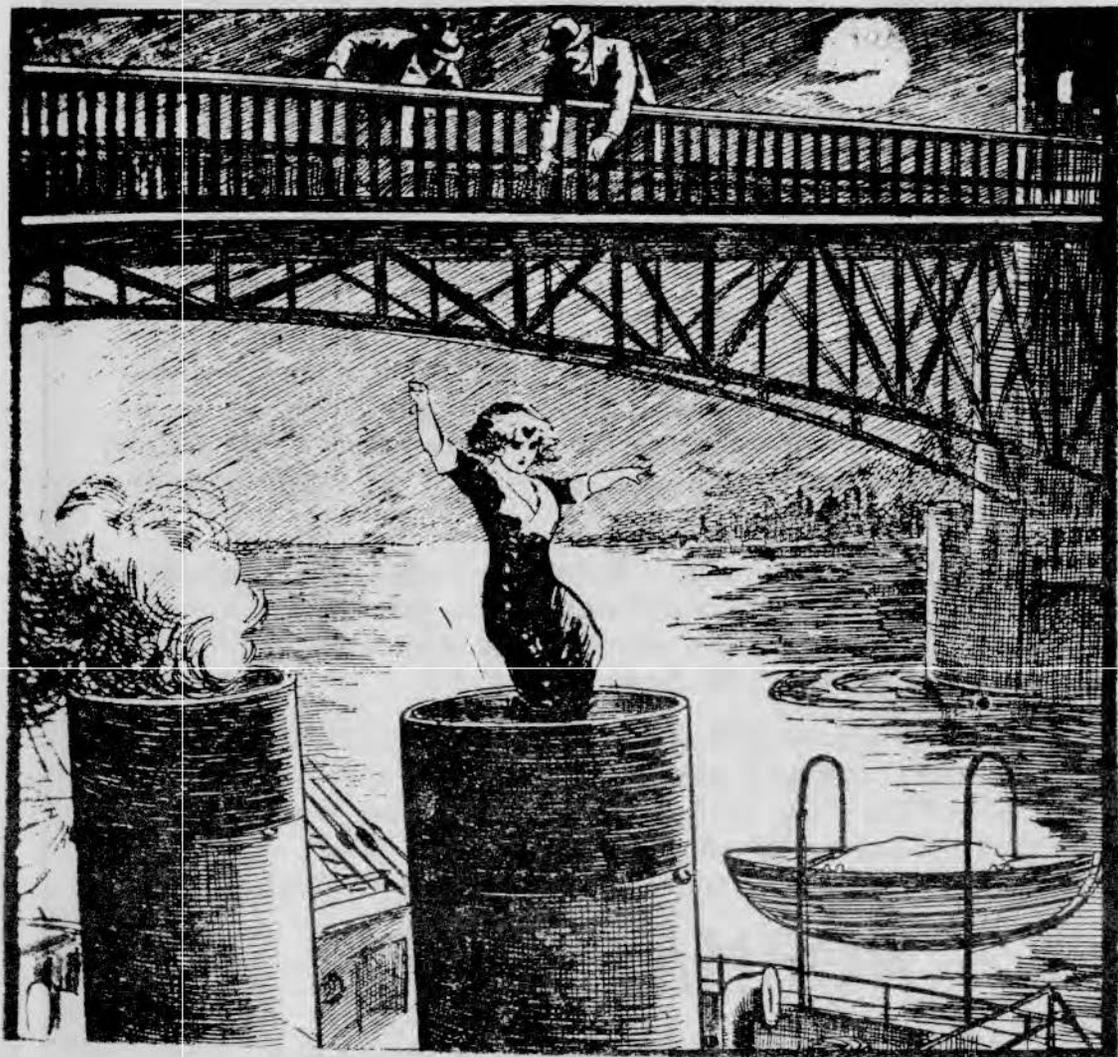


STORY PAPER  
**COLLECTORS DIGEST**

VOL. 38

No. 454

OCTOBER 1984



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Artist: J. Louis Smythe.

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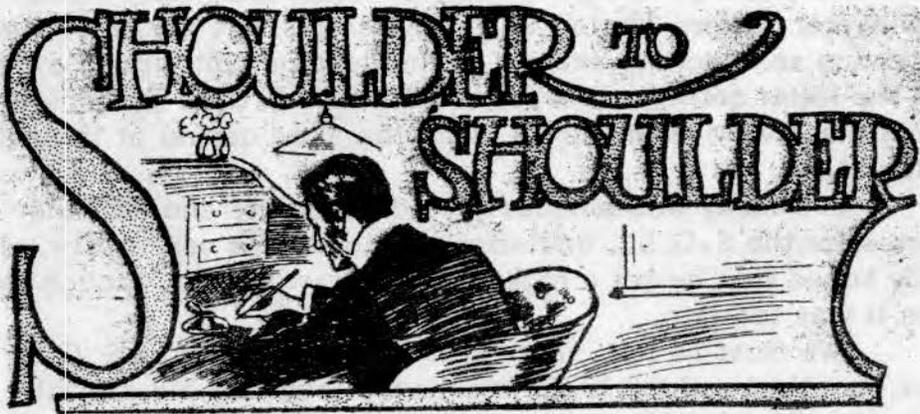
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## THE BLOTTED COPYBOOK

Most of us have considerable affection for the Schoolboys' Own Library. It was indeed an attractive format, and the red, white, and blue covers were a delight. An added attribute of the S.O.L. was that it often gave us the opportunity to read stories which had appeared long before we were sitting up and taking notice.

But, all too often, it was a marred product. Fifty years ago, for instance, Danny was reading "The House of Terror", No. 229. This comprised three stories of the four-story Ravenspur Grange series of the 1929 Magnet. To fit the series into the format, the third of the four tales of the series was omitted. And that

omitted story contained an integral factor of the plot. The result was a disaster.

Some years later, when, as Roger Jenkins observed, the Caffyn series and those which followed, consisted of self-contained tales, the omission of a story would have made no difference. But in 1929, the plots developed with each successive week. A general shrinkage, if carefully done, would not have mattered. But the omission of a whole chunk of the plot, ruined the overall tale.

There are many other instances of S.O.L.'s being spoiled by drastic pruning, though nothing so serious as this, though the Mauleverer Towers "Orris" Christmas series was similarly flawed by having an important section of the development pruned away. And the latter series was reprinted from the S.O.L. by some firm in comparatively recent times, with the same canker at the heart of the story.

Somebody was obviously paid to prepare and edit the stories for the S.O.L., and often he did his job very badly. It is to be hoped that he got a rocket from his employers, though by then it was too late.

We must be fair. A great many editions of the S.O.L. were excellent, which is the reason we love that old monthly. Probably the mistake was in trying to present them all as roughly the same length. Ravenspur Grange clearly should have occupied two issues. By using slightly larger print, or with more generous spacing, there would have been no problem.

One of the best was "Bunter the Benevolent" with Bunter as a fat Scrooge. It fitted snugly into the medium. The worst must surely have been No. 9 "A Schoolboy's Honour", which was the so-called Wingate-Love Affair series concerning that remarkable cinema school - with no less than 5 Magnets squashed into one S.O.L. Awful, even in the Magnet. In the S.O.L. it was - well, even more awful.

LESLIE ROWLEY writes "CHRISTMAS AT WHARTON LODGE"  
JACK OVERHILL writes "A PEARL OF GREAT PRICE"  
in the 1984 edition of the C.D. ANNUAL.

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ONCE UPON A SATURDAY

Some thirty years ago I composed a song entitled "Saturday". The opening lines were:

"Saturday, Saturday, lights will shine...

Best day of all in this week of mine."

Today, in British towns, Saturday morning is usually fairly busy. But by two o'clock the shops are emptying, there are few people on the pavements, the stall-holders in the markets are packing up...

But when I was young, Saturday was the busiest day of the week. Crowds thronged the streets, especially in the evenings; shops were packed with people; the Penny Bazaar, run by gentlemen named Marks & Spencer, were open till ten and even later; men and women and children jostled one another in the town market, the under-cover market being lit by electricity but the fish market adjoining in the open was lit by naphtha flares. Cinemas and music halls were packed. If you hadn't gone to the pictures by six you would find great queues for all parts - fourpence, ninepence, and a shilling. At the music halls there were two queues forming for the second house - one for the normal priced seats, the other for "early doors" at a few coppers extra per seat.

And the trams were packed, with strap-hangers very much in evidence - cars every ten minutes, with the last one leaving the town at ten to eleven after the cinemas had finished their last performance.

I wonder why it is that Saturday is so dead today compared with what it was years ago.

It may possibly be something to do with "pay day". Maybe the British workman used to be paid on Friday night and maybe now he is paid on Thursday night. I really have no idea of the reason.

Pay day - pocket-money day - for children was certainly Saturday in the old days, but it possibly still is. Yet, though children received their pocket-money on Saturday morning, I can't recall any young people's papers which were published on Saturday, which is a bit puzzling.

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Certainly, in the closing years of the Magnet, that famous paper came out on Saturdays, but when I was a child I had Magnet and Boys' Friend on Mondays; Popular on Tuesdays; Gem on Wednesdays; School Friend and Union Jack on Thursdays, and that was the end of it -- till next week.

I suppose there was a reason for these things, but it eludes me.

### BLAKIANA

A good many years back, when we ran a ballot to find the order of popularity of our regular features in Collectors' Digest, Blakiana finished up a good way ahead of the Nelson Lee Column. I fancy those positions would be reversed if we ran a similar ballot now.

It seems to me that Sexton Blake has wilted a good deal in the popularity stakes, whereas St. Frank's has taken on a new lease of life with the passing of the years. The great detective does not seem to have the following, or anything like it, which he once enjoyed. It could be due to the vast number of authors of varying gifts who wrote Blake novels, whereas, in the case of the school stories, readers remain faithful to authors.

Possibly the Amalgamated Press "had something" when they credited all about Greyfriars to Frank Richards, and the same plan with St. Jim's and Rookwood.

In recent times our dear Josie was so often crying out for contributions to her Blakiana Column, yet, with a few worthy exceptions, her appeals fell on deaf ears.

With the sudden passing of Josie, Blakiana was left adrift. Mark Jarvis, with real public spirit and thoughtfulness, kindly stepped in, in the past few months, and we are grateful to him. But he made it clear that he could only fill the gap as a temporary measure. His final presentation appears this month.

From now on, all contributions to Blakiana should be sent to me at Excelsior House. I hope and expect that Blakiana will continue to be a regular feature, but that will depend on the Blake & Tinker fans. If, any month, there is nothing up to standard to

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make up the column, it will not appear. So the regular Blakiana feature depends on you.

### THE PRINCESS SNOWEE

The Princess Snowee has her own fan club, and it is a surprisingly substantial one. Of the hundreds of letters I receive in any month, a large proportion of them contain a reference to our furry morsel, with scores of requests for the return of her Corner.

She has been a very great comfort to me in the recent sad months. Every night she tucks up on an old sweater - I ring the changes with one of her Mum's and one of mine - placed between my pillow and the wall. And it is in that spot that I take her her dish of hot milk late every evening without fail.

For a good many weeks she has been eating like a horse, and, what would please her Mum enormously, is that she now has variety in her food. The first two meals of the day are of fresh whiting (at one time she ate nothing else), and the last two meals of the day are of Whiskas' Beef and Kidney to which she has taken a great liking.

I leave a dish of it down in the hall when I go to bed. I turn in, beside the purring Princess, and start my nightly read. After a while, the Princess rises, slips off the bed, edges the door open with a firm paw, and disappears. Ten minutes later, with me still reading, she returns to her sweater by my pillow.

--- And in the morning I find an empty dish in the hall.

### THE ANNUAL

Everybody seems happy that the new edition of the C.D. Annual is taking shape and on the way. Have you ordered your copy yet?

### THE EDITOR

\* \* \* \* \*

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Magnets, Gems, Annuals all periods. Early Nelson Lees. Bullseyes, Fun & Fiction, Early Thompsons, Boys' Herald Friend Magazine Nugget, Popular Ranger, Triumph, Union Jack, etc., H. B. Facsimiles.

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# Danny's Diary

OCTOBER 1934

A speed limit has been fixed on the roads. "And about time, too", says my Dad. I can never persuade him to buy a car. He says the roads are death traps. But there is now a speed limit of 30 miles an hour on all roads where there are street lamps at regular intervals. So road hogs will now be a thing of the past.

Gore stars in the first story in the Gem this month. It is entitled "The Bully Who Wouldn't Fight". Gore's father finds his son bullying smaller boys. He makes Gore promise not to fight again, and if he breaks his promise his father will remove him from St. Jim's. So now poor Gore finds himself the bullyee instead of the bullier. I wonder if that's good English. I must ask my schoolmaster, Mr. Scatterby.

Next tale is "The Gipsy Schoolboy". A gipsy boy named Kit renders a service to Lord Eastwood, so Lord Eastwood begs Dr. Holmes to accept the boy at St. Jim's.

Then the start of a new series with the return of Lumley-Lumley, who has been away owing to his trances. The first yarn of the series is "The Outsider's Return". And the Outsider has formed a plot to get Tom Merry expelled in disgrace. Last tale of the month is "When Friends Fall Out". Tom Merry is the victim of Lumley's plotting and finds himself at loggerheads with his friends. The series continues next month. It's good.

The "Ten Talons of Taaz" series about the St. Frank's chums having to undergo tests for their courage has continued in the Gem all the month. The first tale is "The Clutch of the First Talon" in which Vivian Travers is tested. Next came "The Castle of Torture" in which the victim is Reggie Pitt. Then "The Needles of Nemesis" in which Handforth defies the Priests of Taaz. Then "The Prison of Peril" in which the star is Archie Glenthorpe. And last in October is "The Fifth Victim" and this time the victim is Tregellis-West. The series continues.

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Summer time ended on 6th October when the clocks went back and we had an extra hour in bed.

The Duke of Gloucester is in Melbourne for the Victoria Centenary celebrations. And there has been an air race from London to Melbourne. Scott and Campbell Black were easy winners. They did the trip in 2 days, 16 hours and 48 minutes.

A wonderful tale in the Sexton Blake Library this month is entitled "The Living Shadow". It is about camouflage, and it reminded me a little of the film "The Invisible Man" which I saw a few months ago. It has Granite Grant and Mademoiselle Julie along with Blake and Tinker.

There is a St. Frank's story in the Boys' Friend Library entitled "Crusoes of Surf Island" with Nipper & Co. in another amazing holiday adventure.

Two lovely tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library. "The House of Terror" tells of a strange menace which hangs over the mansion Ravenspur Grange where the Greyfriars chums are spending part of their summer holiday. The other S.O.L. is "The River Adventurers" which tells of the second part of Tom Merry & Co.'s splendid holiday in the Old Bus on the Thames. This one has, tacked on at the finish, part of the story about D'Arcy Maximus, the donkey which D'Arcy adopted. It's good but a bit not quite right when tacked on at the end of the Old Bus tales. Still, that's carping.

Some nice goings on in the local picture palaces. I had seen "The Ghost Train" before but it was worth seeing again. It's really good. Another good British film was "Evensong" starring Evelyn Laye. About a great singer at the turn of the century who gave up her career for love.

"We're Not Dressing" starring Bing Crosby, Carole Lombard, Burns and Allen, and others is about a wild heiress cast on a desert island and tamed by a singing sailor. It's based on the well-known play "The Admirable Crichton".

"Gambling Lady" is a good thrilling tale of murder, etc., and stars Barbara Stanwyck and Joel McCrea. Jack Hulbert was in a fairly funny British comedy "The Camels are Coming". "Blossom

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Time " starred Richard Tauber, and had some good singing and music but was a bit heavy-going for the likes of me.

Clark Gable and Myrna Loy are pretty good in "Men in White", about a doctor who is in love with a rich girl who resents the way her young man is dedicated to his duty. And, finally, a very pleasant film to make you chuckle - "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" starring Zasu Pitts and W. C. Fields who has a bulbous nose.

It's great to have King of the Islands back in Modern Boy. The first story of the new set started in the final issue of last month. This month's opening tale is "Kit Hudson's Hustle". There's a wreck on the coast of a cannibal island with £7000 stacked away in her. Kit Hudson, Ken's mate, wants that money, and it causes a rift between the once great pals. They go their different ways. Dandy Peter, the biggest rascal in the South Seas is also after that money in the wreck.

Next tale in the series is "The Crackerjack's Treasure".. The character of Hudson, still after that £7000, seems to have changed completely with his lust for wealth. The third tale of the month is "South Seas Partners". Kit Hudson, crazy over the salvage, goes into partnership with the villainous Dandy Peter.

Final yarn of the month is "Head-Hunters of Treasure Island". Kit Hudson and his new partner meet up with the cannibal guardians of the treasure-wreck. The series continues next month.

Also in Modern Boy at present is a motor-racing and boxing series, Hurricane, by John Hunter. In another series Captain Justice and Midge find themselves in an Unknown Land.

"Where's George?" "Gone to Lyonch!" That's the new advertising jingle for the Lyons Tea-shops. You see it on all the hoardings and in all the papers.

The King and Queen opened the new University Library at Cambridge during the month. And President Poincaré of France - he became famous during the Great War, it seems - has died at the age of 74.

The Magnet is giving away a complete Sheriff's kit. A sheriff's badge, an invisible writing pencil, a six-shooter, and so

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on. It seems a bit childish for a paper like the Magnet, I think.

But the paper has a great new series. A charabanc taking the First Eleven to a game is in collision with the Head's car. Dr. Locke is crumpled and insensible with a stream of red running down under his silver hair. Wingate, Gwynne, and North are lying like logs in the grass where they have been placed.

And that dramatic accident causes Mr. Prout to be appointed temporary Headmaster of Greyfriars, and Mr. Prout makes Loder his Head Prefect. And the opening story is entitled "A Tyrant Rules Greyfriars". The second tale of the series is "The High Hand". Loder sets out to squash his old enemies in the Remove, but he doesn't succeed. The story carries on excitingly with "The Greyfriars Storm-Troops". Mr. Quelch, unable to tolerate Prout as Head, has gone, and he has been replaced with a weak little man named Mr. Woose. And in the month's final story "The Secret of the Vaults" the Bounder starts a Secret Society - they call themselves the Secret Seven - to deal with Loder and Prout. Mighty fine series. It goes on next month.

\* \* \* \* \*

### NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY'S DIARY"

The Gem Story "The Bully Who Wouldn't Fight" had been entitled "Bound by Honour" in the summer of 1911. "The Gipsy Schoolboy" had appeared under the same title the following week in 1911. "The Outsider's Return" had been "Lumley-Lumley's Return" very early in the year 1911. "When Friends Fall Out" had been "Tom Merry versus Jack Blake" in the following week early in 1911.

S.O.L. No. 229 "The House of Terror" comprised three stories from the 4-story Ravenspur Grange series of the 1929 Magnet. The omission of the one story left out an integral part of the plot, and seriously marred the whole tale. S.O.L. No. 230 "The River Adventurers" comprised the last 3 stories of the Gem's "Old Bus" series of the summer of 1923, plus a few chapters from D'Arcy Mazimus", tacked on incongruously to make up the S.O.L. length.

S.B.L. No. 451 "The Living Shadow" had been "The Mystery of the Living Shadow" from the autumn of 1920. A fine novel - one of Pierre Quiroule's best - particularly memorable for a remarkably eerie chapter set in the Red House on Blackheath. A pity it has not been reprinted in recent times.

Evelyn Laye did not make many pictures. To this day, "Evensong" is considered to have been her best film.

# BLAKIANA

Conducted by Mark Jarvis

This is the last Blakiana under by temporary stewardship. Everybody will have fond memories of dear Josie; Harry Pemberton of Newall Green, Manchester, was a great pen pal of Josie and a stalwart borrower of the Blake Library and says he will miss her greatly (as we all will). He is comforted by the thought that she is now with her beloved Len.

Bill Bradford has an intriguing poser for the scholars amongst us; over to you Bill.

I have recently acquired some Populars (1927) which include some Blake stories which are not shown in my SBL catalogue or supplement. They could be reprints from the Penny Pictorial (one or two titles are very similar) or possibly from the Penny Popular; the length would be about right. I list the titles here; perhaps someone could shed some light or has knowledge of the originals.

<u>NO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
434	21.5.27	The Helderstone Pearls
435	28.5.27	The Stolen Tie Pin
436	4.6.27	The Black Hand
437	11.6.27	The Houseboat Mystery
438	18.6.27	The Case of the Artificial Rubies
439	25.6.27	The Mystery of the Forged Cheque
440	2.7.27	The Colonel's Guest
441	9.7.27	The Case of the Missing Sapphires
442	16.2.27	The Secret of the King's Keep
443	23.7.27	Tricked in the Train
444	30.7.27	The Mystery of the Theatre Box
445	6.8.27	The Affair of The Shooting Party
446	13.8.27	What The Office Boy Saw
447	20.8.27	The Case of the Goona Pearls

<u>NO</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
448	27.8.27	The Three Sovereigns
449	3.9.27	Diamond Cut Diamond
450	10.9.27	Proved Innocent

Please write to met at 204 Lewis Trust, Warner Road, LONDON, SE5 9LY, and I will pass any contributions to my successor.

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FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE - Part Three

By W. O. G. Lofts

Alfred John Hunter to give him his full name, had dropped the first name for writing as 'John Hunter' sounded better. He was a big man with twinkling eyes, whom I suspect was the basis from where Captain Dack the large sea-going seaman was created. In looks he reminded me sharply of Richard Dix a famous film star who used to appear in action type of films before the Second World War. I was also struck by a sort of musical lilt to his voice, and it was only quite recently that I discovered he was actually born at Ponypridd in South Wales, so must be considered to be Welsh joining such other Welsh writers as Gwyn Evans, Trevor Wignall, and George Rees - who all wrote in the Sexton Blake saga.

As a boy he read The Magnet and Gem, as well as Chums. He regarded the latter as the finest boys' paper of all time, contributing a great deal himself in later years. His wealth of amusing stories about fellow writers was unlimited, and I only wish I had remembered them all. Charles Hamilton to him was a genius, and had a most unusual job before he was established in writing. Anthony Parsons was a great humorist, and was so fed up with the editor of the S.B.L. changing the titles of his stories that he titled them all 'By the Waters of Babylon'. Coutts Brisbane was a white bearded Australian who in the fashion of so many in pre-war days used to carry a small sack on his back, just like a swagman in the old traditional fashion. He had a sort of mania for collecting, buying and exchanging, as well as selling books from second-hand bookstalls and was not worried where they came from. His

mind was akin to Bunter's as regards tuck. Once an editor found his office books replaced by others, and saw his own copies later on a stall in Farringdon Road market!

Robert Coutts Armour to give him his full name was a great humorist, and it is believed he died at Brentford, Middlesex in his eighties in the fifties.

I met John Hunter quite a few times at his house, as well as in the Wine Lodge on the sea-front almost right up to his death in 1961 when he was aged 69.

Reverting back to Len Pratt, whilst it must be said I was most disappointed at our correspondence, by all accounts he was quite popular with authors who were writing for the S.B.L. at the time. 'Pratty' as he was called was quite happy to smoke his Woodbines, and enjoy a pint of bitter surrounded by his friends at Fleetway House. He had been editor of the S.B.L. since 1921, actually joining the firm of Amalgamated Press in 1903. Working on The Marvel and Pluck, after War service he edited the Robin Hood and Prairie Libraries in 1919. He retired in 1953 after fifty years service, a record that anyone could be proud of.

Unfortunately he had got rather lax in his judgement - especially during his final years at the firm. I was buying the Library monthly, when the stories certainly were not on a par with the earlier ones. The tales were full of holes in detection and absurdities that made me wince at times, at how the editor had let such glaring slips pass.

Sexton Blake for example was going over to France and back with Pedro, when strict quarantine regulations were in force. Sexton Blake finds a girls' body that had been buried for almost a year. The picture showed her still to be a ravishing beauty, with no trace of decomposure after such a length of time. Though in this case the artist was in a difficult position, he could have put a sheet over her with only the toes showing!

Sexton Blake goes over to Italy and hires a car to take him to a mountain stronghold. Next morning after breakfast at an hotel he goes out and gets in the Grey Panther and drives away! His famous car must have flown over there in the night!

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Many years later I was to learn that Len Pratt had not bothered to read all the scripts as carefully as he should have done, taking a lot on trust. Once a story by Walter Tyrer intended for a Woman's Library was sent to him by mistake, and it was passed through to the printers! It was only by checking the proofs that the error was noticed, when by some hurried re-writing Sexton Blake was introduced in the last few pages!

After a muddled report that Len Pratt had died in 1965, when to the embarrassment of The Amalgamated Press who sent a wreath in error, to find like Mark Twain his death was highly exaggerated - he eventually died in 1967.

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## Nelson Lee Column

HALF A REPRINT

By R. J. Godsave

The reprint of the Dick Goodwin series in the Monster Library under the title of "The Boy who Vanished" is remarkable for what has been omitted from the original Nelson Lee Library. In many of the earlier Lee stories E. S. Brooks wrote two themes into the same story. One was devoted to the detective activities of Nelson Lee and the other to the school. Generally there was a link between the two.

The arrival of Dick Goodwin - the Lancashire Lad, occurred in o.s. 275 "The Study of Mystery". Being the inventor of an improved textile machine, Goodwin was allowed by Dr. Stafford to have complete privacy in order to work on a model of his invention. Complete privacy meant frosted glass windows and a secure lock on the study door, much to the chagrin of his fellow Removites who could not understand why he should be treated so differently from the usual run of new boys.

Even the latter part of the first Nelson Lee in the series o.s. 275 was not used in the Monster version as it introduced the detective element which had no place in the school story. Two men, one of whom had recently been in the employment of Dick

Goodwin's father in his textile mill was a Mr. Naggs who with an accomplice named Colmore had made an attempt to steal the plans of the machine from Goodwin's study, with the help of Ralph Leslie Fullwood.

It was the entry into St. Frank's one night which caused Colmore to be captured by two men who actually had no connection with the Dick Goodwin part of the story. Both of them were cornered by Nelson Lee, that is Naggs and Colmore. In their panic to escape Naggs fled to the domestic quarters and escaped. Colmore fled upstairs and without knowing it entered Nelson Lee's bedroom where the door had been left open by Lee. Rushing to the window Colmore looked out for a pipe or some tough ivy in order to descend to the ground. As he looked out of the window a thin loop of rope came circling down. It swung itself over his head and shoulders, and with a sharp jerk it became tight. Colmore was then lifted right off his feet and swung clean out of the window and into the air. Then with a swiftness that was startling he was lowered to the ground.

It was obvious that the persons who had captured Colmore had really intended to capture Nelson Lee. With Colmore left bound on the ground, the man who had been with the rope on the roof now joined his companion. They soon found that they had captured the wrong man and escaped into the darkness. Nelson Lee appeared on the scene and found that Colmore was bound and helpless, in these circumstances it was extremely easy to hand him into the custody of the police.

This is where the two themes meet and whoever edited the Monster version of this series had no option but to keep Colmore 'alive' for a short time as it were. In the original Lees Colmore was no longer in the story and his place was taken by another accomplice of Naggs named Williss. This name was never used in the Monster and Colmore was granted a new lease of life until he was captured later in the story, when it no longer mattered.

The gang who had tried to capture Nelson Lee turned out to be jewellery thieves who had designs on Lady Banningstowe's collection of jewels. In this case Nelson Lee was successful in

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preventing the theft.

This is an instance of where two themes clash which makes a genuine reprint of the school activities only impossible.

### ST. FRANKS AND THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY

By W. O. G. Lofts

I was most interested in the recent letters on the stories of St. Franks in The Boys' Friend Library, as only recently I unearthed some notes about them, that I had gleaned from official records - just before they knocked down the old Amalgamated Press Building. 'The Idol of St. Franks' issue No. 633 First Series seems a mystery that will now never be solved, as whereas all other stories are listed - this issue must have been paid for on acceptance, as no trace of its origin has ever been found. According to the late greatly missed Bob Blythe, E. S. Brooks said it was his, and consequently it was listed by him in his Biblio of E. S. Brooks. Indeed recently having the good fortune to obtain a copy of the St. Franks tale - perhaps some clue can be given in the blurb on the opening page - which states that the story was written by "the author of the St. Franks stories assisted by the editor of the Boys' Friend Library". As Charles Churchill says it is possible that the plot may have been supplied by E.S.B. and written up by some other writer. The editor of the B.F.L. at that period was a Balfour Ritchie who certainly penned stories under the 'Basil Baldwin' pen-name.

Recently in letting a hobby friend of mine have my copy of 'The Idol of St. Franks' - and who is an expert on the stories - his opinion was that the story starts very slowly, and does not seem like E.S.B. but later it picks up a lot and has his characteristics.

There is no problem with the other B.F.L. St. Franks stories - No. 704 'Pots of Money' was originally called by E.S.B. 'Handforth's Golden Windfall', and others printed as our author named them.

E.S.B. was always months ahead of schedule with his stories, and unlike his S.B.L. yarns titles were very rarely changed which confirms Lionel Brooks' (his son) statement that he

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and his wife always paid strict attention to the title. One title I know had to be changed because he called it 'The Schoolboy Gambler' - and in those days editors had to be extremely careful about what they printed. It may have given the impression that the excellent story may have encouraged them to gamble! The story eventually appeared in No. 243 (old series) as 'Singleton in London'. There are many more fascinating things to reveal especially about The Boys' Friend Library.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

No. 197 - The Great Sports Series

By Roger M. Jenkins

Charles Hamilton never had anything complimentary to say about the substitute writers. On 21st January, 1946, he wrote to me as follows: "Yes, it is true that what the A.P. were pleased to call 'substitute writers', and what I was pleased to call inter-  
loping cheeky asses, did butt into both papers. Their raids on the Magnet were kept within limits and finally stopped: but in the Gem they had a free field...". Some three years later, when writing to Herbert Leckenby this detachment broke down, to reveal the bitter feelings he still entertained about Pentelow's actions: "This man took advantage of his position as editor to steal my work and push me into the cold. That was theft. In order to make his thefts effective, he put my name instead of his own on what he wrote. That was forgery. By palming off the stuff on the public, deluding them into the belief that it was written by me, he was guilty of swindling".

The question seldom faced by Charles Hamilton was how the A.P. were to continue publishing the Magnet and the Gem if he failed to deliver the weekly manuscripts, and his tours of Europe certainly did not help the situation. When pressed, he would admit that substitute stories by other writers would have to be published, not under his pen-names but their own, as was the custom for the Sexton Blake stories. Nevertheless, Pentelow was obviously different from all the others, in his opinion. In

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Pentelow's time, Charles Hamilton's own manuscripts were put aside in favour of the editor's substitute stories. No clearer example of this could be seen than the Great Sports series in the Gem of 1918.

Whereas the later Wally Bunter series in the Magnet and Gem was a Hamiltonian theme, with interpolations from Pentelow, the Great Sports series was a Pentelow theme, with interpolations from Hamilton. The Fourth and Shell were in competition for various events, mainly of a sporting nature, with Lefevre, Wally D'Arcy and Frank Levison as judges, the latter in charge of the records book. In his stories, Charles Hamilton even referred to future events, like the Marathon, which were to be in a Pentelow story the following week. It must have been galling in the extreme to Hamilton, even more so as the series ran for about two terms.

Charles Hamilton never regarded a sports event as an end in itself, but as a means of highlighting the feelings and the characters of the participants. It is significant that his contributions to this series tended to be on a different level. No. 533, for example, was a spoofing competition, in which two juniors dressed up as Mr. Lathom. No. 535 related the story of a competition to deal with food hogs, in particular Racke's man, Mr. Berrymore, who was installed in a house near Rylcombe where the son of the war profiteer gorged himself on black market foodstuffs. No. 537 was a fine character study of the disgruntled Reggie Manners and the disappearance of the records book, the boat race occupying only a few paragraphs at the end. A very topical story the following week featured the final of a chess competition between Harry Manners and Koumi Rao during an air raid. 540 was even more bizarre: Skimpole's 500 page manuscript 'Reflections on the Present War', which was to have been sent to the War Aims Committee, had disappeared and points were to be allowed for solving the mystery. Skimpole's belief that it had been stolen by a German spy proved to be unfounded.

In looking back over these contributions, it is easy to see that the emphasis was on characterisation, not physical prowess. It is also noteworthy that the Shell were not specially favoured,

and the fortunes of the contest swayed backwards and forwards. Charles Hamilton's contributions did at least provide some welcome relief from Pentelow's grim relentlessness.

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MEETING MISS PRISCILLA

By Tommy Keen

I possess one original GEM, and one only, a very special favourite story from very long ago, "The Pluck of Edgar Lawrence" - No. 786, and not even a Hamilton story. George R. Samways was the sub writer concerned, and with the New House trio of Redfern, Lawrence, and Owen featured, it was rather a change from the usual Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adventures. I might add that this tale of pluck and friendship, read so many times by me, often caused a pair of damp eyes.

Although a devotee of St. Jim's, and my favourite characters belonged there, Manners and Digby (who should both have had more prominence), Cardew, Clive and Levison, Dick Redfern, and the absolutely superb Reginald Talbot, my favourite boys' paper was really the MAGNET, but I am digressing. This is not a screed regarding the merits of the MAGNET and GEM.

One evening recently, a most peculiar happening occurred. A lady called at my home to collect money for the local Church Magazine, and whilst finding the necessary cash, I invited her into my lounge. That very day I had been looking at the illustrations of "The Pluck of Edgar Lawrence", and on my table laid the GEM. Returning with the money, the lady said "How very odd, only this morning, an elderly lady living further along the road, was talking to me about a schoolboys' paper of long ago, called the GEM, and now I see one on your table". I was interested at once.

I have lived in Thames Ditton, and at the same address, for over twenty years, but I know only a few of my neighbours, and the lady in question, although living only eighteen houses away, was quite unknown to me. After my visitor had left, I decided to call and see the elderly lady who remembered the GEM,

so clutching my treasured GEM (to explain my call), along the road I went.

It was indeed a very elderly lady who opened the door to me, and whilst somewhat incoherently explaining why I had called, she scrutinised me keenly, then, maybe deciding I was not a desperated character, asked me in.

She informed me that she was 91 years old, therefore having been born in 1893, she was already 14 when the GEM first appeared, but to her Mother's horror, she read the GEM for years. I was mesmerised.

She remembered Tom Merry perfectly. "Such a lovely, clean living boy" she said, "and he had an old governess, a Miss... a Miss... (here a little prompting from me) Priscilla Fawcett". (In the 'Who's Who at St. Jim's' in the 1923 HOLIDAY ANNUAL, it states that Miss Fawcett is Tom's aunt.) Rather a coincidence here also, as my new acquaintance's name was Miss Peggy Fry, the same initials as Miss Fawcett. Again, with a little jogging of her memory, Lowther and Manners were recalled, Gussy and the chums of Study 6, and Figgins, Kerr and Wyn from the New House.

Even the lady's appearance was reminiscent of Miss Priscilla, as she was wearing a black shawl over an almost floor length red dress. She had little or no knowledge of the MAGNET, and the SCHOOL FRIEND and SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN had not then appeared on the bookstalls, but her love for the old GEM was unmistakable. She was fascinating!

I mentioned my adored Gracie Fields, and she told me that she knew there was a man living not too far away, who had known Gracie, so I explained I was the person. "Oh, Gracie was tremendous", she said, "the next time you call, we will talk about Gracie, and my great favourite... William Shakespeare". I said "Good night", and walked home slightly dazed, thinking maybe Shakespeare was not quite my cup of tea... why should he be, when there was Martin Clifford? I sank into a chair in my home, with a glass of sherry at hand, opened my GEM, and again read "The Pluck of Edgar Lawrence".

## TOM MERRY CAVALCADE (Serialised from a Long-Ago C.D. Annual)

1934

Ocean Guest House,  
Blackpool,  
19th July, 1934

Dearest Leslie,

We are having a wonderful holiday. I feel much better for the change, and Ethel is brown as a berry.

Yesterday, Mr. and Mrs. West, the Proprietors here, took us to Liverpool in their car, and we saw the King open the new Mersey tunnel. It is a wonderful affair, and the longest of its kind in the world.

Did you like "Wally's Willy Wheeze" in this week's Gem? I have an idea it was called "Well Played" when it was first published, but you would know more about that than me. I always like cricket tales, and stories which bring in Tom Merry's Weekly.

I suppose you received Ethel's card. She chose it herself. Some of the cards here are dreadfully rude - if we sold cards like that, they would close us up.

Look after yourself, dear. See you on Saturday.

Your loving Lizzie.

P. S. Have you read in the papers that there has been a second trunk murder in Brighton? Isn't it shocking? I'm glad I came to Blackpool and didn't go to Brighton.

1935

Every available bit of space on the exterior of Chadley's shop was hung with bunting and flags. Red, white, and blue prevailed everywhere. The contours of the little shop were picked out with coloured electric lights, which even now, early in the summer afternoon, had been switched on. The brilliance of the sunshine killed the lights, and tonight, when darkness fell, Chadley's display would still be overshadowed by the magnificence of that of the cinema next door.

But Chadley and his wife did not care. They were doing their small share to brighten the road, and to show their loyalty to the King and Queen who were celebrating their

glorious reign of twenty-five years.

Chadley and his twelve-year old daughter stood back on the edge of the pavement, and admired their handiwork. The newsagent's gaze dwelt with satisfaction on the row of red, white, and blue Gems on the other side of the gleaming glass. "Jubilee Day at St. Jim's" announced the cover of that patriotic-looking journal.

"Don't tell anyone, Ethel", said Chadley, softly, "but that story was once called 'Coronation Day at St. Jim's', and it was written to mark the coronation of King George and Queen Mary. Now it's back again to grace their Jubilee. Don't believe people when they tell you that history doesn't repeat itself."

1936

"The King's life is moving peacefully towards its close."

Quietly, unemotionally, the measured voice came from the radio. Outside, the January night was bitterly cold and unusually still. From the distance came the sound of a church clock striking half-past nine.

Lizzie Chadley leaned forward and dropped another log on the fire. She shivered a little as she lay back again in the comfortable arm-chair. Tears were trickling down her cheeks.

She muttered: "It's stupid of me to cry. It's not like a personal loss - it's not like losing your own ---"

Leslie Chadley stretched out his slippered feet to the blaze.

He said: "When a great man dies, the whole nation is bereaved... and when it's the King ---" He did not complete his sentence.

The Gem lay unopened on his knee. The title of the story was "Getting Even With Ratty". The cover picture showed Tom Merry saving "a wee child from being run over by a train". A chord was touched in Chadley's memory.

He said: "Do you remember this story, Lizzie? It was once called 'The

Scamps of the School'. I talked to you about it, long before we ever thought that one day we should marry". He lapsed into silence, but his thoughts ran on. That story, with a similar picture on the cover, drawn by the same artist, had been published soon after the crowning of the great monarch whose life, even now, was 'moving peacefully

towards its close'.

Chadley rested his hand on the picture. He said, very quietly: "Tom Merry has lasted through two reigns. I wonder how far into the reign of King Edward the Eighth we can expect old Tom to live".

(Next month : 1937)

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## REVIEWS

### "THE FALL OF HARRY WHARTON"

Frank Richards  
(Special Club Edition:  
Howard Baker)

Another glorious volume from the spacious days before the First World War. Stories from the peak of the Red Magnet, when the paper was at its biggest and the yarns were at their longest.

Seven consecutive stories, with the heart-warming illustrations of Arthur Clarke adding to the tingling nostalgia.

The opening tale is "The Greyfriars Wheelers", dedicated to the bicycle and with Fishy riding an ancient penny-farthing.

"The Prisoner of the Priory" turns out to be Rosie Locke, the Head's daughter, who experienced more than her fair share of kidnapping during her short life. Another of those lively, sweetly old-fashioned yarns of Dr. Locke's family.

Now comes a Bulstrode series, and a completely excellent one it is. "Last Man In" is a cricket tale, and the man of the title is Vernon-Smith though Bulstrode and Alonzo play substantial parts. "The Bully's Remorse" is quaintly amusing, and introduces Alonzo's Uncle Benjamin, gorgeously depicted by Arthur Clarke. Uncle Ben plays cricket, and decides that his nephew, Lonzy, is becoming a reckless young rascal.

Now, with "Harry Wharton's Downfall", the Bulstrode series gets into full sway. Incidentally, one wonders how many times in his long school career, Harry Wharton had a "downfall". At the end of this tale, Bulstrode becomes form skipper again as he was in the beginning. Bulstrode was a first-class character study, and one can only be amazed and wondering as to why Frank Richards dropped him from the Greyfriars scene after these early stories when he was so prominent.

Now a couple of stories about a new Headmaster, Mr. Lothrop, who proved a tyrant and caused a rebellion. They were unlucky at Greyfriars down the years with their temporary Heads. Mr. Lothrop seems to have been the first of them.

A superb volume from any point of the compass. Tip-top tales, a great artist to warm your hearts, and the perfect setting of luxury and dignity which is found in all these "specials".

### "NAPOLEON OF GREYFRIARS"

Frank Richards  
(Howard Baker: £9.95)

Inevitably these stories, from the year 1918, when England was at war with Germany and everybody's belts had been tightened, are dated with the grim flavour of the period. Eleven copies, not consecutive, when the Magnet was at its smallest and the price had gone up to three-ha'pence. It is the minor character, Ogilvy, who is "Saved From Shame" in the opening

story. He has no less than six brothers in the army, and one of them saves the Greyfriars brother from expulsion.

The next two yarns feature another gentleman in khaki, this time Snoop's father, who had joined up as Private Smith.

Next, "Bolsover's Way" turns the spot on another minor character, Elliott, who gets into trouble as a result of his contact with a rascal named Smiles. Elliott leaves that week to go to Canada.

The following week Elliott's place in Bolsover's study is taken by another new boy, Napoleon Dupont, a character who never quite made the grade in the popularity stakes with readers.

"William the Good", next week, was Billy Bunter, in which, cunningly, the Owl becomes odiously virtuous and a thorn in everybody's neck. Very, very funny, though the theme was far better handled in two superior tales in the Gem some years later.

The next tale, "Bolsover's Enemy" is actually a sequel to the "Bolsover's Way" yarn of weeks earlier, and re-introduces the rascal, Smiles. Clearly intended to appear ahead of the Napoleon story, its late appearance seems due to an editorial slip-up. One of those fascinating tit-bits for we researchers after many years.

Next comes a story which must have been pleasant to readers in 1918 - "Tom Redwing's Father". Thought to have been drowned when his ship was torpedoed, the father turns up safe and sound.

The final three stories in the volume comprise a series which introduced Aubrey Angel as a new boy. A kind of Greyfriars version of the villainous Ponsonby of Highcliffe, he uses Hazeldene and Sir Jimmy Vivian as his dupes.

A thoroughly fascinating volume, this one, from the last year of the First World War. A period piece, and the period adds to the interest of the book. Well worth having on your shelves to read over Christmas.

## A FEAST OF NOSTALGIA

by Mary Cadogan

Dent & Son, who launched their series of Classic Thrillers some time ago, have just produced another attractive batch of these. There are two further John Buchan titles, THE HOUSE OF THE FOUR WINDS, which is set in Central Europe in the 1930s, is a worthy sequel to HUNTINGTOWER AND CASTLE GAY, full of kidnappings and enigmas and political intrigues. THE POWER HOUSE is another adventure to feature Edward Leithen, the character in the stories who - according to the author's wife - most closely resembles Buchan himself. There is also a truly compulsive First World War espionage thriller by Manning Coles called D RINK TO YESTERDAY, and, for good measure, one of 'Sapper's' Bulldog Drummond adventures, THE THIRD ROUND, and Leslie Charteris's THE SAINT IN NEW YORK. All these titles are in well produced paperbacks at £2.50 each.

Leaving fiction - but not nostalgia - aside, the same publishers have produced WE'LL MEET AGAIN, a collection of photographs of 'Daily Life in Britain During World War Two', with an introduction by Robert Kee. This is a book that beautifully and heart-warmingly catches the many and varied moods of the Home Front during those dreadful but strangely-inspiring days. It is all recorded here, with tremendous vigour and clarity - from the graciousness of the King and Queen to the guts of the Daily Mirror's Jane; the endeavours of the A.R.P. and the enterprise of little evacuees; the stirrup pumps, and Spitfires and the shot-down Messerschmidts; the bombing and the blackout; the Force's Sweetheart and the fabulous 'Few'; the W.A.A.F.s and the Windmill girls. It is difficult to select the best from such a wealth of illustrative material, but

for me the two most atmospheric pictures from this memorable volume are of the Women's League of Health and Beauty exercising in gas-masks, and of Anti-Aircraft gunners, called suddenly to action from rehearsals for a Christmas Show, and wearing tin-hats and frilly can-can dresses while manning their gun!

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# News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

LONDON

Jim Cook, disappointed that there was no mention of Moor View School for Young Ladies at the Jolly Hockey Sticks exhibition, compiled a quiz that dealt with the girls' school that was featured in the Nelson Lee Library. As the meeting of the club was at the home of our late esteemed Reuben Godsave, it was a mark of respect to that great Franciscan. The quiz proved to be very entertaining and even if the answers were beyond some of those present, it was enjoyable. Ann Clarke was the winner.

Arthur Bruning, after exhibiting a copy of the paper-back 'Heirs of Tom Brown' and mentioning Tod Slaughter of 'Sweeny Todd' fame, gave a good sermon which he called Alonzo's Sermon. This was greatly enjoyed and evoked much laughter.

Duncan Harper read passages from the Memory Lane feature. These quotes were from News-letter number 200 and the date May 1967.

Roger Jenkins conducted one of his Puzzle Squares competitions. Eric Lawrence proved the winner.

Laurie Sutton had compiled a 25 questions quiz on the characters at Greyfriars and St. Jims. This was won by Don Webster, suitable prizes were awarded to the winner and the two runner ups, Roger Jenkins and Eric Lawrence.

Phyllis Godsave received the grateful thanks for all those present.

Next gathering will be the luncheon party at Ealing and there will be no library transactions on this occasion.

Finally, Mark Jarvis put on show the scrap book which eventually will contain many news-cuttings, magazine extracts, and the like.

BEN WHITER

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NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 8th September, 1984

Further to our last meeting and Jack Allison's revelation that astounded us all that he had been a writer for "THE SCOUT" and "THE SCOUT ANNUAL", Geoffrey Good had brought along a copy of the latter for 1961 to show us a story written by Jack - "Fatty Wright - Atomic Scientist".

A cutting recently published in our local paper concerning our Northern Club, was brought to the attention of our group: although the wording was not as good as we would have liked - and certainly did not contain expressions that Joe Wood and Jack Allison had used by referring to "THE MAGNET" and "THE GEM" as "comics". However, the article - short as it was - was better than the average and we did hope that it would create some interest in our Club.

Geoffrey had prepared an amusing piece - "The Minutes Of The Last Meeting for August, 2004". Needless to say, Geoffrey's subtle and amusing piece was appreciated and we noted that according to his minutes, our Chairman (Harry Barlow) was still going strong at the age of 93! Seemingly, members had brought along treasured copies of the C.D. for August, 1984!

"My Choice" was presented by Joe Wood, selecting a story entitled "The Cop and The Anthem" by the American author, O. Henry (1862 - 1910).

Geoffrey presented us with a reading from Magnet 145, "The Removal of Horace Coker", explaining to us that in the earlier Magnets, Coker knew his limitations - i.e. he realised he was no good at Latin, or cricket, or football and just about everything else. Whereas, in the later issues, the fifth-former did not know his limitations - he thought he was good at everything. Geoffrey's rendering of the story in question was an expert piece of reading which caused much merriment.

Only nine were present at our meeting - holidays still being evident.

Visitors and newcomers to our gatherings, are welcome.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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CAMBRIDGE

On 9th September the Club paid its annual visit to the home of Neville and Ruth Wood at Swefling, and, as always with these visits, we enjoyed a wonderful time.

After Ruth's generous lunch, Neville gave a taped talk on intelligence, signalling, and spy fiction. An intensely interesting address.

We looked over the latest additions to Neville's bookshelves. After enjoying Ruth's excellent tea, not forgetting the "seedy cake", we gathered round Neville's computer.

All too soon came the time to depart for Cambridge, with warm thanks to our host and hostess.

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## The Postman Called

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

MISS EVELYN FLINDERS (Hitchin): I came across "Bessie Bunter and the Missing Fortune" in a Merlin paperback recently. I found it on a bookstall in the market. It's quite an old book. I expect it was written by John Wheway. I like it because Jemima Carstairs plays a big part in it. She was always my favourite character in the Cliff House stories.

WILLIAM LISTER (Blackpool): Jack Hughes' article "The Last Farewell" refers to my article in C.D. Annual 1983, and he points out a further series of Ezra Quirke stories which I had overlooked. Many thanks, Jack, for your article. I am applying to Bill Bradford for the loan of this series from his Nelson Lee Library.

H. HEATH (Windsor): I have been very interested to read references in the C.D. to the Rookwood story entitled, "The Boy Who Walked by Night".

I have the S.O.L. reprint of this story which has always ranked highly in my estimation. I have not read a great deal about the Hampshire School, but of those stories that have been read, "The Boy Who Walked by Night" is rated second only to the "Jimmy

Silver/Thornington Captain Series", which after all took up two S.O.L.s. It had never crossed my mind that it could be regarded as a substitute story.

In my opinion, this Rookwood story is a more powerful one than what was usually provided for Rookwood. I agree with the comments made by Mr. Lasky in the August issue of the C.D. that this story was written in a polished and easy style.

The central character in the story "The Boy Who Walked by Night", is a boy named Dudley Vane. The choice of name is vaguely familiar, and coupled with the style of the story amply confirm to me that this is a genuine Hamilton story.

Dudley and Vane were members, although very minor ones, of the St. Winifreds' Fourth Form in the "Benbow Series", which first appeared in the Greyfriars Herald in 1920. Those stories were reprinted in the Gem in 1939.

When stories featuring Hamilton's new school Carcroft appeared in the magazine "Pie" at intervals during the period December 1944 - June 1947, the new type of "Bounder" was Dudley Vane-Carter.

I cannot believe that a substitute writer in 1936 would go back as far as 1920 to acquire two names for a new character.

I would be very interested to hear what other readers think on this subject.

C. R. KEARNS (Hull): So pleased we are to have our dear old Annual to brighten Christmas Day. Thank you very much.

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): Having just not read the Carter series (1938) - which is similar in plot to the Caffyn series - I agree with Roger Jenkin's point about the lack of development in the series as a whole, with each number comprising a separate and complete unit. On the other hand, there is something very satisfying - especially to young readers with a strong sense of justice - in seeing Carter/Caffyn getting come-uppance every week, in spite of his scheming, without having to wait till the final episode.

W. T. THURBON (Cambridge): May I make a few comments on

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this month's "Digest".

1. Danny's reference to "Under False Colours". The plot of this story was used by Henry St. John in a serial "Fourth Form at Greyminster" in a Marvel "end" serial in 1907.

2. I was interested in your comment on "The House of Fear". I had never read this, and so did not realise that either Hamilton, or, perhaps a "sub" writer had plagiarised the "Speckled Band". I think this is one of the best Sherlock Holmes short stories, but surely it's lucky Doyle didn't learn of it's use.

3. I was also interested in Edmund Kadish's reference to "The Schemer of St. Franks". Keith Hodkinson has recently drawn our attention in the Cambridge Club to a re-issue (or re-use) of this story by Brooks for Gerald Swann under the title "The Rotter of Whitelands".

4. I was particularly interested in the report of the meeting of the London Club and Stephen Goddard's talk on Henty. Surely the title of the Henty story read by Stephen is wrong. I have been until recently a member of the Henty Society, and the title of the story is "Beric the Briton". Indeed, I have checked this with Guy Arnold's book, and found all index references quote this title. Bill Lofts, who is chief researcher for the Society will I am sure confirm this. If the quoted title is correct, Stephen has found an edition, possibly American, which has previously been unknown.

FRANCIS HERTZBERG (Wirral): I have friendly memories of Mrs. Packman, also. Her love for the Sexton Blake saga I found warm and comforting, something which did not change. Her length of service also made me feel humble. The issue of Detective Weekly which bears the date of my birth (30th December, 1939, Teed's Brotherhood of Twelve) includes a letter from Herbert Leckenby saying that for him the DW "is still the Union Jack" with which Mrs. Packman, who had no great love for the DW, would not have agreed! But both remembered, as Mr. Leckenby commented, reading copies back to the early days as they appeared. Interested, by the way, that Ben Whiter believes Blake is back in Baker Street (from Berkeley Square): he is probably correct.

Goodness, someone else who agrees with me! The editor

also has been unable to finish Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals!

Mr. Loft's continuing autobiography is fascinating; but it is not written in his usual style. Which is the sub? Actually I am not only being funny, the discrepancy does show that not all stories written in an unrecognised style are necessarily by substitute writers - that is, if the Lofts pieces are genuine...

Mr. Baldock remembers pestering his own Mr. Chadley for early copies of the Magnet. As a child I worked in an outside (open in all weathers, hours 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. alternated with 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.!) Smith's bookstall. Every week I was besieged with female blandishments for copies of Woman and Woman's Own a day early. Even then logic overpowered tact, and I hopelessly pointed out that if they always got the papers a day early, there was still a week in-between issues.

M. S. FELLOWS (London): In my boyhood days, I remember that it was at this time of year that those little notices used to appear in the newsagents' windows - "Join Our Christmas Club". One received a little card and paid a small amount every week. Of course, I always ordered "The Holiday Annual" in response to the advertisements which also started to appear in September, if I remember correctly. And what a thrill it was near Christmas time to be told that the Annual had arrived and was available for carrying home. Mine was always put away until Christmas Day.

Now one can re-capture the thrill as one orders the C.D. Annual which is even better than the Holiday Annuals and is even more correctly described as being "Full of Good Things". However much I enjoy re-reading the "Holiday Annuals" I now derive more pleasure from the C. D. Annual.

If you ever loved "The Diary of a Nobody", may I recommend to you "The Eliza Stories" by Barry Pain, recently re-issued by Pavilion/Michael Joseph at £7.95. Of course, you probably know these stories already. But, for anyone like me who had not previously encountered them, then there is a real delight in store. They originally appeared between 1900 and 1913 and original copies have been treasured, it seems.

C.D. for September was excellent. There were, of course,

the sad tributes to Josie Packman which were beautifully written. Ben Whiter's comment was excellent. I enjoyed every one of your contributions. Your remarks on great entertainment of yesteryear were much appreciated. "Magnet Memories" by E. Baldock was the kind of writing that brings back many happy memories. Bill Watson's letter brought back some memories of how in the war I asked my mother to send out some "Magnets" and "Gems" to me at the front in Italy. These were very much appreciated by my comrades-in-arms. Thank you for another first-class number.

Thanks to you for all that you do to brighten our lives.

PETER LANG (Jarrow): Since I became an enthusiastic collector of Old Boys' Books a few years ago, I have grown to love the following publications, authors, and illustrators of Yesterday. Here is my little list (or Roll of Honour): "The Captain": R. S. Warren Bell, T. M. R. Whitwell; "The Scout": F. Haydn Dimmock, Fred Bennett; "Chums": George E. Rochester, Thomas Somerfield; "B.O.P.": Major Charles Gilson, Stanley L. Wood; "Greyfriars Holiday Annual", "Magnet", "Gem": Charles Hamilton, C. H. Chapman, Leonard Shields. Wonderful names from the Past, still giving pleasure today. I look forward eagerly to the opening days of each new month when I receive our beloved "Collectors Digest".

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WANTED: ALDINE ROBIN HOOD LIBRARY (1924-27): Nos. 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 50, 52.

C.D. ANNUALS: 1947, 1948, 1949, 1959.

THE POPULAR: No. 566, 21st September, 1929.

MODERN BOY (1st series): Nos. 29, 31, 33, 35, 204, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211, 296, 297, 346, 347, 360, 361, 376, 389.

OFFERS TO: W. BRADFORD, 5 QUEEN ANNE'S GROVE, EALING, LONDON, W5 3XP.

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WANTED: Howard Baker Reprint of Magnet 27 (single issue): BELLFIELD, 65 BRIDGE COURT, CRADLEY HEATH, WARLEY, W. MIDLANDS, B64 6LW. Must be in good condition - your price paid - Phone C.H. 68952.

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Darrell Swift would like all his friends to note his new address:

37 TINSHILL LANE, LEEDS, LS16 6BU. Telephone number unchanged.

# SHEER ENTERTAINMENT! EDGAR WALLACE & SAPPER

## TWO NEW SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS

'THE SOOPER' AND OTHERS by EDGAR WALLACE features stories about some of his most famous characters: the Four Just Men, the Ringer, the Brigand, Angel Esquire, the Sooper -- and, of course, others. 8 of the stories have never been published in book-form before, and another 2 were only published in a poorly distributed paperback over 20 years ago. 9 more stories complete the volume.

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