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Robert Hamilton Edwards

Editor and Writer

A TRIBUTE

IT HAS BEEN SAID of Frederick the Great that "the soul of an army is the mind of its great commander." To apply this saying to men in all walks of life would perhaps stretch the simile too far. There are, however, exceptions to every rule, and an allowance may be made in the case of the gentleman whose name heads this article.

Few men have occupied an editorial chair for so long a period, or undertaken so many and varied activities in the service of a great publishing house. Certainly no editor before or since has achieved that human touch which makes all the difference to the success of a boys' paper. Unlike some editors who seemed to aspire to a Jove-like eminence to be approached from afar with wonder and awe, "H. E." made one feel that here was a real person in whom one could confide with the certainty of receiving a helpful and instructive answer. This was further emphasized by the appearance of his portrait on the editorial pages of his papers, and

also by his practice of making replies at some length instead of limiting them to a couple of lines or so, as was too often the case with the editors of various other journals. All this served to make "Your Editor's Den," as he called it in *The Boys' Friend*, the most interesting feature of an interesting series of papers.

Thousands of his juvenile readers have remembered Hamilton Edwards with affection on reaching manhood, among them the writer and his brother. He was a good type of the upper middle class man who honestly and conscientiously tried to be the friend and advisor of those who wrote to him. The result of all this was seen in the many queries on almost every subject under the sun which were sent to him, and his replies, which were typical and topical, witty and whimsical, pointed and pithy, or kindly and critical, according to the mood of the editor or the temperament of the writer. He would have needed an almost encyclopedic knowledge to have answered some of them, and this no doubt accounted for the

stereotyped and sometimes caustic replies which were given. Making allowances for these little failings, which are common to all of us, "H. E." still remained a personality, which, after all, is needed in journalism as in anything else.

HE CERTAINLY succeeded in giving good value for money and also in making his papers go with a swing. This was by no means easy to do with a man such as Alfred Harmsworth, who believed in results every time and who always put business first and ideals second. That they succeeded in combining the two was in itself a tribute to both men. Mr. Harmsworth, who later became Lord Northcliffe, had no use for those who could not beat the big drum in advertising his papers, but he rewarded well those whom he retained. All this further adds to "H. E.'s" success, for his personality was stamped on every page of his journals. He was quite candid about this and frankly admitted that the papers were published to make money.

To this may be added his flair for boosting his papers and their stories, which were written "to counteract the harmful influence of the 'penny dreadful'." These somewhat vague references all served their purpose in keeping his journals alive for so long.

The writer of this article once wrote to Mr. Edwards about a story then running in *The Boys' Herald* and received a most courteous reply. His letters were always signed personally and this fact may dispel some doubts as to whether he was a reality or just a journalistic shadow. His activities in private life may have been somewhat at variance with the sentiments expressed in his papers. Be this as it may it would not have detracted from his character had his readers been informed of it.

Hamilton Edwards was also a writer, and several of his stories appeared in *The Boys' Friend*. One was "The Road To Fame," which was a story of city life, somewhat after the style of Talbot Baines Reed's "My Friend Smith." This is about all that can be said of "H. E.'s" efforts at writing, and it is as an editor that he is remembered.

It might interest many to know that in 1909 Mr. Edwards organized a summer camp for his readers. This was held somewhere in the north of England and may have been inspired by a similar effort on the part of a journal devoted to Scouting. The camp was a success but apparently he did not repeat the experiment.

Not much space has been left to refer to individual replies he

gave to readers, but one or two outstanding ones may be mentioned. A certain reader, having claimed to be the first person in Scotland to read *The Boys' Friend*, asked for a bicycle as a reward. This, to put it mildly, somewhat cool request would have provoked some editors to give a reply which would have done credit to Dr. Johnson, whose remarks on anything across the Border are known the world over. "H. E.," however, merely said that he did not think it was necessary.

ANOTHER reader sent in a very interesting account of his work in a grocer's shop and was rewarded with a book of adventure, but a query for information about the bagpipes tried the editorial patience to its

limits and a somewhat abrupt reply was given. Perhaps the saddest query was from a reader whose father was a drink addict. This was suitably answered, but a further query from the same reader gave one the impression that "H. E." would not have succeeded as a temperance reformer. But all in all he was a worthy character who fully justified his existence.

This very incomplete sketch may be fittingly summarized in conclusion by a quotation from Goethe:

*Folk and Thrall and Victor can
Witness bear in every zone,
Fortune's greatest gift to man
Is personality alone.*

---HENRY ADAMS PUCKRIN.

July 16th, 1944.

Does Anyone Know?

PIERRE QUIROULE

Information wanted about a *Sexton Blake Library* writer whose work appeared under the name of Pierre Quiroule. His stories introduced the characters Mademoiselle Julie and Granite Grant. The earlier

stories were published anonymously, but when reprinted they were credited to Pierre Quiroule, obviously a pen-name. Following the reprinted stories new ones, under the same name, were published.—E. F.



Frank Richards Redivivus!

By FRANK RICHARDS

FRANK RICHARDS—moi qui vous parle—is one of the most interested readers of *The Story Paper Collector*. He is glad to have a word with other readers.

Since May, 1940, when *The Magnet* came to a sudden end, letters have descended on Frank Richards, thick as the falling leaves in Vallombrosa, inquiring why he is not writing, and when he will be writing again. These questions can now be answered. Frank has not been idle by his own choice; and he is now preparing to meet his readers again—in print—when the war is happily over. But it will not be in the columns of *The Magnet* as of old. Greyfriars School is dead—Carcroft School has come to life! It is a case of “le roi est mort, vive le roi!”

A word in explanation. Early in 1940 the paper supply ran out. Frank Richards, after a long in-nings, was run out, too! The publishers, the Amalgamated Press, Limited, shut down a crowd of papers, *The Magnet* among them. It was rather a severe jolt to Frank, to part with the happy bunch of schoolboys who had been his constant companions for thirty-three years.

Neither did he like the idea of looking for another publisher, after having been with the A. P. over so long a period.

But, as Shakespeare has remarked, “thus bad begins, but worse remains behind.” Paper was very short. But every publisher had his quota. Frank Richards looked round for a publisher to share his quota with Billy Bunter. Then came the K. O. The Amalgamated Press claimed the right to prohibit him from writing Bunter copy for any other publisher!

As Billy Bunter was Frank’s staff of life, and as the Amalgamated Press themselves had ceased the publication, this seemed rather tough on Frank. It rather reminded him of Aesop’s tale of the dog in the manger. Frank Richards was faced with the problem of living on nothing a year. From the publisher’s point of view, it seemed, an author’s existence was one of those things which are of no value to anyone but the owner!

Frank Richards was booked for a tough time during the war days. He had problems to solve, which caused such little matters as the blitz and the doodle-bugs

to pass him by like the idle wind which he regarded not. But, as Tom Merry used say, why grouse?

Hope springs eternal in the human breast. Many years ago, at Monte Carlo, a croupier remarked to Frank Richards: "Monsieur perds toujours, mais Monsieur est toujours gai!" Frank did not allow the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune to damp down his cheery spirits. He had always been lucky, and he did not believe that fortune had finally deserted him. And it hadn't!

Harry Wharton and Co., Tom Merry and Co., were washed out—dead and done with. Frank Richards and Martin Clifford had to bite on the bullet. Frank Richards could not help feeling, for a time, like Dante in the dark wood, "che la diritta via era smarritta." But he soon rallied, and set to work on the invention of an entirely new set of characters. Now he has them all in readiness for the piping times of peace.

Things are looking up again. True, the war is not quite over; but the pernicious paper-hanger is on his last legs, and will soon, I hope, go the way of the paper he used to hang. Like a ship-wrecked mariner,

Frank Richards sees land at last.

Billy Bunter, alas, is dead and buried. Never again will his fat voice be heard to ejaculate "I say, you fellows!" Never again will Bob Cherry's cheery "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" wake the echoes of Greyfriars. That schoolboy world is gone, "like an unsubstantial pageant faded." But Frank Richards, like Milton's shepherd, folds his mantle blue, tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new!

Frank Richards believes that his new characters are better than the old bunch. He hopes that his readers will agree with him. "Carcroft School" will soon be before the public. A short story dealing with this school and its denizens is to appear in a publication called *Christmas Pie* in December this year (1944)—a sample of the good things to come! The story is called "Turkey's Impot!" by Frank Richards.

And if all goes well—as why should it not?—Carcroft School, after the war is over, will appear regularly, as Greyfriars used to do. Though perhaps Frank Richards, at his present time of life, cannot quite hope for another run of thirty-three years!



The Nelson Lee Library

By H. R. C.

ALTHOUGH the first number of *The Nelson Lee Library* was dated June 12th, 1915, with forty pages for a penny, tales featuring Nelson Lee, Detective, had appeared in other papers for a number of years. It is difficult to say exactly when he was first introduced.* The writer has seen advertisements in other papers, such as *The Marvel*, *Union Jack*, *Pictorial*, and *Pluck*, telling of Nelson Lee yarns. It is reasonably safe, however, to satisfy oneself as to the identity of the creator of this character. He was Maxwell Scott who, as we have already been told in these pages, was a well-known and liked Yorkshire doctor and surgeon. Besides the papers mentioned above Maxwell Scott wrote for the *Boys' Own* and *Boys' Friend* Libraries; and, of course, for *The Nelson Lee Library*.

From No. 1 of the *N. L. L.* to No. 112 the tales are just ordinary well-written detective yarns

of Lee and his assistant Nipper as period tales of that day. The number of pages varied according to the paper situation. From the start there was always a serial story occupying as a rule the last four pages of the little paper. Another characteristic was its two illustrations, or, to be exact, its coloured cover and its one picture about half-way through the paper. These were done for a very long time by A. Jones, who, later, was noted for his work in connection with *The Thriller*. Jones' drawings were easy to detect by their style but as a rule they were signed. There was something about a Jones' sketch that particularly suited the *N. L. L.* While, in the opinion of the writer, they were never very brilliant compared, say, with an artist like E. R. Parker, they were, in this instance, just right.

The stories up to No. 112 ran in alternate weekly tales featuring in turn the Black Wolf, Eileen Dare, often referred to

*Nelson Lee made his debut very much earlier. In No. 29 of *The Boys' Friend*, first series, August 13th, 1895, there is an announcement of a Nelson Lee story commencing at that time in *The Comic Home Journal*: "The Further Adventures of Nelson Lee, Detective" commences in next Friday's *Comic Home Journal*"; which indicates that at least one story of Nelson Lee had appeared prior to this.—W.H.G.

as Nelson Lee's lady assistant, the Circle of Terror, Dr. Huxton Rymer, Professor Cyrus Zingrave, and the Green Triangle. Zingrave, too, was the ruling power in the Circle of Terror. Eileen Dare had a personal vendetta with half a dozen city magnates who had ruined her father. Lee gave her assistance and advice when she was stumped, which was not often. She was a nice slim, keen, intelligent young girl who appeared in later tales, even after she had married a young flying officer.

Last but by no means least at this early period came our friend James Douglas Sutcliffe, alias Jim the Penman. Weekly battles between Jim and Lee and Nipper took place with honours about even, as it would not have paid the publishers to have taken him out of the picture too soon.

A little before No. 112, where the writer feels Maxwell Scott dropped out and Edwy Searles Brooks took over, a series known as "Nipper's Note Book" had a brief run. It has always struck me as being in the nature of an experiment in order to see if the tales would go better told in the first person, as for a few years afterwards this was the case. I rather liked them told by young Nipper; they seemed to have a personal ring. In one of the yarns Nipper is disgusted

with a detective story he is reading in his "gub'nor's" room and says that he could write better stuff or "eat his hat." The outcome was that Lee said: "Well, have a go at some of our cases, my lad!" This "Nipper's Note Book" series ran every other week with ordinary yarns in between. Just before No. 112 a Chinese secret society is out to seek vengeance on Nelson Lee and are determined to find him. It is decided that Lee and Nipper should go to St. Francis' College (St. Frank's) in the village of Belton, Sussex, as a master and pupil until the hunt blows over. They each adopt a small disguise and go as Mr. Alvington and Dick Bennet, No. 112 being titled "Nipper at St. Frank's."

AT THE SCHOOL they meet with many adventures and the tales from this point on are exceptional—here Edwy Searles Brooks was great. An occasional new boy would come into the stories and have some mystery attached to him. Each summer the boys went abroad to Africa or the Pacific Islands or some other place. Eileen Dare still came into the summer holiday series with new characters, such as Lord Dorrimore and Umlosi. These two are first met in a tale called "The Ivory Seekers" and it reads that they are old friends but gives no real explanation

where or how they became acquainted. At Christmas the school chums with Lee and Nipper usually went to a castle of some description and had real adventures. New masters often came into the tales and they, too, would bring mystery and intrigue with them.

THE MAIN characters during this period besides Lee and Nipper, were Lord Dorrimore, Umlosi, Eileen Dare, Handforth, Sir Monti Tregellis West, De Valeri, Tommy Watson, Stark, Frinton, Kenmore, Fullwood, Gulliver, and Bell, to name a few. Fullwood was Captain of the Remove Form when Nipper arrived but soon lost the Captancy to Nipper. Later, others came into the stories, among them Archie, William Napoleon Brown, Singleton, Willie Handforth, Travers, the Moor House girls, and the Onions brothers.

The *Nelson Lee Library* went from a penny to three-halfpence, and then to twopence when it was again made larger. *Nipper's Magazine* was included as a supplement, and there were fine illustrations by E. E. Briscoe. To my mind the later issues never seemed to come up to the early ones. Later the size of the little paper was changed, too, and on three occasions it started again from No. 1. The tales were at all times good clean wholesome reading, fit for anyone. I know of but one complete collection of the *N. L. L.* in Britain, apart from museums, and have often seen it. Mr. Brooks wrote all the school stories; I have spoken and corresponded with him.

The little paper enjoyed a fairly long life and must have had a rather large circulation. The *Nelson Lee Library* was undoubtedly a great little paper.

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START/STOP NUMBERS AND DATES IN THE LIFE OF "THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY"

- First Series**— No. 1, June 12, 1915—No. 568, April 24, 1926.
1st New Series— No. 1, May 1, 1926—No. 194, January 18, 1930.
2nd New Series—No. 1, January 25, 1930—No. 161, Feb. 18, 1933.
3rd New Series— No. 1, February 25, 1933—No. 25, August 12, 1933.



"THE BOY'S STANDARD"

An Outstanding Paper: 1875-1892

By ARGET HARRIS

IN AN ISSUE of Mr. Joseph Parks' *Vanity Fair* it was stated that a Nuneaton miner possessed Volumes 1 to 60 of Brett's *Boys of England*, while an enthusiast in Newport, Mon., had Vol. 1 to the end of the *Boy's Comic Journal*. But I have yet to hear of a collector who has a complete run of *The Boy's Standard*, which was first unfurled on November 6th, 1875. The opening serials were "Lionel Wilful's Schooldays," by Charlton, illustrated by "Phiz"; "Gentleman George," by J. J. G. Bradley, illustrator G. C. Tressider; and "On the Queen's Service," illustrator Warwick Reynolds, senior.

A feature of *The Boy's Standard*, especially during its later years, was the fine illustrations. The artists were, mainly, Harry Maguire, H. K. Browne (Phiz), and Robert Prowse. Most of these illustrations were engraved by Webbe, who also used his initials W. H. W. as his signature. One of the serials, "The Imprisoned Heir," had some unique drawings; all the characters and costumes were of French appearance, although the scenes of the

story were on the rugged coast of western Cornwall, with wreckers and smugglers. The illustrator was a French artist, F. Phillippeaux. I have not come across his signature in any other story in the Fox publications.

One of the most popular writers in the early days of this paper was E. Harcourt Burrage. He wrote that immortal story "Handsome Harry" and created that inimitable character Ching Ching, who in later years was honoured by having a boys' paper — *Ching Ching's Own* — named after him. "Handsome Harry" was in great demand in the United States and was reprinted several times. With the possible exception of "Jack Harkaway" it had a larger circulation in that country than any other British story. Burrage wrote many serials for *The Boy's Standard*: "The School Room, Gunroom, and the Quarter-deck"; "Lionel the Bold"; "Only a Factory Lad"; and, of course, his "Ching Ching" series, while his "Broad Arrow Jack" and "Giant Jack" are eagerly sought for by collectors. These were issued by Fox in book form. One of Burrage's best yarns, and

one of his earliest, was "Frank Fairplay's Schooldays," which appeared in *The Young Englishman* in 1874. It was reprinted in *Sons of Old England* in 1883, the illustrator being R. Prowse. In 1891 it again appeared, this time in *The Boy's Standard*, when the artist was H. K. Brown (Phiz). This illustrator did a large number of drawings for Charles Dickens' works. Another story which he illustrated throughout was "Timothy Teaser's Schooldays," which ran in *The Boy's Standard* in 1892.

THE BOY'S STANDARD enjoying a large circulation in Australia, Fox saw that some fine bushranger yarns appeared in it. I have vivid recollections of two, one being "Through a Thousand Perils," by J. J. G. Bradley, the bushrangers rejoicing in the names Hurricane Dick and Daredevil Bill. The other story was "The Golden Creek," the chief villain being Black Jack, and his lieutenant Sulky. This was by George Emmett, and appeared in 1881. Fox reissued it in *The Boy's Champion* in 1891-2. Many a laugh I enjoyed over Sancho and his numerous fights with the "jiggered kangaroos." Those who possess No. 553 of *The Boys' Friend Library* have an abridged edition of "The Golden Creek," by a modern author. The coloured illustration on the cover

depicts a huge kangaroo taking a flying leap over the prostrate Sancho. Poor old Emmett! First he was robbed of the authorship of "Tom Wildrake's Schooldays" and now a fictitious author "pinches" his "Golden Creek."

Frank Mercer was another favourite author of mine. He wrote several of the Scottish romances which were so popular with the readers: "Glenullin," "Gilderoy," "Rhoderick Dhu," "Claymore and Dirk," "Duncan the Daring." I was always attracted by the illustrations showing the bold chieftains in their kilts and tartan, wielding claymores and huge battleaxes. Mercer was also the author of "Battle and the Breeze," "William Tell," "Fred of the Falcon," "Captain Ralph," "Jack of the Sword," "The Fatal Brand," and others.

One other tale I would like to mention is "Cartouche, the French Jack Shepperd." It was finely illustrated and the engraver was Webbe. The author, in the 60th chapter, stated that Cartouche evaded the Paris police and escaped to Marseilles, where he married Louise and embarked for New Orleans, where they lived happily. But history says that he was sent to the guillotine in August, 1721.

The last *Standard* was hauled down on September 24th, 1892.

JOHN G. ROWE

A Prolific Boys' Writer Of Past Years

By HERBERT LECKENBY

SOME TIME AGO I was scanning the shelves of the Public Library for something to read. The books, however, somehow made no appeal to me. A friend came along, and on being asked if he could recommend anything he said:

"I dunno; there doesn't seem to be much in tonight, but I had a good one out a week or two ago—one of those 'who did it?' murder yarns. It was called—let's see—no, dash it, I can't remember the title."

And after racking his brains a little longer he still could not recall the title or much about the story, even though he had enjoyed it just a week or two before.

Later the same evening I rang up a man in a Lancashire town who had advertised for sale some old boys' papers I was interested in. He turned out to be one who had gone to school in the days when motor cars were still something of a novelty. The purpose of my call having been disposed of, he got into a reminiscent vein. He had evidently been devoted to the papers of yesterday, so, needless to say, he found

in me an interested listener. He knew many of the stories, their authors, and their plots, by heart. After a while he said, in a rich Lancashire brogue which I cannot hope to set down correctly:

"An ee does ta remember a yarn in t' *Boy's Champion Story Paper* called 'T' Secret of the Golden Fetish'? It were by John G. Rowe, an' my, it were a grand yarn, nowt like it these days. He could write about owt, that chap, an' by t' dozen. Ah read 'em in t' *Pluck*, *Comic Life*, and t' *Marvel*. Writers these days tell t' same yarn ower an' ower but nowt came amiss to John G. Rowe."

Then our time was up and I had reluctantly to leave my new friend and his recollections.

When I had replaced my receiver I could not help contrasting my friend of the Library who had forgotten the title of the story he had read a week or two before and my acquaintance of the 'phone who could vividly recall the details of the serial of forty years and more ago. True, youth is impressionable and the smaller incidents of life then have a habit of becoming fixed. Yet the contrast was interesting

and significant, for I don't think many of the stories of today, even those written for boys, will be remembered forty years hence.

I cordially agreed with the Lancashire man, for I had read John G. Rowe's stories in my youth, and remembered them, too. It is true that he could "write about owt," as my friend put it, for stories of all types flowed from his pen: yarns of the sea and the Australian bush, stories located in Russia and Peru, the Arctic and the Tropics; of Cavaliers and Roundheads; of Ancient Rome; of poor boys in London Town and of airships in the days before men had flown at all; in fact, every type of story which would appeal to boys. What is more, he wrote other stories, too, as I shall presently show.

I am fortunate enough to have in my possession some of Mr. Rowe's stories and I am able, too, to give some details of the career of this remarkable writer. I am sure that readers of *The Story Paper Collector* will find them interesting.

HIS FULL NAME was John Gabriel Rowe, and he was born at Liverpool in 1873. At school he soon began to display a keen aptitude for English and won several prizes for his essays. In view of what

happened later this was not surprising for it was evident he had writing in his blood. In his childhood his mother used to read to him stories from *Young Folks*, stories like "Don Zalva the Brave." As he sat by the fire listening to his mother's voice he would probably little dream that the day would come when he would follow in the footsteps of the writer of "Don Zalva the Brave," and himself write stories for the House of Henderson, to thrill boys of another generation.

Shortly after leaving school he became a junior reporter on the *Bootle Times*. Whilst there he succeeded in placing his first story—at the age of sixteen. It was entitled "Cupid's Dart"! Didn't I say he could write all sorts of stories?

Many other stories quickly followed, mainly for the Harmsworth periodicals. Mr. Alfred Harmsworth heard of him and Mr. Rowe found himself in London, on the Harmsworth outside staff at a weekly salary. Then he freelanced again and wrote for Newnes', Pearson's, Shurey's, Leng's, and others.

His first story for Harmsworth's was "The Traitor Guide," which appeared in the halfpenny *Marvel*, No. 38, in 1894. His second, "The Terror of the Bush," was in *Union Jack* No. 44. Here are

the titles of some of his stories which appeared in these two papers and in *Pluck* about the same time: "Bound by a Spell," "Left for Dead," "The Sea Apprentice," "Tracked Down the Seas," "A Spy of the Czar," "The Captain's Fag," "The Rival Airships," "A Soldier's Honour," "Rebels and Royalists," "In Peruvian Wilds," "To the North Pole With Nansen," and "White Slaves." These, I think, will give a good idea of his versatility.

But, although his name appeared so often under the title of a story, this did not adequately reveal the whole of his tremendous output, for he wrote many stories anonymously and used many pen-names. In connection with this there is an interesting incident. Some time ago there came into my possession a number of halfpenny *Union Jacks*, *Plucks*, and *Marvels*. These, considering their age, were in excellent condition, except that they had substitute covers, which were of brown paper, very neatly replacing the originals. I noticed at the time that the great majority of them were by John G. Rowe and it occurred to me that someone in the long distant past had been an admirer of his work and had carefully preserved them. The others bore the names of Charles Lewis, Mortimer Austin, and

Captain Arthur Ferris. I did not know the significance of it at the time, but I know now that these were just pen-names of Mr. Rowe's. This proves conclusively that this collector was an admirer of John G. Rowe. What is more, he knew the secret of his pen-names, or, less likely, he detected it by a similarity in the styles. It is interesting to note, too, that I obtained those copies from Bootle, Liverpool, where Mr. Rowe spent many of his earlier years. Some of these stories now carry the autograph of their author, inscribed thereon just fifty years after he had written them—a unique souvenir.

I may add that the names mentioned above were not the only pseudonyms used by Mr. Rowe. Others were Gregory Dunstan, Chas. A. Ransome, and James Bright.

MORE THAN ONCE in these pages the Tufty & Co. school stories, published in the Henderson *Nugget Library* forty years ago, have been mentioned. John G. Rowe wrote most of them, although he did not originate the characters. He took them over at the request of the editor, who was not satisfied with the earlier stories.

In addition to the countless stories for boys the subject of my sketch wrote many appealing to the fair sex. Some of these were

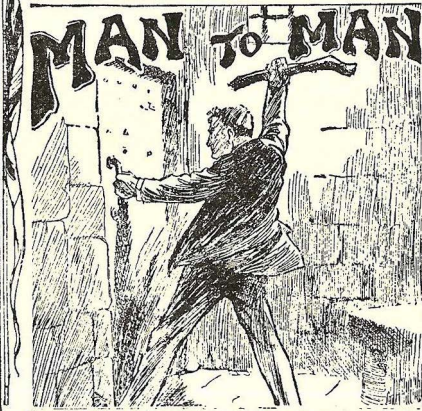
ENTHRALLING STORY OF REAL LIFE!

1/2 PLUCK

EVERY
SATURDAY

A Healthy Complete Story Book.

MAN TO MAN



No sooner had the footsteps died away ere the captive raised his crowbar, and savagely attacked the lock of the great oaken door that stood between him and freedom.

No. 449. A Long, Complete Tale and Two Serials Every Saturday.

Front cover of *Pluck Library* No. 449, date probably—it's badly blurred, on back cover—July 4, 1903. Both John G. Rowe and Charles Hamilton (Frank Richards) were contributors to this paper in years gone by.

[To face page 274.]



written under his wife's maiden name. He also found time, in 1918, to write a "Popular History of the Great War," the manuscript of which ran to no less 656 quarto pages. And there also flowed from his pen biographies of Queen Alexandra, Baden Powell, Captain Cook, and John Howard, the prison reformer.

I am pleased to be able to record that Mr. Rowe had the foresight to retain the book rights in many of his serials, so

that, unlike some of the less businesslike authors of his day, he was able to claim a fair return for his labours when the stories appeared in more permanent form.

Enough has been written to prove that John G. Rowe was a versatile and prolific writer, and I consider it my good fortune that I can, when I so wish, settle down to read one of his grand yarns as I used to do in the long ago when I was a boy.

The Theatre And Boys' Literature

Following his article "Favourites and Footlights" in No. 17 of *The Story Paper Collector* these two extracts, also supplied by Mr. Alfred Horsey, are of interest. The first is from *The Sports Library*, No. 208, September 6th, 1913. The title of the feature is "Your Favourites," the subject that week being Mr. Arthur S. Hardy, a popular boys' writer. It reads:

MR. A. S. Hardy's career has been chockful of incident. From his personal experience alone he could write many an entertaining book. . . .

Starting his journalistic career as private secretary to a dramatic critic and author, he very naturally became immersed in matters theatrical, and after a time part of his work consisted of interviewing "stars."

He soon realized that he had a taste for stage work—for acting, that is—and it was not many

months before he was making no small success in London and the provinces. For some years he played in well-known comedy and drama.

His stage career has left its indelible mark upon Mr. Hardy, for today he possesses that pleasing, mellow cadence of voice, and that debonnaire personality and bearing which one cannot help connecting with the "juvenile lead."

During his theatrical career Mr. Hardy played with the late

Edward Terry, the late Miss Kate Vaughan, Ben Webster, Miss Marie Tempest, and many other great "stars" in the theatrical firmament of bygone days. It was during his stage work that Mr. Hardy turned his able hand to story-writing, and his first two stories, which he wrote the same day, were accepted. This must be something of a unique experience amongst scribblers. . . .

When quite a youngster, Mr. Hardy took part in the "Wild West on Skates" show at the

Olympia Skating Rink, which was managed by the American manager Hall, and Colonel Cody, better known as "Buffalo Bill," who introduced the Red Indian to the British public in his popular shows. . . .

The preceding remarks touch very lightly upon which has, up to the present, been a career of events; but you can see that Mr. Hardy has lived a full life, and that incidents from his own career would furnish many plots and suggestions for exciting serials.

The second extract, from a copy of the *Aldine O'er Land and Sea Library*, reads as follows:

IT IS WITH particular pleasure that we print a letter from the eminent dramatic author and critic, Mr. Mark Melford, giving his opinion of our publications generally.

Strand Theatre, London, W.C.
April 10th, 1894.

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MARK MELFORD.

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