THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JULY 1948

No. 31
Vol. 2

An Amateur Magazine Featuring Articles of Interest to Collectors of British Boys' Periodicals of the Past

Famous Victorians Sum Up "Penny Bloods"

The Greyfriars Gallery

A Review -:- Part One

"The Magnet Library" No. 1

Reproduction of the Front Cover

The Story Paper Collector WHO'S WHO

No. 5: HENRY STEELE

BORN in 1877 at Hastings and still going strong, our subject for Number 5 in this series is a composer-musician by profession and a gentleman by nature. While especially attached to highwaymen and tales of dark deeds, he resides at Harrow, in Middlesex, in a quiet and law-abiding manner. He has contributed to *Vanity Fair, Collector's Miscellany, International Amateur,* and this magazine. He hankers not after a large collection, and often sells, with no thought of profit, very rare books. He "took in" Edwin J. Brett's *Boys of the Empire* from the first number in 1888. He was on intimate terms with the late Barry Ono, whose wonderful collection he loved to explore. A piano novelty, *The Knave of Diamonds,* is his best-known composition. He is rather fond of mentioning the fact that he waited forty-six years for a certain story.

Set in type, printed and bound, Henry Steele's letters to this compiler would constitute a well-written record of interesting historical facts, and through his introduction to Jenny Diver, May Turpin, Blueskin, Colonel Blood, and many other intriguing characters he has assisted the writer along the hard path of the literary way.

His "Thanks (to H. R. C.) for letter. The 'Who's Who' idea is excellent. I am pleased to be included in the series. Here are a few particulars. . . If you wish, you are at liberty to quote from any of my letters. . . With all best wishes," is typical of the man. A visit to his "old world" home involves a hearty hand-shake in greeting, a few hours with some grand books, tea, homely conversation, and a parting hearty handshake.

While paying reverent respect to *Magnet, Gem, Union Jack,* and other famous A. P. papers, his "period" commences before their arrival; he does, indeed, live in the past. Nearing the end of my word-length, I pause. . . Has my tribute done him justice?

I am in touch with a publisher who requires unusual and interesting books. What about *Letters of Henry Steele*?

A Series of Short Articles About Our Contributors, Collectors, and Readers :: Compiled by H. R. C.

The Story Paper Collector

Articles of Interest to Collectors of British Boys' Periodicals of the Past

No. 31 JULY, 1948 Vol. 2

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY

Reviewed by WM. H. GANDER :: Part One

WHAT surely must have been one of the most popular among the many supplementary features that appeared in the pages of *The Magnet Library* during its thirty-two year run was The Greyfriars Gallery. To anyone familiar with *The Magnet* of the 1914-18 war years it will be unnecessary to state *which* Greyfriars Gallery. For them there is only one, and it is the Greyfriars Gallery that was written by John Nix Pentelow and illustrated by C. H. Chapman.

Unlike The St. Jim's Gallery* in *The Gem Library*, also written by Mr. Pentelow, which was cut short when he relinquished the editorial chair, The Greyfriars Gallery ran on and on until there had been hung in it—not literally!—every character of any importance who had played a part in the Greyfriars stories, including boys of Highcliffe School and Courtfield County Council School and girls of Cliff House.

Also unlike The St. Jim's Gallery, which started after weeks of editorial references to it, The Greyfriars Gallery commenced in *The Magnet* Christmas Number for 1916 (No. 461) with a complete lack of fanfare or preliminary announcement. Not appearing every week, due partly to the sparsity of pages and, no doubt, to there not being enough hours in the week for J. N. P. to write an article for each issue in addition to his editorial and authorial duties, the last entry did not appear until January, 1919 (*Magnet* No. 571). In that issue "The Rest of Them" were dealt with in article No. 102. Thus the Gallery took just over two years to complete.

Reading Mr. Pentelow's write-ups in this series of articles the conviction is forced upon one that he had a vast and complete

*See "The St Jim's Gallery," by C. F. F. Rickard, in "S.P.C." No. 24.

knowledge of the stories. In fact, one feels certain that he must have compiled, before he began writing, a file in which was listed under each character's name the stories in which he or she took a leading part.

THERE was but one possible choice for the subject of No. 1. In later years the situation might have warranted that choice being Billy Bunter. But at that time the great William George had not grown to his full stature—and I do not refer to his physical proportions, generous though they were. Mr. Pentelow commences:

"In starting a series such as this there is, of course, a choice of subjects."

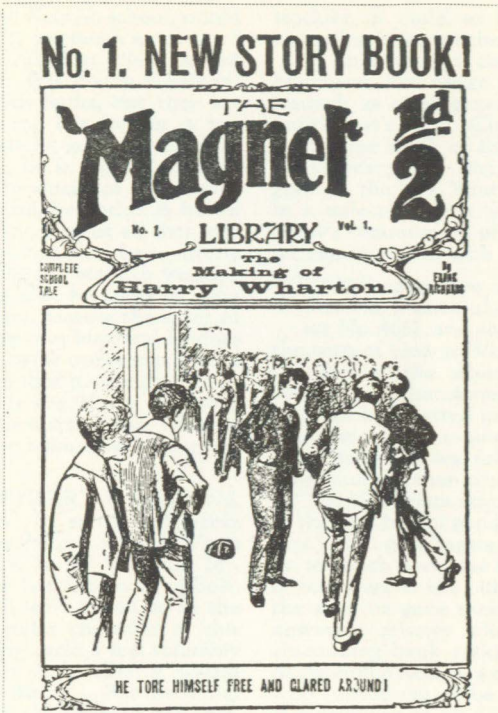
He might have thought that he had a choice, but he really had none. It just *had* to be Harry Wharton. And why not? Frank Richards began the Greyfriars saga to tell of the adventures of Harry Wharton at school. Was not the first story named "The Making of Harry Wharton," and the second one "The Taming of Harry"?

"It would be possible to begin with Dr. Locke, the revered Head of the school," Mr. Pentelow continues, "or with George Wingate, the school's captain. But, if not one of these two, then No. 1 of the series must surely be none other than Harry Wharton, the acknowledged leader of the Remove, the form with which the stories are chiefly concerned."

I am sure that Mr. Pentelow knew, as well as we do, that neither of those two could be chosen to commence the series. He probably mentioned them because of the position each held at Greyfriars. But the position each occupied in the stories was in the main a minor one.

SO Harry Wharton was the subject of the first article, which, with the heading and picture, occupies a full page. The paper shortage had not yet arrived at its most serious point. The picture was drawn by C. H. Chapman, who illustrated so very many *Magnet* stories. Not having any qualifications as an art critic I must refrain from commenting to any extent upon the portraits, but I will say that I am disappointed in this one of Harry. To me, it might have had beneath it the name of any one of a dozen or twenty Greyfriars juniors and would have fitted just as well.

The text runs to about one and a half of *The Magnet's* two wide columns and tells briefly of some of Harry's experiences, but, as J. N. P. says, "To tell here of all the exploits in which Harry Wharton has been concerned, of all the ups and downs of his



A slightly inaccurate reproduction of Number One of *The Magnet Library*, the date of which is February 15th, 1908. See note regarding it on page 81.

[Facing page 72.

life at the Kentish school, would take up far too much space . . "

He concludes: "No perfect character, this Harry Wharton! He has his faults, but they are venial ones. His temper is too quick, but he generally holds it in leash; he is capable of sulking, but he does not often sulk; he is proud, but pride is half a virtue. And against all that may be set the fact that he is utterly honest; he is a staunch friend, a generous foe; he leads by right of capacity, because the spirit of leadership is in him, and he does not fear to be unpopular if he is only sure that he is right!"

That is the Harry Wharton *Magnet* readers knew, whether they were readers in 1910 or in 1940!

BOB CHERRY appears in No. 2 of the series, two weeks later, *Magnet* No. 463. When writing of Harry Wharton Mr. Pentelow had this to say of Bob: "If a poll were taken as to the most popular character in this great story cycle, I feel tolerably sure that Bob Cherry would head the list. . . But the genial Bob, with all his good qualities, is not the born leader that Harry Wharton is."

Mr. Chapman's portrait of Bob is rather more like the Robert Cherry we imagine, though perhaps a little on the lean side. One thinks of him as stockier in build, as befits the champion boxer of the Remove.

"A little rough at times in his breeziness, but never a bully—staunch as steel, generous to a fault—that's Bob Cherry. He makes one think of the lines of Shakespeare: 'A merry heart goes all the day, Your sad tires in a mile-a!' " Such is Mr. Pentelow's summing-up of Bob, and we can but agree with him.

IT WAS again two weeks before No. 3 came along (*Magnet* No. 465), and then it was the turn of George Wingate, the Captain of the school. He is shown as a handsome fellow, his dark hair parted in the middle. The portrait is autographed, a practice which was followed for some months, then dropped.

"The Greyfriars skipper is one of the very best of good fellows," says J. N. P. of Wingate, and goes on to touch upon the highlights of his career at the old school—the time he gave shelter to an unworthy relative who was an absconding bank cashier; when he defended Rosina, a circus-girl, who turned out to be the long-lost daughter of Dr. Locke; and when, as told in that fine story, "Wingate's Folly" (*Magnet* No. 200), he fell for the charms of Paula Bell, the pantomime girl.

"There is real pathos in the end of that story," comments Mr. Pentelow, "when Wingate

has said farewell to Paula, and walks back to the school feeling as though the grey clouds above him would never break and let the sun shine through."

But Wingate was young and the sun did shine through. "Almost an ideal captain, with faults enough to make him human, but sound to the core—a gentleman and an athlete."

IN the next place we find, surprisingly enough, Percy Bolsover (No. 4, *Magnet* No. 467). I would have been inclined to leave him until near the end, for there is little that is good to say for him. What little there is, J. N. P. says it. He is pictured as a coarse-featured fellow, his lips pressed together in a straight line.

"The three Greyfriars fellows so far dealt with . . are all of the type to make writing about them a pleasure. But there are others who play by no means unimportant parts in the stories of whom as much cannot be said." But "one must not have all the whites first, to be followed by the greys, and leave the blacks to bring up the rear." So says Mr. Pentelow, and he is right.

Bolsover came to Greyfriars an outright bully and proceeded to lick anyone who opposed him in the smallest way. It was necessary to call in Solly Lazarus, of Courtfield, to give him what he so much needed, a good defeat. After that a change came o'er the scene. First Bob Cherry fought and bested him, then Monty Newland, Peter Todd (if Peter had remained the great fighting man that he was when he arrived at Greyfriars he would have mastered Bolsover the first time they met!), Dick Russell, and others.

After that, though Bolsover still liked to lord it over the small fry, he was kept in his place, but always ready for a fight, ready to try again. "A mixed character—bad and good in him, . . but not an absolutely hopeless rotter even at his worst," comments J. N. P. He showed at his worst in his treatment of his young brother, Hubert, a good little fellow, who was rescued from the slums of London and came to Greyfriars with the talk and many of the manners of a street urchin. Not a pleasant character, Bolsover major! He is perhaps seen at his best later, in his friendship for Napoleon Dupont, the boy from France. That, however, did not come about until after he had tormented poor Nap unbearably.

NO. 5 in the Gallery, in the next week's issue, is Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad who came to Greyfriars on a

scholarship, and whose life there for the first while was a heart-breaking fight against the gibes, and worse, of the meaner-minded members of the Remove.

"Why don't we hear more of Mark Linley?" readers were asking. "It is easy to answer them," said the Editor. "Mark has come to Greyfriars with a stern determination to make the best use of his scholarship, to work his hardest, to raise not only himself but his family."

Mark had a hard row to hoe, for his home was frequently haunted by poverty and sickness, and often he is found studying hard to win a prize in the hope of lifting the heavy burden a little from his parents.

He is a close friend of the Famous Five, especially of Bob Cherry, and we can imagine that he would change the "Five" to "Six" but for his having to devote so much time to study, for he is no mean footballer and cricketer.

"Mark Linley is a triumph of portraiture," says Mr. Pentelow, and that is a compliment from one writer to another. "There have been studious boys who were also good at games and ready for fun in other school stories; but it is difficult to recall another who was so fine a fellow in every way as Mark is, and the fact of his being a practically universal favourite with readers proves how well, how sympathetically, the author has drawn him."

TWO WEEKS later No. 6 is devoted to Johnny Bull, who came into the stories as John Bull junior, bringing with him his concertina, that instrument of torture which he later appeared to neglect. From Yorkshire, Johnny is an outspoken youth with a firmness of character that his friends are sometimes inclined to regard as stubbornness.

It was Johnny who turned the Famous Four into the Famous Five. One memory of him is his founding of a paper, *John Bull Junior's Weekly*, which was soon forgotten. This was in the days before Fisher T. Fish started *The Greyfriars Herald*, to have it taken over by Harry Wharton & Co.

Johnny has had his adventures. There was the time his cousin, Lucas Crane, "a worthless rascal, came along, in the hope of leading the boy into doggish ways. . . But Johnny did not succumb to the wiles of the tempter." And there was the occasion when he started off to Australia to be adopted by a rich uncle. It was a little odd to me, seeing that he is a member of a well-to-do industrial family, why he did this. Perhaps he wasn't so clear about

it in his own mind, for on the way he thought it over, changed ships at Port Said, and went back England. A torpedo cut the return journey short just off shore near Greyfriars and he was saved from a watery grave by Harry Wharton.

"Very outspoken, this good Johnny," says Mr. Pentelow of him. "Even to a master he cannot relax his accustomed bluntness. In another fellow it might be cheek; but he has no intention of being cheeky. . . No impudence meant; he merely speaks 'after the use of the English, in straight-flung words and few,' as Mr. Kipling has it!"

THE NEXT week the Gallery (No. 7) is given over to Peter Todd. The article is commenced with a few words about "the variety of characters which figure upon our mimic stage. Not only are there many characters, but they are so wonderfully differentiated from one another."

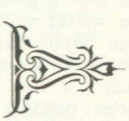
Six have so far been presented, each markedly different from the others. "Peter Todd is quite apart from any of them. He is very much like his cousin Alonzo; but there the likeness ends, except that both are as honest as the day."

Fortunate it is for Peter that he differs from the guileless, simple-minded Alonzo! "There is something of the grown-up man about Toddy. He has an old head on young shoulders. It is not for nothing that he studies law books which seem as dry as dust to his fellow juniors."

But Peter is as ready for a jape as anyone, and some in which he has taken part are recalled. He is, says Mr. Pentelow, a tower of strength in the Remove football team. "A capital cricketer, too, and a budding author. . . Cool, resourceful, plucky, generous—he should go far, this Peter Todd!"

And Peter doubtless will, if he ever finishes his studies at Greyfriars!

PART 2 WILL APPEAR IN THE NEXT ISSUE



FAMOUS VICTORIANS SUM UP "PENNY BLOODS"

WHAT a discovery! In the twilight of my life I have come across an old autograph album, wherein I have pasted letters from authors of the period to whom I had evidently written.

I have only the dimmest recollection of that exchange of correspondence and most of the authors were justifiably content to send me just a few lines of the "wishing you well" type and an autograph. I will therefore merely set down in full letters from two famous writers of "juveniles" in Queen Victoria's day, one of whose books are still selling while the other makes only occasional appearances in publishers' lists and has lost much of his once wide appeal.

Apparently George Alfred Henty and George Manville Fenn had been asked about the "penny bloods" which were then enthralling me but which most of my elders thought shameful and demoralizing. Mr. Henty's answer must have been considerably easing to the conscience:

"You ask me, is there any harm in stories of the blood-and-thunder type? Well, I haven't heard of any boy coming to grief through them by copying the sensational and sometimes highly ridiculous feats of the people pictured in them. These fire-eaters attack one another with pistols and swords from sunrise to sunset and seldom go to bed satisfied unless they have strewn the city's streets with pale corpses and left dozens of luckless antagonists dying in the ditches.

"You can't take such stuff seriously, can you, even at the age of 12? You do know that it's all pretense and only meant for the entertainment of an idle hour? If you don't think of it like that – if you are ever tempted to fancy that such a death-dealing life of eye-rolling ferocity and wholesale bloodletting is in the remotest degree worthy of imitation – stop reading such yarns at once, fling them away for burning and fly like an arrow to something of a sounder quality. Read Scott, Dickens and high-class writers of the same type, who can give you any amount of fine adventure of infinitely higher standard."

I didn't tackle everything Henty wrote – most of his books were historical and I fear I found them "dry" – but I was passionately devoted to G. M. Fenn and in later life I tried to recapture

some of the magic of his "Dick o' the Fens" in a book I called "Blake of the Modern Fifth," published by Ward, Lock & Co.

Here is Fenn's letter:

"No, indeed, my dear lad—don't apologize to me or anyone for your keen and seemingly excitable interest in the penny-paper and serial number publications which nowadays pour from Fleet Street's cheap presses. I am not going to say that they are at all brilliantly written or artistically conceived (you won't think that yourself) but they *are* fully charged with life and movement and you will notice that they never shrink from plunging knives into the hearts or shooting bullets into the anatomies of villains who have become altogether too bad to be tolerated any longer.

"It's fairly certain that Dick Turpin was more of a low-down horse-thief than a galloping hero of the turnpike road and that there never was a Sweeny Todd to make sausage-meat of the customers he shaved; nevertheless stories about both can be thrilling and stimulating to a young and impressionable mind and so I say, read them if you want to until your tastes develop and you crave for something stronger and better in a literary sense, as you surely will in due course."

Reassuring letters with no pious smugness about them. I feel sure even our very good friend, the late Barry Ono, would have approved of them, despite his oft-expressed predilection for "bloods" of the fiercest type.

—R. A. H. GOODYEAR.

THE NAME IS JOHN

IN THE CLOSING paragraph of his tribute to Mr. J. P. Quaine ("S. P. C. Who's Who" No. 4) in the last issue H. R. C. refers to the subject of his article as Joseph P. Quaine. "Q"'s name is John P. Quaine. The error probably came about through a phrase in the material used by H. R. C. when writing the article: "the generation which knows not Joseph."

NOTES BY A READER

3

ALWAYS having had a weakness for highwaymen "and those of that ilk," I was intrigued by Henry A. Puckrin's article in *Story Paper Collector* No. 24, "The Highwayman in Fact and Fiction." As no article on highwaymen would be complete without mention of the immortal Dick Turpin, we find a reference to the ride to York, and this brings me to the fact that I spent five days in that ancient and historical city. It was well worth the visit.

I had often longed to see the place where Turpin was hanged. In "Black Bess" we are told that he was hanged at the Castle, but in York they say the execution took place on the Knavesmire (now the famous race course). There is very little of the Castle remaining, but in the Yorkshire Museum I saw the leg-irons and shackles worn by Turpin when he was in the Castle.

The Kirk Museum, founded by Dr. Kirk, is a very remarkable place. In it is a whole street, shops and all complete of the 18th and early 19th Century, showing goods for sale as they were in those days. One of the illustrations in "Black Bess" shows Dick jumping over the York coach. In the Museum is a stage coach office and a notice informs the visitor that the coach leaves the Black Swan, York, for the Black Swan, Holborn, London, and that the journey takes four days.

I stayed one day in Knaresborough, about eighteen miles from York. Before going there I "brushed up" my "Eugene Aram" (Lytton), and also "St. Robert's School" and "The Student's Crime" in *Boys of England* of 1887. There is Knaresborough Castle, where the visitor is shown a spinning wheel which belonged to Mrs. Daniel Clark. Then there is the Dropping Well and Mother Shipton's Cave, where she was born in 1488 and died in 1561.

I visited St. Robert's Chapel, where the Saint died; this dates back to 1409. Then there was Eugene Aram's Cave, where the bones of Daniel Clark were discovered fourteen years after his murder. As a boy I did not read the *Boys of England* story, it being a little too early for me, but I may have seen one or two stray numbers of it. Had I read it, it would doubtless have ranked as one of my prime favourites.

My holiday finished in Scar-

borough, where there is a ruined castle, King Richard the Third's house, and The Three Mariners, a famous smugglers' den dating back to the year 1300.

I READ THE TALE "The London Apprentice" some years ago. There was Martin Wareham, the goldsmith of West Chepe, and his two apprentices, one of whom bore the interesting name of Simon Sweetapple. Sir Rauf Verney was the villain of the piece, and there was the usual Alsatian bully, Captain Hackheart, who was killed by Senora Teresa. It was published in 91 numbers. I do not think it is one of the "rare items," but if a copy was badly wanted one might have to hunt years for it. The copy I had was published by E. Harrison.

I HAVE BEEN READING that old-time thriller "Cartouche," the edition published by Fox in fourteen numbers. As a hero he leaves much to be desired. He is far too bloodthirsty and lacks principle. The number of people he murders in cold blood is really appalling. His grand finale is to blow up the police in the catacombs; 52 bodies were recovered. According to history he was hanged in 1721, but the author was evidently fond of him for he allows Cartouche to emigrate to New Orleans with his wife, Louise. I remember how excited Barry Ono was when he captured the Temple Publishing Co.'s edition of "Cartouche." In that version also he escapes justice.

THE ARTICLE on *The Boy's Own Paper* that appeared in No. 26 of this magazine makes one realize what a wonderful journal it is. A run of sixty-nine years! It has outlived all others. Many of Jules Verne's stories appeared in it. Somebody said in an article that although he wrote about all manner of places he had never visited one. How true this is I do not know. I remember reading a few numbers of the *B. O. P.* as a boy but for some reason I did not continue with it and my memory of the paper is very vague. I suppose it did not make the same appeal as did the more sensational and full-blooded journals of Brett and Fox. Nevertheless it appears to have had some excellent stories.

WHILE ON A VISIT with John Medcraft at his home in Ilford I inspected his latest acquisitions, among them a volume of *At Home and Abroad*. A reproduction of it appears in No. 3 of the current series of *The Collector's Miscellany*. Barry Ono, who also had a copy, used to think the title was misleading, that it seemed to indicate a Beeton or Routledge publication,

whereas it was more like a Fox or an Emmett journal. With regard to one of the leading tales, "Busiris the Proud," Barry remarked that it was the only story he knew which dealt with ancient Egypt, though there were plenty of tales about ancient Rome or Greece.

A TALE that intrigued me in *Ching Ching's Own* about the year 1888 was "The Veiled Captain." There was, however, one drawback about this journal, as far as I was concerned. It never published any historical or old-time yarns. All the tales were modern and at that time all my interest was centered on the olden days.

I AM NOW READING Reynolds' "Mysteries of London" and I must confess that there is a deal to be said for them. Reynolds knew how to write a story and, what is very important, to "create an atmosphere," which many modern writers seem incapable of doing. I now regret that I did not read his "Mysteries of the Court of London," which I had for ten years before making a "swap" with Barry Ono.

—HENRY STEELE.

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS--- AND GIRLS!*

ON ANOTHER PAGE in this issue is printed what appears to be a reproduction of the front cover page of No. 1 of *The Magnet Library*. But appearances are not always what they seem, as someone may have once remarked. It is, in the words of "soap opera" radio announcers in the United States and Canada, only a "reasonable facsimile."

It is actually a reproduction of the reproduction in *Gem* No. 1000 of something that looks like *Magnet* No. 1. The picture in *Gem* No. 1000 is *not* a reproduction of *Magnet* No. 1. It is, instead, a reproduction of what purports to be a reproduction of *Magnet* No. 1 that was printed in *Gem* No. 1 (new series). There are differences.

No. 1 of *The Magnet* is before us as we write and these are the differences between it and the

*For many years the heading of the editorial page of "The Magnet Library."

reproduction: in the original the line of type across the top is in a smaller but more extended size of the same or a very similar design; the flourish at the upper left corner of the "M" in *Magnet* is missing and the "t" is quite different, coming to a point at the top; there is a straight cross-stroke, and a hook at the foot of the letter. Further, in the original there is no period following "The Making of Harry Wharton," the word "Harry" is a little to the right, and the top of the open door is not so near the frame around the picture.

Why these differences? Our guess is that the design used in *Gem* No. 1 and reproduced in No. 1000 was an earlier effort which was thought not entirely suitable and changed for the printing of the first issue of *The Magnet*, but used unchanged in *The Gem*.

We have used the picture in *Gem* No. 1000 rather than the actual copy in our possession because the latter is wrinkled and worn as the result of the passing of forty years since it was printed.

WITH BUT LITTLE SPACE left we can do no more than refer briefly to "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School," written by by Frank Richards, which has been greeted enthusiastically by Greyfriars fans. Some comment has been made to the effect that there is too much Bunter in it. That there should be lots of Bunter seems inevitable, for the fat Owl of the Remove looms large in the public memory. We can take our Bunter or leave him alone, and we enjoyed the story and are looking forward to the next, in which, we are informed, Herbert Vernon-Smith, the "Bounder" of Greyfriars, will play an important part, though the title of the book will be "Billy Bunter's Banknote." —W.H.G.

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