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-- In This Number --

Artists of the Golden Era

There Was Magic In
Their Names

Papers of the Post-1918
Period---Part 2



: : AN AMATEUR MAGAZINE : :

ARTISTS OF THE

EVERY AGE has its gods and the sentimentalist, cherishing the memory of the books which brought colour and romance to his own youth is naturally biased in their favour. So at the risk of appearing prejudiced in favour of my own boyhood idols, I venture to assert that the period from 1900 to 1910, so often referred to as the Golden Age, is the outstanding period in the history of modern boys' literature. No comparison is intended with the older boys' journals and romances, misnamed Penny Dreadfuls by the bigoted who condemned the whole for the worst faults of the few. Indeed, comparison is impossible for the old Dreadfuls were essentially products of a more leisurely age, varying widely in conception and merit, whereas the modern boys' papers bear the stamp of mass production. Thus the early years of the present century may be regarded as the transition period when the individuality of the old combined with commercial enterprise of the new to produce papers of range and quality unsurpassed by any since produced.

Consider the many fine papers which appeared or were running

during this decade: the Aldine and Henderson libraries, "Nuggets," "Boys' Champion Story Paper," "Big Budget," "Boys' Leader," "Jester," "Boys' Friend," "Marvel," "Union Jack," "Pluck," "Boys' Herald," "Boys' Realm," "Gem," "Magnet," etc., all fresh and vigorous, untouched in those blissful days by the blight of the 1914/18 conflict which was destined to end so many of them. Compared with these, the present-day boys' papers published prior to the war, particularly the fantastic rubbish spewed from the house of Thomson, seem very poor stuff indeed.

After the first thrill of seeing his old favourites once again, the sentimentalist usually finds that the stories have lost their grip and no longer stir his blood as of old but the illustrations have become far more interesting and the desire to know more of the personalia behind them grows. Unfortunately, not a lot is known of the artists themselves but a brief survey of their activities may be of interest to collectors.

FIRST and foremost comes the evergreen Robert Prowse who started in the far off 'sixties illustrating "Black Bess," "Char-

GOLDEN ERA

By JOHN
MEDCRAFT

ley Wag," "Blueskin" and many more and who was still active in 1920. From 1895 to 1910 he was principal Aldine artist and his cover illustrations of the Claude Duval Library are works of art of their class, correct to the smallest detail of Cavalier costume. He illustrated many of the covers of "Dick Turpin," "Robin Hood," "Jack Sheppard," "Red Rover," "Spring Heeled Jack," "True Blue," and the later issues of "Tip Top" and "Detective Tales." Prowse's best work was done between 1900 and 1910 but he turned out some poor stuff in later years, probably through necessity rather than choice, but reverted to his best in the coloured covers of the "Buffalo Bill Novels" of post-war years. Although exclusively an Aldine artist, Prowse illustrated a few numbers of "Pluck" for the Amalgamated Press in 1909.

F. W. Boyington, who was responsible for most of the other cover illustrations, had a similar style to Prowse with whom he is sometimes confused but lacked the latter's individual touches, both good and bad. His work is invariably signed, sometimes in full but more often initials only and the best examples are to be found in the "Dick

Turpin" and "Claude Duval" Libraries.

OF THE MANY ARTISTS of varying merit who devoted their talents to boys' literature of the past hundred years, the greatest were the grand Henderson artists John Proctor (Puck) and W. Boucher. Their fine work appeared in the "Boys' Champion Story Paper," "Nuggets" and the final "Giantland" reprints of the period but all illustrations were reproductions of woodcuts from "Young Folks" of an earlier day so with regret we pass on.

Another notable Henderson artist was Fritz Braun, a naturalized German who developed his latent ability in the "Young Folks" Literary Tournament, a training ground which produced many talented men and women, and later became a staff artist. His early work appeared in "Nuggets" and the "Boys' Champion" and is seen at its best in the fine coloured covers of the "Wild West Library." Without being quite so versatile or finished as Prowse he had a pleasing style and I, for one, liked his work better. Braun was afterwards on the editorial staff of the "South London Press" but had an un-

fortunate time during the last war on account of his German antecedents. He died around 1921-22.

Phil Ebbutt was responsible for the extra illustrations to the final Henderson reprints of "Giantland" and similar stories. He copied Proctor's style very well and the youngsters liked them better until their immature judgment grew more discerning. Ebbutt illustrated the covers of the short-lived "Rob Roy Library" and many of the "Nugget" and "Lion" Libraries, while his earlier work can be found in "Nuggets" and the "Boys' Champion." Sound but lacking in versatility, he was at his best in school story illustrations.

Two other widely dissimilar Henderson artists come to mind, one whose human subjects were lean and angular, hungry looking individuals with prominent Adam's apples, yet attractive in their way; the other with a style reminiscent of the old faker artists—short stocky characters, almost dwarfish, invariably clad in what appeared to be rough tweeds. Who these two artists were I could never discover.

Then George Davey, primarily a comic artist, whose work appeared frequently in "Scraps," "Pictorial Nuggets," "Comic Life" and "Lot-o-fun." In the

latter paper he created a humorous character named Dreamy Daniel who regularly each week fell asleep in circumstances which induced a ridiculous dream adventure with the awakening as an anti-climax. I recall one such adventure which never fails to raise a chuckle at the mere thought. At the start of Lloyd George's Old Age Pension scheme Dreamy Daniel falls asleep reading about it and dreams that he visits countless Post Offices in numberless disguises and amasses a huge pile of money only to be aroused to stern reality by his landlady with a bill for overdue room rent in her hand. Nonsensical, of course, but funny. Dreamy Daniel outlived Henderson's, and first Hearst and later the Amalgamated Press tried to continue his somnolent adventures via another artist, but the George Davey touch was lacking and Dreamy Daniel expired.

COMIC PAPERS of 1900-10 were things of joy and far more adult than their modern infantile prototypes which, to be quite fair, are more suitable for children. What old boy can ever forget Airy Alf and Bouncing Billy whose adventures ran throughout the eleven year run of the "Big Budget," Happy Ike, Gloomy Gus and the Bunsey Boys in the "Jester," Happy

Harry and Neglected Jim in "Comic Cuts," Professor Radium in "Puck" and, above all, the evergreen Weary Willie and Tired Tim in "Chips." The late Tom Browne created Willie and Tim and was paid fourteen pounds for each weekly front page of six pictures. After a few years his creations became something of an obsession and Browne began to dream of them—they got on his nerves—so he dropped them and another artist carried on in his stead. But the foundation laid by the art of Tom Browne lasted and today, despite rigours and restrictions of wartime, Weary Willie and Tired Tim survive, purile travesties of their former selves but still running after 45 years.

To ascertain the identity of the majority of the old comic paper artists is difficult, for their work was rarely signed—that stage of comparative affluence had not yet been reached, and only the style affords clues to the identity. But it is certain that many well known black and white artists of today served

their novitiate on the staff of comic papers.

THE Amalgamated Press papers or, to be exact, the papers afterwards controlled by this giant combine, introduced and developed from crudity to competence many artists of varying ability. None reached the pinnacle of their profession but all knew their job and did it well. As boys we recked little of artistic technicalities, of line and shade, depth and background—we wanted thrilling, dramatic and humorous illustrations depicting the characters and incidents with reasonable skill and accuracy. And this, brightened by the rosy glow of boyhood memories, is all that the sentimentalist seeks today.

As a purely personal expression of opinion, I rate Arthur Clarke and J. Abney Cummings as the outstanding Harmsworth artists of the period. Clarke illustrated widely different types of stories in the "Boys' Friend," "Boys' Realm" and "Boys' Herald" from David

This article, written in England at about the same time "Writers and Illustrators" in our last issue was being printed in Canada, is along somewhat similar lines to Mr. H. A. Puckrin's contribution. However, as Mr. Medcraft writes of artists only and covers more territory, it has been thought desirable to print it in this issue, rather than hold it over until later.

Goodwin's Lancashire mill yarns and the Ching Lung series by Sidney Drew to "Circus Ned" and other stories of the sawdust ring and school tales galore. In "Pluck" his illustrations to Harry Belbin's "Captain, Cook and Engineer" series aroused the youth of 1905 to a pitch of hilarious excitement on publishing day, while the cover illustrations to the early St. Jim's stories in the halfpenny series of the "Gem" will be remembered with affection by all who knew them in the old days. Clarke also illustrated the "Magnet" for a few years from No. 40 onwards and virtually died in harness while actually engaged on a drawing for the paper.

J. Abney Cummings had a distinctive and unmistakable style and it was mainly due to his fine work that the Jack, Sam and Pete series in the "Marvel" attained such a great measure of popularity. His first drawings for this series appeared in No. 9, "Comrades True," and the second in No. 22, "The Pilot Gang." From thence onwards to No. 803, the illustrations of which he drew but a few days before his death in May, 1919, Cummings missed less than half a dozen issues. His association with S. Clarke Hook was continued in other stories and

papers, notably "Jack, Sam and Pete's Quest" and "Circus Pete" which ran serially in the "Boys' Friend," the Five Comrades series (an Englishman, Scotsman, Irishman, Welshman and a Jap) in "Pluck" and in the same paper Tom, Dick and Harry, and Rob. Ra and Rupert, two variations of the same American, British and Japanese alliance, unthinkable combinations nowadays. Cummings illustrated numerous other serials and complete stories for other authors in various papers.

THE WORK of the brothers, Val and Willis Reading, appeared in most of the Harmsworth papers. Val, the more prolific, excelled in school stories although to a casual observer his drawings must have conveyed the impression that life in a public school was an unending round of frolic and boisterous hilarity. This lighter vein can be detected throughout the greater part of his work and it is for this reason that his serious illustrations did not always strike the right note. The last I saw of Val's work was in the "Marvel" around 1918 when Sidney Drew's Calcroft School stories were reprinted.

Willis Reading, more restrained in style, covered a wider range of stories than his brother al-

though not such a good artist. He illustrated many comic paper serials including Hubert Trelawney's "House on the Heath" and "The Cruise of the Octopus" in "Chips" and numerous other stories in various papers. At first he signed his work "W. R." but later, possibly to avoid confusion with another artist with the same initials, changed to "Willis." He illustrated many of the earliest Jack, Sam and Pete stories in the "Marvel" and at one time appeared likely to carry on as the regular artist but the advent of Abney Cummings altered that.

R. J. MACDONALD, whose work can be found in every paper of the period, was connected with the Harmsworth papers from their inception until the present war brought so many to an end in 1939-40. A sound and reliable artist with a rather monotonous style which varied little throughout his long career, he could be relied upon to turn out decent illustrations for widely different stories but he occasionally made a bad slip. I recall in a boxing yarn Macdonald had the contestants resting in adjoining corners, an obvious mistake as the average schoolboy knows. He illustrated several of the early Jack, Sam and Pete stories in the "Half-

penny Marvel," two I remember best being "The Secret of the Haunted Palace" and "The Deathless Horseman," the Captain Handyman series in "Pluck" and a few issues of the "Magnet," while from 1908 until 1913 he covered the Tom Sayers series of boxing stories in the "Marvel." In 1909 his long association with the "Gem," broken only by a period of service during the last war, commenced and was only ended with the extinction of the paper in 1939.

Fred Bennett, the antithesis of Macdonald, had a long run as Harmsworth artist. He illustrated the very first Jack, Sam and Pete story, "The Eagle of Death," with atrocious sketches which, fortunately for the success of later stories, were not repeated. His work, almost invariably signed in full, improved considerably later and was at its best in action themes—a jungle mix-up, a free fight or something catastrophic—and whenever Sexton Blake departed on a tropical quest Bennett's drawings would record the highlights. I liked Bennett at his best but his work resembled a cocktail—you would either experience a feeling of warmth and satisfaction or get a headache for the rest of the evening. As late as 1939 I saw

his work in the short-lived "Wild West Weekly."

Hutton Mitchell emerged rather later as a Harmsworth artist and his first illustrations of note were for the halfpenny series of the "Gem" in 1907, commencing with No. 20 to the end of the series and the new series up to No. 30. He also illustrated the "Magnet" up to No. 39. Although Mitchell's drawings are almost devoid of background, he managed to present his characters in greater variety and individuality than many of his brother artists could contrive. Yet he was rarely used by the Amalgamated Press in later papers and I can only recall seeing his work in a few issues of the "Gem" around No. 150 and in the "Boy's Journal" in 1913.

Warwick Reynolds, one of the very few illustrators of boys' literature who achieved real fame in art, carried on when Hutton Mitchell finished and his first spell as a "Gem" artist ended at No. 120. During this period other artists had lent a hand including Val Reading and R. J. Macdonald before the latter became the regular artist from No. 121. In 1916 the order was reversed: Macdonald left the staff and Reynolds took his place for the duration of the war.

The very first front page illustration to the old "Boys' Friend" in 1895 was by T. W. Holmes and from then onwards his work appeared regularly in the journals—the "Boys' Friend," "Boys' Realm," "Boys' Herald" and the "Big Budget." It is not found so frequently in the complete story papers although he illustrated many of the early Sexton Blake yarns in the "Union Jack." Holmes' early efforts were rather crude but he improved considerably later and although covering a wide range of stories he was at his best in school tales. His association with Henry St. John in the fondly remembered St. Basil's school stories will linger long in the memories of old boys of 1900-5.

Fred Holmes, a more mature artist with a forceful style, did a lot of work for the "Big Budget" but I cannot trace it in other papers. He may have been a relative of T. W. but nothing definite is known about him.

THE CAREER of G. M. Dodshon ran parallel with that of T. W. Holmes. He started about the same time and covered an equally wide range of stories in the same papers but rarely illustrated school tales. Of the many stirring stories of adventure illustrated by Dodshon I recall particularly those thrilling but

misleading war epics, "Britain in Arms," "Britain Invaded," "Britain's Revenge" and "Kaiser or King." It was in "Britain's Revenge," I think, that the overzealous inventor of a Frank Reade airship was restrained by frantic humanitarian pleas from flying over Berlin and destroying the city with bombs dropped by hand. Some hopes, as modern air war has shown.

H. M. Lewis, another prolific Harmsworth artist, started with the Aldine Co. and his early work for "True Blue" and the "O'er Land and Sea Library" are best forgotten. With the Amalgamated Press he corrected his anatomical misconceptions and turned out a lot of creditable work but it is his pictorial conception of Sexton Blake which is best remembered. In addition to the "Union Jack," Lewis illustrated several Sexton Blake serials and numerous other stories in the "Boys' Friend" and "Boys' Herald." In 1913 he followed R. J. Macdonald as illustrator of the Tom Sayers boxing series in the "Marvel" to the finish.

E. E. Briscoe was primarily a sports artist and his work is chiefly found in the "Boys' Realm" but he illustrated many school and other stories, including Sexton Blake yarns, for

various papers. Harry Lane, another all round artist of the period, did a lot of work for the "Boys' Friend," "Herald," and "Realm," and, jointly with H. M. Lewis, he was about the best of the many artists who shared in the Sexton Blake illustrations. Vincent Daniels started rather earlier and the greater part of his work was done for the half-penny series of the "Union Jack," "Pluck" and "Marvel" but he occasionally illustrated the later issues of these papers.

C. H. Chapman of the "Mag-net" did not come to the fore until 1912/3 but his early work appeared occasionally in other papers from 1907 onwards. For the "Big Budget" he illustrated several short stories and a series of football articles by Howard Spencer and Joe Bache of Aston Villa and other prominent footballers of the day.

THE WORK of numerous lesser artists appeared at intervals in various papers but with the exception of Hayward and Wakefield none achieved any prominence in later years. But there were also two fine artists whose identities remain, to me at least, a mystery. First, W. M. B., who started in the Aldine "Garfield Boy's Journal" and later did a lot of work for the "Boys' Leader" and the "Big

Budget," including fresh illustrations to the re-issue of Harrison's "Black Bess" in the latter paper. Second, the illustrator of many fine school series in "Pluck"—Jack North's Wycliffe School yarns, the humorous Specs and Co. series by H. Clarke Hook and the original St. Jim's stories by Charles Hamilton. Who were these two fine artists?

How little we really know of the men, authors and artists, whose work appealed to our boyish imagination and influenced us far more than we realized. Little wonder that now, in maturity, we seek to recapture and relive the halcyon days of our youth.

MATTHEW HUNTER

We have lost another member of our circle of "Old Boys." Matthew Hunter, of Scotland, died on January 25th last, quite suddenly. I had a letter from him only a short time before. He was a great admirer of Burrage and had, I believe, a complete set of "Ching Ching." Some years ago I spent a very pleasant week at his place in Musselburgh and during the week explored that wonderful city, Edinburgh.

—Henry Steele.
March 13th, 1943.

THERE

MY EARLIEST recollection of an Amalgamated Press paper concerns an old lady—and "Illustrated Chips." The old lady occupied a bed-sitting room in a working-class street with a single entry—the street in which I spent my first few years.

She had been a nurse with Florence Nightingale in the Crimean war—ye gods!—to think that I had a link with that war of nearly one hundred years ago! I must be getting on! Still she, even at the time of which I write, was very old, and I was only seven or so. After seeing life in the raw in her younger days she had come to spend the eventide of her life in that little room.

She was a quaint old soul, and sometimes she would call me to her, produce a halfpenny and send me off to a nearby news-agent's for "one of those comic papers." Then she would pass many an hour away chuckling over the pictures contained therein. When she had done with it she passed it on to me. I can see her now—despite the fact that more than two score years have passed—opening her window and motioning to me in the street below, a big lace

WAS MAGIC IN THEIR NAMES

Being Chapter One Of "Memories Of Old Boys' Papers"

cap on her hair of snowy white, her face lined with a thousand wrinkles. The pink pages of "Chips" would come fluttering down to be seized in my eager fingers. Then I would hie me to a door-step where I would sit engrossed in the adventures of Weary Willie and Tired Tim, then just setting out on their long careers. Yes, some childhood memories are very vivid.

The picture pages were mainly for kids—and old ladies who could tell of blood-stained battlefields. The stories between seemed more adult, but I read them too even though I was only six or seven. Memory plays strange tricks, but I feel sure that if one could search the files of "Chips" for round about—let's see—1896, one would find a story entitled "The Fatal Seven" and in one issue would be seen the two heroes tied across the railway track. And, in the white pages of "Comic Cuts" there would be found a series of "Fatal Steps of Bad Men." When that old nurse

By
HERBERT LECKENBY

travelled on her last journey I shed a tear, selfishly perhaps, because, for the time, I had lost my weekly "Chips."

THAT, then was my first glimpse of the papers produced by young Alfred Harmsworth. For over forty years I was never to lose touch completely with those which followed from the presses of the huge concern which he built up: "The Boys' Friend," "Halfpenny Marvel," "The Union Jack," "Pluck," "The Boys' Realm," "The Boys' Herald," "The Jester," "The Gem," "The Magnet," "The Dreadnought," "Fun and Fiction," "Detective Weekly"—and many more. Now, with the exception of "The Sexton Blake Library," all are no longer published. Perhaps, when we have strung Hitler and his crew to the lamp-posts in the Wilhelmstrasse, we shall see some of them brought to life again. Let

us hope so, though it is true some of them did die before the Austrian house-painter cast a blight across the world.

But to return to the days of the peaceful 'nineties. A year or so after the old lady had passed on a girl cousin several years older than myself came to stay at my home for a few days. Even though I had read "The Fatal Seven" I knew not the reason for her visit, but I did know they read the comics at her house. One afternoon she was returning to her home for a few hours and in response to my appeals she promised to try to bring me some on her return. At the same time I was packed off to a friend of my mother's some streets away. On my return in the evening my cousin prepared me for bed. As she tucked me in I asked "Did you keep your promise?" She replied in the affirmative and then added "You've got a baby brother." "Oh!" said I, and then after a moment's pause, "How many are there?" My cousin laughed and retorted "Why, one, of course." "Pooh! Is that all?" said I as I snuggled down.

Next morning she produced the comics and gladdened my heart when I found four of them. "But," I said indignantly, "Why did you say there was only one?" For, you see, there

had been a little misunderstanding. I was thinking of my beloved comics, of course. What was a mere addition to the family compared with those?

An insignificant little incident, happening over forty years ago, yet I remember it as though it be but yesterday. I wonder why?

A YEAR OR TWO passed and at ten years of age I saw my first copy of "The Boys' Friend." And again it was a lady who was the Good Samaritan. I happened to go on an errand for her one afternoon and as a reward she handed me two green-tinted papers—"Nuggets" and "The Boys' Friend." And for several weeks after that I used each Monday to wait impatiently for school to close, then dash off eagerly to her house to receive those two papers, and occasionally "The Garland," a less well-known companion to "Nuggets." At first the latter was my favourite with its famous stories of Tim Pippin, but soon I turned to the dear old "Green 'un," the nickname Hamilton Edwards coined for the paper which was his own first love.

By a strange coincidence, the day after I made a rough draft of these notes, and written only a little further than the last paragraph, there came unexpect-

tedly into my possession two odd copies of the halfpenny "Boys' Friend," one actually a double number. I had not seen any for years, and, remarkable to relate, they were of exactly the same period of which I have just written. The moment I set eyes on them I could almost guess the stories they contained: "Boys Of St. Basil's," "Wolves Of The Deep" (actually the copy carried the first instalment of the sequel, "Lion Against Bear"), "When Britons Faced The Foe," "Silver Blaze," by Hamilton Edwards, and "The Boy Gold-Miner." Those I did not recall were "Bob Redding's Schooldays," "Chums Of The Ring," and "Houp-La!"

Yes, those two little papers enabled me to travel back down the corridors of time to the days of that other war of more than forty years ago, and for the time being the only discordant note was the wireless.

That kind lady was responsible for instilling in me a regard for "The Boys' Friend" which lasted throughout the years until the day it died. Maybe at times it palled a little for in its declining years it was but a shadow of its earlier days. Nevertheless I was loyal to it to the end.

ANOTHER MEMORY, vivid to me: In those days of which I write there was in my native city

a second-hand book shop—to me a wonderful little shop. It attracted me like a magnet. The woman who kept it—again a woman!—did not buy or sell the papers mainly consisting of serials like the "B. F." or "The Boys' Realm," but she always had a fine selection of halfpenny "Union Jacks," "Plucks," etc., which she sold at four a penny. Four a penny! Think of it! And she put all her goods in the shop window. There could be seen a pile, a foot high, of "Marvels," "Plucks," "Union Jacks," "Surprises," "True Blues," and an almost forgotten one, "The Bullseye." And there were lesser heaps of "Dick Turpins," "O'er Land and Seas," "Robin Hoods," "Claude Duvals," and the rest of the Aldines. Many times and oft did I make my way to that shop, and there I would stand with my nose pressed to the window staring at the display. Sometimes I was able to enter and purchase four or even eight copies.

One day, how well I remember it, I saw on top of the pile a "Union Jack" I had never seen before. Having a copper in my pocket I went in. The woman handed me three or four dozen to choose from. I then discovered they were all back numbers dating back to a day long before I was able to take an interest in

them—"Plucks," "Union Jacks," "Marvels," "Surprises" galore!

I set off on my way home. How was I to get hold of more of them before they were snapped up? I wracked my brains for a plan. At last a glimmering of an idea came to me. I had a chum who worked for a newsagent in the evenings and sold the evening papers. It was the year 1902 and one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of Australian tour teams of all time, was in England—Victor Trumper, Clem Hill, Monty Noble, and the rest. I approached my friend and he agreed to let me have a go. Happily for me, it was the very day when Gilbert Jessop made that thrilling, never-to-be-forgotten century which helped to bring England victory by the narrowest of margins. The cric-keting public was roused to a high pitch of excitement. We got our pile of papers with the result of the game. My chum urged me to shout. I had never sold a paper in the street in my young life until that night, and after it never did again. I plucked up courage and piped "Cricket Post! Close of play!" The papers went like hot cakes, my spirits rose as my embarrassment went, and I yelled like a veteran. When I received my "commission" I was richer by fourteen pence, the greatest sum I had

ever possessed in my life.

At the earliest possible moment I set off hot-foot to that book shop. The bulk of those old issues were still there. I picked them out—"Marvels," "Union Jacks," "Plucks," "Surprises"—eight, twelve, twenty, thirty. The good lady looked at me suspiciously—for she knew me by then—where had I got the money from? I guessed she was thinking. I left the shop with fifty-six copies in my hands, quivering with excitement, as Maxwell Scott would say, my whole fourteen pence spent, and what is more I had to hide them at the house of a friend for I daren't take them home. But that only lent zest to it all.

NOW I HAVE described that little adventure of my long-ago youth at some length. Some who may read what I have written may scoff and call it all a lot of fuss about nothing and that my time might have been better spent. Yet I believe that most of that little band of "old boys" who still take an interest in the papers of their youth and who, like myself, had their penny a week pocket money doled out to them will have a kind of fellow-feeling.

I remember other incidents at that little shop. Another occasion, when I had got to work, a

great pile of "True Blues" with the coloured covers brought joy to my heart. I spent a considerable sum there in my time. It is a cake shop now and its romance for me is gone. I frequently pass it and oftentimes I fancy I see in the window "Plucks" and "Marvels" of a by-gone day.

I HAVE DROPPED a hint already that papers like "The Boy's Friend" and "The Union Jack" were frowned upon in my home. My father was a staunch Wesleyan and had very strict, some would say narrow-minded, views on what was good for the growing youth. He made no distinction between "The Boys' Friend" and, say, the "Deadwood Dick Library." To him, with the possible exception of "The Boys' Own Paper," they were all "blood and thunders." The fact that when I got them I had to keep them out of the way, find all sorts of hiding places for them, made them all the more precious and romantic in my eyes, for stolen sweets were ever sweetest. Three times to school and chapel each Sunday was my lot, and on those Sunday evenings a small boy might have been seen right up in the highest pew in the gallery. During the sermon he was apparently studying his hymn book or Bible—but I confess with a blush of shame that the Holy Book only served as a

cover for "The Marvel" or "The Union Jack," for that small boy was my guilty self. Such were the deceptions one was driven to so that one could read in peace one's Jack, Sam and Pete or Nelson Lee.

I remember once having an argument with my father over "The Boys' Friend." He was lecturing me for reading such "trash," and I said in protest "You buy 'The Sunday Companion' every week, Dad, and it is published by the same firm as the paper you say I shouldn't read. Maybe it is printed on the same machines." He was not much impressed, however, for he retorted "A printer will print a hymn-sheet or a race-card so long as he gets paid for them." He went on to point out a serial for young readers which was running in "The Sunday Companion" at the time and said I should be satisfied with a story like that. The story was by Harwood Panting. I was unaware of the fact that he was also Claud Heathcote, one of my favorite "Boys' Friend" authors. If I had known maybe I should have scored a point!

The question of the stern disapproval of what was termed the "penny dreadful" or "blood and thunder" in the days of which I have been writing is an interesting one and I hope to refer to it again in a later chapter.

Some More About The Papers Of The Post-1918 Period

By CYMRO

EARLY in the year 1919 came the re-appearance of "The Boys' Realm," printed on pink paper as of old, with an all-star cast—Henry St. John, Arthur S. Hardy, E. Searles Brooks, and a Sexton Blake serial by Robert Murray—or was it by his father, Wm. Murray Graydon? I am not sure which, but father or son, it gave me hours of enjoyment.

"The Penny Popular" was another reincarnation of this year, and "Billy Bunter's Postal Order" was at the top of the bill with Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver supporting.

Henderson's were, I think, the publishers of "The Boy's Weekly," printed on white paper with an orange heading, and the same size as "The Boys' Realm." I have no vivid recollections of this paper, nor of how long it ran, but I recollect that a few of the principal characters were re-born at a later date in "Young

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Readers of this article will forgive me if the papers mentioned are not given in the sequence of their appearance. I am writing from memory, and memory is apt to be brilliant at one time and at another time dim.—Cymro.

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Britain," an Amalgamated Press publication. This of course would be after this company had taken over the Red Lion House publications.

"Adventure," "Skipper," and "Rover" were

published by the D. C. Thomson Company. They had a large reading public but after the first half dozen copies my interest faded, although a detective paper by the same firm kept me enthralled even more than Sexton Blake or Nelson Lee ever did.

Two papers for our girl friends were "The School Friend" and "Schoolgirl's Own." The first was started after many requests had been made by the feminine readers of "The Magnet" and "The Gem" and featured tales of Cliff House School.

"All Sports," "Sports Budget," "Sports For Boys," and "Sports Fun" indicate the trend that the generation of that day was following.

What amazed me at that time

was the great number of photo-gravure plates that were given away with nearly every new paper published, and indeed some of the old-timers caught the complaint also.

"The Rocket," "Pluck," "The Greyfriars Herald" (later called "The Boys' Herald"), "Play-time," "The Champion," "Merry Moments," "The Boys' Sports Pictorial," "Crackers," and others too numerous to refer to give an inkling of the immense number of papers that were flooding the newsagents during this period.

"The Champion" made its bow in January, 1922, rather larger in size than "The Magnet," with its first cover illustrated by Fred Bennett and a free glossy photograph of Georges Carpentier. The stories were by such well-known authors as Henry St. John and Allan Blair, while Stacy Blake and Carras Yorke contributed to later numbers.

One strange thing about "The Champion" that I have never forgotten was Earle Danesford and Howard Steele writing stories of Panther Grayle, Detective. Back in 1910 Panther Grayle had appeared in "The Empire Library" and the author was then given as Jack Lancaster. Were they the same, I wonder?

All good things come to an

end, and the end of "The Champion" came for me when its policy was changed, to meet, I suppose, the menace of the Thomson papers, which at that time were outstripping all their competitors—a menace that was even then crumbling away the foundations of such stalwarts of the Amalgamated Press as "The Boys' Friend" and "The Boys' Realm."

I wonder if after the second world war we shall have another such feast of new papers? I doubt it, and hope not, for I cannot see any number of new papers taking the place of those that passed us by, into the land of memories, away back in the nineteen-twenties.

¶ This is the second of two articles; the first appeared in "Story Paper Collector" No. 11.

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Ralph F. Cummings
Dept. S. P. C., Fisherville, Mass.

Richard Randolph And The Levison Series In "The Gem Library"—A Correction

Referring to the article by "Cymro" entitled "Richard Randolph" in No. 13 of "The Story Paper Collector" Mr. John R. Shaw writes under date of June 24th last:

"The writer has given J. N. Pentelow the credit for having written several St. Jim's stories in the 'Gem' which were actually written by the genuine Martin Clifford, that is, Charles Hamilton. I can say definitely that the series of stories dealing with 'the reformation of Ernest Levison,' the story 'The Shadow Of The Past' in 'Gem' No. 510, and the series of three stories in 'Gem' Nos. 594-596, of which 'His Brother's Keeper' is the first, were all written by Charles Hamilton. If the writer had these stories he would see at once that not any of them were by J. N. Pentelow. It is a very unfortunate mistake and I hope you will print a correction in a future issue. The stories about 'the reformation of Levison' are: 'Gem' Nos. 451, 455, 462, 464, 466, and they were reprinted in Nos. 1597-1600 and 1602. The series in Nos. 594-596 were not reprinted in the 'Gem,' but were reprinted in 'Schoolboys' Own Library' No. 8. Mr. Hamilton

also wrote the series about the coming of Cardew to St. Jim's, and the stories about Manners' wayward young brother, Reggie. Later there are two stories introducing Doris Levison, and a series of three stories about Manners' feud with a new boy, Roylance, on account of Reggie—all being by Mr. Hamilton. In the 'Gem' during 1922 he wrote a series about Levison's 'past,' and in the 'Magnet' one year later a series about Levison and and his brother at Greyfriars (Nos. 793-799)."

Since receiving his letter I have glanced through those copies of the "Gem" mentioned by Mr. Shaw that I possess and I am certain that, as he claims, they are by Charles Hamilton and not J. N. Pentelow. It has been said before that to err is human, and it would seem that "Cymro's" memory has played him tricks. As he says in a note inserted in his contribution to this issue, "I am writing from memory, and memory is apt to brilliant at one time and at another time dim."

I regret that the error got into print and take this opportunity of correcting it. —W. H. G.

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John Medcraft,

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Wanted—Plucks with St. Jim's stories; red-covered Magnets. E. Fayne, The Modern School, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

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Boys Friend Library—All stories by Martin Clifford (except Cedar Creek), Prosper Howard, Frank Richards, Owen Conquest. also No. 393, by Rich. Randolph.

Gem Library—Nos. 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, first or ½d. series. New series Nos. 1-304, 329, 375, 407 (with suppl.), 452, 454, 458, 510, 603, 620, 621, 623-627, 629, 631, 635-637, 630-641, 643-654, 656-698.

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"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.

The Geographical Magazine
—Wanted: 3 copies of February, 1942, issue. This is the Geographical published in London, not the National Geographic. W. H. Gander, Transcona, Canada.

Wanted—Aldine 1d. Dick Turpins, early issues of Magnet, Gem, Penny Popular, and Comic Papers, particularly Chuckles. Also interested in old volumes containing coloured plates of wildflowers, butterflies, birds or fishes. Alfred Horsey, 60 Salcombe Rd., Walthamstow, London, E. 17, England.

Magnets—pre-1930, wanted, any numbers. Corbett, 49 Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham, England.

Wanted—1d. Boys' Friend, Realm, Big Budget, Boys' Leaders, 1/2d. Sports Library, early 1d. Nelson Lee Library.—H. Dowler, 86 Hamilton Road, Manchester, 13, England.

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.

"Boys' Friend 3d. Library"
—No. 288, Jan., 1915: "The Boy Without a Name"; and others by Frank Richards.

"The Popular"—Many before No. 512.

"Empire Library"—New series.

WM. H. GANDER

Transcona, Manitoba, Canada