witching hour of night, when churchyards are said to yawn. Bunter yawned.	" III, 2.
302.	Desperate diseases, as the poet has remarked, need desperate remedies. (He didn't! F. R. is mixed up between a poet and a proverb. "Diseases, desperate grown, / By desperate appliances are relieved, / or not at all."	"Hamlet" III, 4.
303.	Life seemed weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable.	" I, 2.
304.	A consummation devoutly to be wished.	" III, 4.
305.	If everyone had his deserts, who'd escape whipping?	" II, 2.
306.	An eye like Mars, to threaten and command.	" III, 4.
307.	Polonius behind the giddy arras.	" III, 4.
308.	Modesty, thy name is Arthur Edward! (Frailty, etc.)	" III, 4.
309.	Quelch's brow, like the sable arms of the rugged Pyrrhus, it did the night resemble.	" I, 2.
310.	Ingratitude is a sharper child than a serpent's tooth, with variations by W. G. Bunter.	"King Lear" I, 4.
311.	... a trifle light as air. (the truth)	"Othello" III, 3.
312.	To wear his heart upon his sleeve.	" I, 1.
313.	Like Desdemona, he did perceive a divided duty.	" I, 3.
314.	Not wisely, but too well.	" V, 2.
315.	The onlie begetter ... (Not by W. S. of course)	Deciation of "The Sonnets"

SPENSER, EDMUND: 1552?-99

316.	Quelch's face ... like unto the fabled basilisk. (From powrefull eyes close venim doth convey, Into the lookers hart, and killeth farre away.)	"Fairie Queen" 4, 8.

STOWE, HARRIET BEECHER: 1811-96

317.	Like Topsy, they just growed.	"Uncle Tom's Cabin"

SWINBURNE, ALGERNON CHARLES: 1837-1909

318.	Even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea.	"The Garden of Proserpine"

TENNYSON, ALFRED, 1st LORD: 1809-92

319.	Like the little brook in the poem ...	"The Brook"
320.	"Kindest friend, and noblest foe", that's me, said Bunter.	"The Princess"
321.	There was a rift in the lute in Study No. 10.	"Idylls of the King"
322.	Kind hearts are more than coronets.	"Lady Clara, Vere de Vere"
323.	Gussy had quite lost the repose that stamps the caste of Vere do Vere.	" " " " "
324.	So near, and yet so far!	"In Memoriam"
325.	Like moonlight unto sunlight, like water unto wine.	"Locksley Hall"

326. There were balloons to the left of him, Balloons to the right of him, etc. — "Charge of the Light Brigade"

THACKERAY, WILLIAM MAKEPEACE: 1811-63

327. Like the Rawdon Crawleys, on an income of nothing a year. — "Vanity Fair"

THOMSON, JAMES: 1700-1748

328. Jolly old Aristides hadn't a thing on Quelch in that line. (Being just) "The Aristides lifts his honest front/ Spotless of heart; to whom the unflattering voice/ Of freedom gave the noblest name of 'Just' ". — "The Seasons - Winter"

VERNE, JULES: 1828-1905

329. The psychological moment. (A thorough cliche, which seems to have first appeared in Jules Verne. — "The Begum's 500 Millions"

VICTORIA, QUEEN: 1819-1901

330. Like the old Queen, Pon was not amused. (Victoria froze an equerry, Alec York, with "We are not amused", after seeing him do an imitation of herself).

VIRGIL, PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO: 70-19 B. C.

331. As facile as the descent into Avernus. — "The AEneid" 6, 126.

332. Like Mercury, he had dissolved into thin air. — " " 4, 276.

333. ... seemed glued to it, like the sad eyes of Dido to the departing sails of Aeneas. — " " 4, 588.

VOLTAIRE, FRANCOIS MARIE AROUET DE:

334. "Pour encourager les autres" as jolly old Voltaire puts it. (Referring to the execution of Admiral Byng.) — "Candide" Ch. 23.

WAGNER, RICHARD: 1813-83

335. Like Amfortas in "Parsifal", in a state of suspended animation. — "Parsifal" 2.

WATTS, ISAAC: 1674-1748

336. Let dogs delight to bark and bite. — "Against Quarrelling"

WOLFE, CHARLES: 1791-1823

337. Bunter found himself 'alone in his glory'. — "The Burial of Sir John Moore"

WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM: 1770-1850

338. Battles long ago. — "The Solitary Reaper"

339. The good old law, the simple plan/ That they should take who have the power/ and they should keep who can. — "Memorials of a Tour in Scotland. No. 11 Rob Roy's Grave"

UNTRACED:

... serve, indifferent to fate. — (Not Shakespeare)

What he had said, he had said. — (Not Bible or Shakespeare)

Sacrifice himself upon the altar of friendship.

Coker had woke up the wrong passenger as it were. — (Some anecdote?)

The English nation dearly loves a lord.

Gave him furiously to think.

Wrapped in soot as in a mantle. — (Wrapped in pride ...?)

Quelch's speaking countenance. — (Not Shakespeare)

Feelings too deep for words. — (? thoughts too deep for tears. Wordsworth's Ode.)

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Greetings fellow collectors. WANTED to buy: Hamiltonia.

ERIC WAFER

6 BINGLE STREET, NEWCASTLE 2300, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

= =

Seasonal Greetings to all OBBC members everywhere.

ELSIE and DON WEBSTER

BIDEFORD, N. DEVON

= =

WANTED: "New at the Game" by Bat Masters Aldine; "Where Duty Lies" by J. K. Jerome; 1885 Children's Friend Annual; War Illustrated 1914 - 1918.

J. R. JARMAN

277 SOUTHWELL RD. WEST, MANSFIELD, NOTTS.

= =

WANTED GREATLY: Magnets: 1085, 995, 985, 951, 949, 948, 902, and some below; also Bullseyes. Purchase or Magnets below 700 as exchanges. Season's Greetings to all contacts in hobby.

J. de FREITAS

648 STUD RD., SCORESBY, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA 3179.

= =

Dandy, Beano, Magic, 1937-45 WANTED, great exchanges offered. Have SBL's 1920's, 1940's; Film Funs 1930's, Adventure, Rover, Wizard, Hotspur, Skipper, all from 1920's, 1930's, 1940's.

G. FISHMAN

200 CORBIN PLACE, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11235, U.S.A.

= =

A Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to all hobbyists. A special thanks to the Editor and all contributors to the C.D. R. J. McCABE.

= =

Christmas Greetings to all O.B.B.C. friends! URGENTLY WANTED: B.F.L. 457, "Soldiers Of Fortune".

IAN BENNETT, 20 FREWEN DRIVE, SAPCOTE, LEICESTER.

= =

Warmest Season Greetings to our esteemed Editor, to Tom and all Midland Club chums - Uncle Ben and all London Club pals, to Cyril Rowe, to Albert Watkins, New Zealand, Cobber and especially to Henry Webb and family.

STAN KNIGHT, CHELTENHAM.

Best wishes to all for a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year, from ERNEST and IRIS SNELLGROVE of 15 WEST DUMPTON, LANE, RAMSGATE, KENT.

= =

Grateful thanks to Eric Fayne for another year of delightful nostalgia.

CHARLES VAN RENEN, SOUTH AFRICA.

= =

Greetings to Hobby friends. Early monthly C.D's wanted.

MAURICE KING

18 BARTON ROAD, LANGLEY, SLOUGH.

= =

All the best to all Hobby friends from

RAY and HARRY HOPKINS

= =

MAGNETS WANTED to complete set - 10, 134, 136, 158, 162, 167, 171, 181, 200, 215, 217. Will exchange any Gems, N. Lees, S. Blake's, U.J's, from own large collection early Magnets also.

MURTAGH, 509 WINDSOR AVENUE

HASTINGS, NEW ZEALAND.

= =

WANTED: "The Scout" containing "The Other Bird", "The Feud at Farringdon" (circa 1930/31).

MEARNS, 4 OGILVIE PLACE

BRIDGE OF ALLAN, STIRLINGSHIRE, SCOTLAND.

= =

THE PROPRIETOR OF YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES AND HIS STAFF

WOULD LIKE TO WISH THE EDITOR AND YOU ALL

A Very Merry Christmas

AND GOOD WISHES FOR 1977

= =

Goodness, Sexton Blake

by JAMES YORK

"Ah, yes," said the middle-aged friend, "I remember Sexton Blake. My father used to read Sexton Blake stories. He always enjoyed a good old-fashioned detective yarn, but I always felt Blake was a bit out of date."

Old fashioned - out of date - are epithets used by people who have never read more than a couple of lines about the famous sleuth. It is an interesting phenomenon but not, perhaps, difficult to explain. Blake, of course, clearly derives from Sherlock Holmes who has an emphatic nineteenth-century image. Even though he flourished well into the motor-car era it is the hansom cab with which we associate him. Some people therefore, have tended to lose Blake in the Holmesian fogs of Baker Street, and I must confess I have done so myself from time to time. But Blake was never a mere cab-and-gaslight detective. He always had more contact with the workaday world than Holmes. Between 1905 and the outbreak of World War One, Blake, in the course of his professional duties, was variously aeronaut, fisherman, collier, watchman, pierrot, steward, whaler, mesmerist, lumberman, secretary, insurance agent, wrestler, pavement artist, ambassador, longshoreman, author, tax-collector, tramp, batchairman, chef, gypsy, taxi-driver, bandsman, laundry-man, hawker, boxer and many other things besides. There was even a spell of unemployment, though only in the line of duty, if you follow me. Truly a man of parts and a man of the world.

Sexton Blake was also familiar with the great political figures and affairs of the day. A year before the first (abortive) Russian Revolution of 1906, he was dealing with the case of the Tzar's Double (U.J. 83) and six years before the out-break of war, was actually involved with the German Emperor in The Kaiser's Mistake. (U.J. No. 271)

The 1890's and early 1900's were periods of anarchist violence in Europe and America, a contemporary malise not unnoticed by Blake as witness the Master Anarchist (U.J. 238) and Azaff the Anarchist (U.J. 286). Other pressing social issues to engage his attention put him Among the Unemployed (U.J. 288) and led him to solve The Old Age Pension Mystery (U.J. 287) in the very year state pensions were introduced. In 1909 when Bleriot made his historic flight across the Channel, Sexton Blake Aviator (U.J. 317) showed that in matters of recent technology he wasn't to be left behind and only a few months later the theme was, so to say, given yet another airing in Tracked by Aeroplane (U.J. 347).

Before the first World War, the Cinema was still very much an infant, but Blake was with it in The Case of the Cinematograph Actor, U.J. 430, published in 1912. The following year he was again airborne in The Detective Airman (U.J. 501) but came down to earth in time to deal with The Case of the Suffragette Raid (U.J. 503) a problem with a topical background.

Technology was strikingly to the fore in The Case of the Petrol Substitute

(U. J. 532) a reminder of just how far back the search for that magic ingredient goes.

So far we have reached only the eve of the Great War and yet evidence is already abundant that Blake was always light-years away from any hamsom cab image. A quick look through old U. J's, S. B. L. and D. W. files soon confirms that right up to his final bow, he was unfailingly a contemporary figure: up to the minute and sometimes even ahead of it. One recalls his adventures in both World Wars, his early fight against American gangsterism and his involvement in both the Manchurian and Abyssinian conflicts of the 1930's. His chronicles record some of the earliest warnings against the European Dictators. For a moving and memorable account of racial persecution by the Nazis see Detective Weekly No. 22, published in the year of Hitler's rise to power. After the second World War Blake kept well abreast of all the new problems of a brave new world: the drug traffic, the defection and kidnapping of scientists behind the Iron Curtain, and the emergence of the white mercenary soldier in the cauldron of modern Africa.

In scientific and technological fields, Sexton Blake was more than once concerned with projects which, even in this fast-moving age, have still not been realised. As far back as 1927 he was doing battle with Steffson the "human mole" who threatened to undermine (literally) the foundations of society with his burrowing vehicle (S. B. L. 91). Then there were the 1930's encounters with Zenith the Albino when the latter was involved in Rain Making and Gold making (U. J's 1505 & 1510) enterprises. What themes for our time - not to mention the case of the ingenious and terrifying villain who invented a machine to steal life itself (D. W. 17). So, to bring it all to a point, who could think that Sexton Blake was ever an old-fashioned or out-of-date figure? The sad truth is, however, that even when he was most up-to-date he was becoming, in one vital respect, ever more out-of-date. To explain this we must go back in time again, almost to the birth of Blake himself.

It all started perhaps, with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's brother-in-law, E. W. Hornung, who created the cricket-playing gentleman crook, A. J. Raffles, as a rival to Sherlock Holmes. This character gave to modern English crime its first flawed hero, or anti-hero. However we interpret the beloved Raffles' peculiar "code of honour", however much we are mesmerised by his glamour, the fact remains he was a man against the law, a crook, and this surely had an effect on the general ethos of future crime stories. The later Bulldog Drummond, though not a professional criminal, probably owed quite a lot to Raffles. Like Raffles, he was a high-handed gentleman who never hesitated to make his own "laws". Drummond added an ugly streak of ruthlessness, sometimes even of savagery (and if you think this is going too far have another look at some of Sapper's novels). Certainly his "Code" would not have been acceptable to Sexton Blake.

A general impatience with civilised behaviour was frequently shown by Edgar Wallace's heroes and anti-heroes, and Wallace's own impact on crime fiction is incalculable. In the early 1930's one out of every four books read in this country was written by him. Later, there was the influence of the American crime writers, Dashiell Hammett for instance, author of Red Harvest, Maltese Falcon, The Thin Man, etc., brought a new dimension of realism to the field. Hammett's heroes were certainly all too human and it is sometimes impossible to see any vital

difference between goodies and baddies. Later came that other milestone in the march of brutal "realism" No Orchids for Miss Blandish. Not to be compared as a piece of writing with anything Hammett or Raymond Chandler produced. No Orchids pushed even deeper into the jungle with its implied philosophy that might is right, the end justifies the means and sadistic violence is its own justification. After this, Mike Hammer, James Bond and all the rest of the amoral and immoral tribe were inevitable. They surely signed the death warrant of Blake as a figure of credibility for our time. For Blake remained an old-fashioned untarnished hero to the end (in spite of those latter-day smart and sexy secretaries and all the other modern trappings of the so-called Organisation). Gallant - sometimes perhaps too gallant - to the fair sex, he was ever just, even to the nastiest of his foes. If one can use the phrase these days without a blush, he was always a man of honour.

I am reminded, perhaps incongruously, of a 1930's film starring that old Hollywood sex symbol, Mae West. "Goodness!" exclaims one character on seeing Miss West's costly jewellery, to which Miss West replies "Goodness had nothing to do with it honey". How very different from the life-style of Sexton Blake in which goodness had everything to do with it.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Border Bookshop (1979)
61A Halifax Road
Todmorden, Lancs OL14 5BB
Tel: 01706 814721
UK Comics wanted pre 1970
20,000 comics in stock