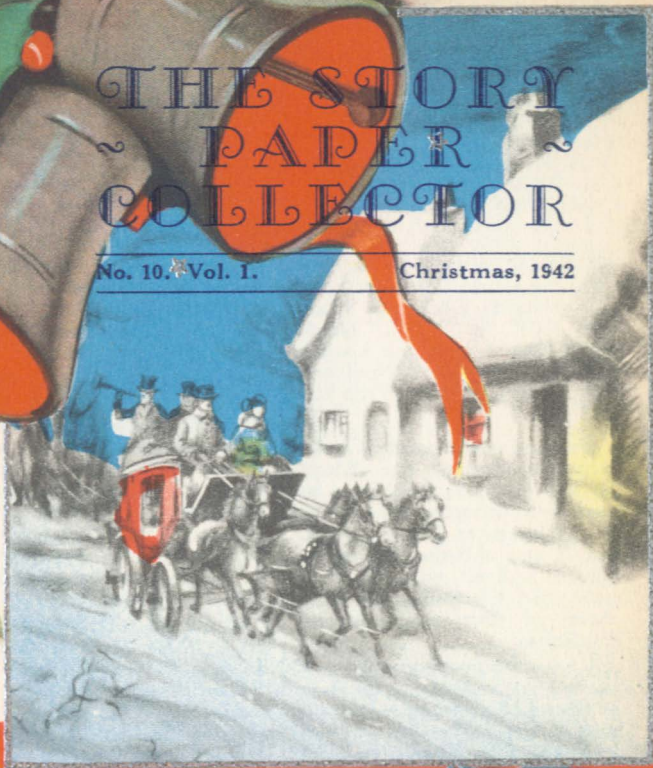




THE STORY
PAPER
COLLECTOR

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CHRISTMAS
GREETINGS



Recollections Of An Old Time Christmas Number

By HENRY STEELE

I READ with great interest the article "The First 'Boys' Herald' Christmas Number, 1903" in "S. P. C." No. 5. As a boy I took the keenest interest in Christmas Numbers; my period goes back to the '80's and 90's.

By the description the Christmas Number of the "Boys' Herald" seems to have been an extremely attractive one. The date, December 5th, was early, but it was also the practice of Edwin J. Brett and others to issue the Christmas Numbers three or four weeks before Christmas.

I note the cover was printed in colours and that the issue consisted of 32 pages, a substantial budget of reading matter. I like the title of the story "The Secret Chamber," a story of the Civil War, by the author of "Cavaliers and Roundheads." The English Civil War was a

favourite subject for boys' tales in my day and many stories of this kind appeared in Brett's and Fox's journals. Here are a few:

"Jack o' Boughton Wood," "Boys of the Empire," Vol. 5, 1890; "Doctor or Demon," "Boys of the Empire," Vol. 9, 1892; "Brave Hal of Chester, or, For King and Country," "Boys of England," Vol. 54, 1892; "Ralph Royster," "Boy's Standard," 1880 Christmas No.; "Strike For The King," "Boy's Leisure Hour," 1891.

To return to the "Boys' Herald." "The Seventh House at St. Basil's" seems to have been a fine tale and originated from the story "The Boys of St. Basil's." This practice of writing a number of stories with the same characters existed also in the times of Brett and Fox. The difference was that only the first story was a school tale, the

others dealt with the hero's adventures after leaving school, in the Army or abroad. In the "Boys of England" in 1890 there was "Left-Handed Jack, or, The Terror of the School." This was followed by "Left-Handed Jack, or, The Royal Dragoon." Then came "Left-Handed Jack on the Plains of India," and finally "Left-Handed Jack in the Wilds of Australia."

The same thing applied to the famous Jack Harkaway. His travels were still more varied, then the author brought in Jack's son and had him share his father's adventures.

I note that Henry St. John was famous as being a fine author of school tales. In my day Harcourt Burrage had a great reputation for school stories. "The Island School" and "The Lambs of Littlecote" are two shining examples.

My first experience with a boys' journal Christmas Number was with one of "The Boys of the Empire." The date on it was "For the week ending December 17th, 1838." But as the journal always came out on a Monday it really appeared on December 12th. It was the first Christmas

Number of this paper and the only one to be printed in colours. I have it before me as I write. It consisted of a 16-page supplement printed in a mauve tint, and containing a long complete story the title of which was "The Haunted Priory"—A Tale of Three Christmas Days. Pories have always had a great interest for me ever since.

The front page was embellished with a kind of composite picture, the top part showing the hero in bed seeing a vision of a murder. The lower part illustrates a duel about to take place. An inset picture in the centre shows a coach being attacked by two ruffians. In the centre pages are two more large pictures, also in mauve, and, in addition, several miniature illustrations.

Now we come the ordinary number (No. 46) which was printed in colours. There are two new serials. The first is "Godwin the Saxon," with a striking illustration, splendidly drawn, while the second is "Haunted Down; or The Seven Spectres of the Cloisters." This was a school story. Then there

was the continuation of "The Sword of Fate" and the series "Progress of the British Boy." At the back of the number we find "Yuletide Magic and Mystery" and "Riddles for Christmas." In all there were 32 pages printed on superfine paper and the price was 2½d.

The school story, "Haunted Down," followed close on "The Tyrants of the School," which had been concluded the previous week. Brett always kept a school tale running and as one finished another commenced.

In "Vanity Fair" No. 15 I had quite a lot to say about "The Tyrants of the School" and I even quoted an extract from it. I will supplement this with some verses on the subject:

There was an author, Harold
Whyte,
Who had a style, effective,
quite;
Into his yarns he put some stuff
And made his heroes good
tough.
He wrote of schoolboys, as a
rule,
He wrote "The Tyrants of
the School;"
His hero was a fine young chap,
For bullies he cared not a rap.

He gave the bully a big
trouncing
And put a stop to his cocky
bouncing.
There's one thing that has
puzzled me,
It is the pictures that you see.
You note the schoolboys "going
strong"
In "mortar-boards" and
trousers long;
The older chaps—if you don't
mind—
They wear a dress of a dif-
ferent kind.
To earlier periods back they go,
The 18th Century dress they
show;
Three-cornered hats they wear,
you'll see,
If you the pictures scan with
me.
You really don't know where
you are—
George the First or Victoria.
This inconsistency in the illus-
trations has always puzzled me,
but in looking through the story
I have come across the following
paragraph which, in a way, ex-
plains the matter. Chapter 30:
"The new arrival was, like Sir
Talbot, dressed in the costume
of a by-gone age, which was suf-
ficient to mark him as connected



Bringing You

BEST WISHES

for a

MERRY CHRISTMAS

and a

HAPPY NEW YEAR.



with the Masks or some similar society." So I suppose we must accept that as the explanation of the matter.

I have just re-read "Sons of Foes, or, The Secrets of the Abbey School," also by Harold Whyte. This is a similar story and deals with school life and sensational adventure. In this story all the characters wear 18th Century costume. This serial appeared in the "Boy's Comic Journal" in 1887. In it we have the hero, Lionel Langley, with the usual mystery about his birth, and in this particular case it leads to some very awkward complications. He falls in love with a young lady, Violet Esdale, and when Lionel turns out to be the long lost son of her father Captain Esdale, he finds that his sweetheart is of course his own sister! This however comes all right in the end (as all the stories did) for it appears that she is not Capt. Esdale's daughter after all as the babies were changed at birth.

A dramatic touch is introduced by the fact that the Headmaster of the Abbey School is secretly engaged in smuggling and Vivian D'Arcy, a schoolmate of Lionel's

and his enemy, is chief of a band of wreckers!

However, all this made fine reading when we were young and not too critical.

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WANTED

The Following Story Papers
 "Magnet Library"—See Want List, "S.P.C." No. 7, page 76.
 "Boys' Friend" (New Series)—See Want List, "S.P.C." No. 8, page 90.
 "Greyfriars Herald" (New Series, 1919-22) later "Boys' Herald"—Nos. 9, 15, 30, to end.

WM. H. GANDER
Transcona, Manitoba, Canada



INTERESTING GLEANINGS FROM LETTERS

No. 2—R. A. H. Goodyear

IF you could turn up the early 1/2d. "Boys' Friends" you would find a very short story* under Mr. Goodyear's name and a comment by Hamilton Edwards (the Editor) that the writer was only seventeen years old. When Mr. Edwards received the story and was told the writer was only seventeen he was skeptical about it and actually got in touch with the Barnsley police to have the fact confirmed.

Mr. Goodyear wrote several complete stories for the "Friend"

* "The Football Rivals," a short serial commencing in No. 47, the first "B. F." Christmas Number, 1895.—W. H. G.

after that. . . He had over a score of school tales published in the 3/6 type of book popular as prizes. They can be found in juvenile sections of most public libraries. . . Some of them were quite good, written in the style of Talbot Baines Reed brought up to date. —H. L.

Mr. Goodyear has written a large number of books—chiefly school stories—for various publishers . . . All his work from about 1904, as far as I know, is in good-class solid form for the leading publishers, and occasionally in good-class boys' annuals. He is one of the leading boys' writers in England and has earned a place in "Who's Who." —H. D.

"The Collector's Miscellany"

—The paper for anyone interested in Old Boys' Books, Type Specimens, Juvenile Theatre, etc. Write J. A. Birkbeck, 52 Craigie Avenue, Dundee, Scotland.

Science-Fiction Magazines—

"Railroad Magazines"—and most others—write us your Back-Number wants. The School Book Shop, 530 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba.



From The Pages Of The
"Magnet Library"—

ENGLISH PROVERBS

As Rendered By HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH, Nabob
Of Bhanipur, & A Member Of The Remove
Form, Greyfriars School

—Who explains his weird knowledge of the English language thus:
"Before coming to this ludicrous country I studyfully worked under
one of the best native masters in India."

"Where there is a will there is a wisp."

"Speech is rotten, and silence saves a stitch in time."

"He who laughs last goes longest to the well."

"The speechfulness is silver, but the silence saves a stitch in time."

"A stitch in time helps those who help themselves."

"Though you brayfully put a fool into the mortar, yet will not
his folly departfully leave him."

"Experience bought is better than a stitch in time."

"A stitch in time saves ninepence."

"The proof of the pudding is the pitcher that goes longest to the
well."

"A still tongue saves a stitch in time."

"The lickfulness would be a boot on the other foot"—(Referring
to some-one being chastised).

: : NOTES : :

THIS issue, which is the second Christmas Number of our little "S. P. C.," is being prepared a considerable time in advance of publication, so it is not possible to have any idea as to whether world events will warrant our being very festive when the festive season arrives. Nevertheless the greetings and good wishes expressed herein are extended in all sincerity to everyone into whose hands a copy may come.

And in spite of a naturally very small circulation the paper does get around—to various parts of Great Britain, Canada,

and the United States, and, on occasions, to Australia.

☞ ☞ ☞

Correction — Yes! Another one! C. H. Bullivant was born in the year 1882, not 1872, as printed in Mr. Harry Dowler's contribution to our last issue under the title of "Amalgamated Press Boys' Authors."

☞ ☞ ☞

Will correspondents please keep in mind my note in issue No. 7?—Letters, if not answered, should be considered lost, or else my replies have been.

—W. H. G.

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Wanted: Aldine 1d. "Dick Turpins," early issues of "Magnets," "Gems," "Penny Populars," and Comic Papers, particularly "Chuckles." Also interested in old volumes containing coloured plates of windflowers, butterflies, birds or fishes. Alfred Horsey, 60 Salcombe Rd., Walthamstow, London, E. 17, England.

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