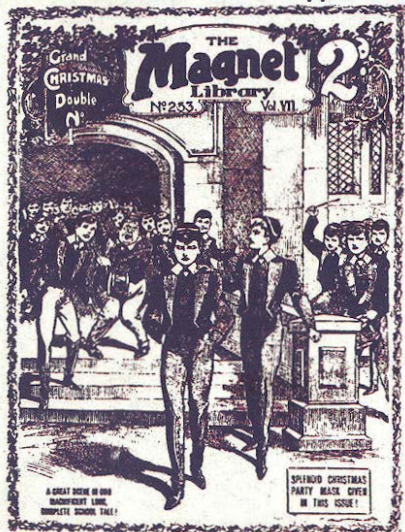


THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JANUARY, 1953
No. 49 :: Vol. 2

"Drummed Out of Greyfriars!"
A Splendid, Rev. Lang, Complete Tale of School Life, and
Grand Christmas Comic Supplement.



Also in this Number:

"THE GUN-RUNNERS!"

A Complete Christmas Story.

By PETER BAYNE.

Also in this Number:

"TWICE ROUND THE CLUB!"

By SIDNEY DREW.

EDITOR'S CHAT★

THAT indefatigable collector of Vancouver, B. C., Peard Sutherland, has realized one of his collecting ambitions: a complete set of *Chums Annual* volumes—all 48 of them! Does anyone else share this distinction with him? (Peard completed his set of *Chums* in February but record of it can be made in this January issue because it's away behind schedule.) He also has what may be a unique run of *The Scout*: Volumes 1 to 17; plus an additional five volumes. Peard's collection of *Boy's Own Annual* volumes is, he says, steadily growing: he now has 26 of them; while his G. A. Henry titles now number 78. Not growing quite so fast are his sets of *The Gem* and *The Magnet*: about 600 of the former, 350 of the latter.

★THIS was the heading of the editor's page of *Young Britain* in 1919.

THE PASSING of Henry Steele on February 13th, 1952, was recorded in *The Collectors' Digest* some time ago, but we pause here to pay our respects to his memory. Mr. Steele's "Notes by a Reader" in our pages (actually gleanings from his letters to us) have been a popular feature of S.P.C. which would have appeared oftener but for lack of

space. There may be more of them in future issues.

IN HIS article on *The Nelson Lee Library* in S.P.C. No. 48 (page 306) Joseph Meechan is made to refer to the girls' school located near St. Frank's as Moor House instead of Moor View. Any blame for this error may be directed, not to Mr. Meechan, but to the compositor/proof-reader, who is better acquainted with Cliff House School than he is with Moor View.

ALSO IN his article on *The Nelson Lee Library* referred to in the preceding paragraph Mr. Meechan expressed the opinion that some of the St. Frank's stories in the first series were rather "far-fetched," citing as an example Edwy Searles Brooks having a 15-year-old boy batting in a cricket Test match. Fact, however, has a way of catching up on fiction. After reading the article Syd Smyth, of Clovelly, N.S.W., wrote us about a 16-year-old lad, Bob Simpson, playing in the N.S.W. State Cricket Team, and a 17-year-old, Ian Craig, who is in the Test team. Ian Craig scored 53 in his first test and Bob Simpson 69 in the State game. In addition Craig top scored in the second innings with 47, and is chosen in the Test team for England. Neither lad is so very much older than Mr. Brooks' young cricketer.

—W. H. G.

ESTABLISHED IN 1941

The Story Paper Collector

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

No. 49—Vol. 2

JANUARY, 1953

Priceless

THE ROOKWOOD STORIES IN THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY

By ROGER M. JENKINS

ROOKWOOD has always received the least attention of the three main Hamilton schools for a variety of reasons: the stories ran in *The Boys' Friend* for only eleven years, compared with the careers of *The Magnet* and *The Gem*, which were nearly three times as long; there was no really famous character at Rookwood like Billy Bunter or Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; but, above all, Rookwood never had a paper to itself—it had to be content with two or three pages in *The Boys' Friend*.

Despite these seeming disadvantages, however, Rookwood was in a way the most polished creation to come from the pen of Charles Hamilton, due mainly

to the fact that it was created after St. Jim's and Greyfriars. Though it had no famous characters, it nevertheless had the most finely delineated ones of all, as Charles Hamilton agrees. And though it never had a paper to itself, it certainly was the backbone of *The Boys' Friend*, as is evidenced by the collapse of that paper the year after the cessation of the Rookwood stories. Furthermore, the shortness of the tales themselves was in a way a considerable advantage, for they required no abridgement or abbreviation at all when they came to be reprinted in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*.

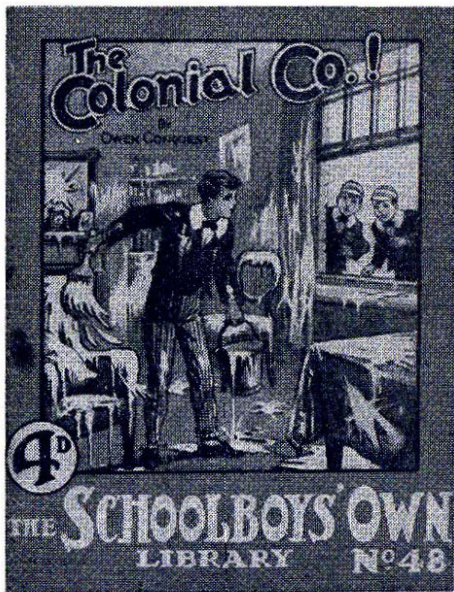
When *The Schoolboys' Own Library* commenced publication

in 1925, the editors had obviously not then planned any systematic reprinting of school stories from the very beginning—they merely seized upon what they considered the most interesting tales which had been published in the various papers not less than about three years earlier. Thus it came about that the very early issues contain a number of very fine tales. A case in point is No. 20, entitled "The Vanished Schoolboys," which describes how the Fistical Four mysteriously disappeared from the school, one after another. It is not difficult to spot Captain Langton, the games coach, as the villain of the piece, but the interest of the story lies in the dramatic turn of events, which are described with a vividness which may come as a surprise to anyone who imagined that all the Rookwood stories were written in a lighter vein. Equally dramatic, though not so exciting, is No. 35—"The Shadow of Shame"—which relates how Bulkeley was obliged to leave Rookwood temporarily after his father had been arrested for embezzlement.

AFTER A FEW years, the very first Rookwood stories were reprinted. In this connexion it is interesting to note that when the Rookwood series was mooted, the editor suggested

Jack Fisher as a name for the hero. Charles Hamilton, who has such a sensitive feeling for appropriate names, at once disagreed. It is impossible not to concur with him in feeling that Jimmy Silver could never have gone through life as Jack Fisher. As a name, Jimmy Silver is evocative of that cheery good-natured junior who is Tom Merry plus something extra—the qualities of tolerance and understanding. Jimmy Silver's arrival at Rookwood was reprinted in No. 118 of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* entitled "Jimmy Joins Up." In that volume is related how he at once made his mark in the school, and won the friendship of the Fistical Three. The story was carried on some while later in No. 128—"Backing Up Jimmy"—which deals with the manner in which Adolphus Smythe, the junior captain, was taught not to fill the cricketing team with his own "nutty" friends. How Jimmy eventually became junior captain (after Tommy Dodd had succeeded Adolphus Smythe) is a story which unfortunately does not appear to have been reprinted in this series.

The characters of Raby and Newcome may at first glance appear to be somewhat colourless, mainly because the other two members of the quartet overshadow them to an extent



The Schoolboys' Own Library No. 48, March 31, 1927

See overleaf]

[Facing page 310

THE COLONIAL CO.?

Referring to the title of this issue of The Schoolboys' Own Library during an interview by Roger Jenkins, Charles Hamilton stated that it was certainly correct when he wrote the story, but he had a suspicion that it might not be so well received these days!

much greater, for instance, than Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry overshadow the other members of the Famous Five. But a closer inspection, however, will reveal that still waters run deep. Raby is the quieter of the two, a plump-faced junior with an unexpected streak of stubbornness which shewed itself in No. 341 of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* entitled "On Fighting Terms." Raby was—quite unjustly—accused of cowardice by Lovell and Newcome, and his pride was such that he did not deign to explain the matter. Even after the facts came to light, there was a rift in the lute for some weeks, so greatly did George Raby object to having his courage doubted. Arthur Newcome is slightly more to the fore than Raby; he is not blunt at all in his approach—on the contrary, he possesses the gift for delightful quiet sarcasm that makes him the perfect foil for Lovell.

WITHOUT doubt, Arthur Edward Lovell is the most successful of all the Rookwood juniors. Charles Hamilton states that his character was worked out from the same basis as that of Harry Wharton—they both represent the type of person who is so certain he is right that he tends to become a little overbearing at times; the same person who also may tend to

sulk a little now and again and mistake it for righteousness. Unlike Harry Wharton, the character of Lovell was worked out in a humorous vein, and he shares with Tubby Muffin the responsibility for most of the humour at Rookwood. One of the most characteristic stories about him is related in No. 347—"Chums on the Open Road"—in which he persuaded the others to club together to buy a motor scooter for the holidays which he then proceeded to monopolize to their entire exclusion.

Apart from their long sojourn in Canada, which occupied no less than four issues of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* in 1931, the Rookwood juniors seemed to spend most of their holidays in England. The holiday with the cart pulled by Trotsky the pony (so called because of his aversion to work) was one of the most charming tales, and well merited its reprinting in No. 84 of *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, entitled "Chums on Tramp." It had an allegorical beginning, in that after Lovell had bought the pony and cart from a tramp who, of course, did not own it, the real owner turned out to be a young Mr. Richards who very kindly loaned his vehicle to the youthful holiday-makers without charge. The

story was continued two years later in No. 132—"Under False Colours."

Perhaps the finest of all the holiday series, however, was No. 202—"The Rookwood Gypsies." This was a reprint of the 1918 summer holiday series in *The Boys' Friend*, during which Jimmy Silver and Co. and Tommy Dodd and Co. went off in rival caravans. Charles Hamilton has confessed that he has always had a passion for caravans, and he certainly excelled himself on this occasion. What with Clarence Cuffy inflicting himself on the Modern and Classical caravans alternatively, together with an encounter with Billy Bunter plus the usual set of misunderstandings with landowners, it definitely proved a memorable vacation.

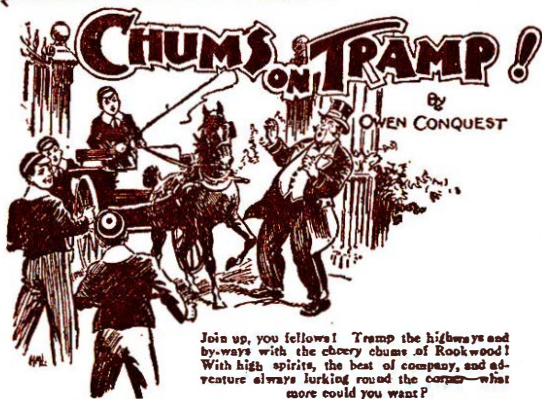
THE ROOKWOOD stage was a comparatively small one, especially during the early period, and consequently the character of Lord Valentine Mornington stood out the more prominently for that reason. When he first arrived at Rookwood, he set himself up against Jimmy Silver in a thoroughly unscrupulous manner, as related in No. 262 of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* entitled "The Fistical Four." His early career did not prove a very auspicious start, and he left the school for a while. On his return to

Rookwood (bereft of his title) he attempted to use a new boy, Higgs, as a lever against Jimmy Silver but the attempt was unsuccessful; this story was reprinted in the library twice—in No. 4 entitled "The Captain of the Fourth," and in No. 272 entitled "Taming a Bully," though the two issues did not contain precisely the same selection of stories from the original series.

The Rookwood stories were reprinted in a completely haphazard fashion, and this is particularly noticeable in regard to those tales concerning Mornington. The arrival of his great friend Kit Erroll was told in No. 220 entitled "The Son of a Cracksman." Erroll later stood by him nobly when little 'Erbert of the Second Form, a waif who had been befriended by Mornington, turned out to be his cousin Cecil, the true heir of the Mornington riches. In that excellent tale "Facing the Music" (No. 108) is described how Mornington's erstwhile friends like Smythe and Topham and Townsend dropped the once supercilious but now penniless Mornington, while Lattrey even contrived to get him suspected of theft.

Lattrey's connivings were really only poetic justice, as a perusal of No. 104—"Dropped

No. 84.—THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY.



Inside Title Design, Schoolboys' Own Library No. 84

From the Team"—will reveal. In this story, which, chronologically speaking, should come between the beginning and end of No. 108, is related how Mornington's ways outraged even Erroll. He was sent to Coventry by the form and went from bad to worse until he eventually engineered the expulsion of Jimmy Silver for stealing Monsieur Monceau's watch. Fortunately he repented at the eleventh hour.

Mornington's uncle, Sir Rupert Stacpoole, M.P., had been pleased enough to accept the office of guardian in palmier days, and he could hardly wash his hands of his ward when the supply of money ceased. But his former tolerant indulgence certainly disappeared, and when Mornington was expelled for insubordination in No. 60 entitled "The Scapegrace of Rookwood," Sir Rupert had scant sympathy for him. Mornington preferred not to

return home, and he took on jobs in Coombe like grocer's boy and billiard marker at "The Bird in Hand" until he managed to regain his place at the school.

It was rarely indeed that a reprint of a Rookwood series took up more than one issue of *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, but such was the case with Nos. 308 and 317 entitled respectively "Jimmy Silver Resigns" and "No Good as Captain." Jimmy Silver, the cricket captain, had fallen victim to a trick of Smythe's to kidnap the junior eleven, which the keen-witted Motnington had suspected. This was the beginning of the movement that led to Mornington's being elected junior captain, but in the second story it was amply demonstrated that his erratic ways made him an unsuitable captain.

THE STAFF at Rookwood were particularly interesting. Whereas the headmasters of Greyfriars and St. Jim's seemed Olympian in their impartiality and remoteness, Dr. Chisholm was a very real personality indeed. It is true that he was august and dignified as befitted a gentleman in his position, but he also had a touch of hastiness and arrogance which occasionally led him to commit an injustice either by refusing to listen to all the facts of the case or by maintaining his position even though

subsequent events proved it to be a mistaken one. These weaknesses in his character were amply demonstrated in *Schoolboys' Own Library* No. 206 entitled "Masters on Strike" in which Jimmy Silver was convicted on circumstantial evidence, and sentenced by Dr. Chisholm to be flogged. Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, was so convinced that this was an injustice that he countermanded the Head's orders in Hall, and told Jimmy Silver to step back when Dr. Chisholm ordered him to the platform to be flogged. The Head demanded Mr. Bootles' resignation, a demand which led all the masters to retire from the school for a while to shew their unanimity in condemning the Head's action. This excellent story was undoubtedly one of the finest Rookwood tales to come from the pen of Charles Hamilton.

Apart from Dr. Chisholm, it can be fairly stated that Charles Hamilton created only three masters who can be considered to be first-class pieces of characterization, and these are Mr. Quelch, Mr. Prout, and Mr. Bootles. The remainder—with the possible exception of Mr. Greely and Mr. Manders—resolve themselves into likeable or unlikeable masters, mild or stern, but they have no other special traits that etch themselves permanently

into the reader's memory as these three masters have. The Greyfriars pair have received their share of attention in a number of articles, but few seemed to have spared a thought for Mr. Bootles, that pleasant well-meaning little man on whose shoulders the cloak of dignity seemed such an incongruous garment. It is true that at times he could rise to the occasion as he did in the story mentioned above, but he was really at his best in his normal unassuming manner.

ABOUT half way through the Rookwood saga in *The Boys' Friend* Mr. Bootles was replaced by Mr. Dalton; this change-over is a reliable guide in estimating the age of any reprinted Rookwood story. The coming of Mr. Dalton was described in No. 76 of *The School-boys' Own Library* entitled "The Fighting Form-Master" in which is told how Dicky Dalton boxed for a purse in the Bunbury Ring on his way to take up his appointment at Rookwood. This fact was ferreted out by Carthew, who informed the Head. Dr. Chisholm considered that, although the money was given to a man injured in the war, it would not be fitting for Mr. Dalton to remain at Rookwood, but the fortuitous arrival of George Gummage, an old boy who had come back to thrash

the Head with a dog whip, and Mr. Dalton's timely intervention, caused Dr. Chisholm to reconsider the matter.

There is no doubt that Mr. Dalton was a more efficient master than his predecessor, and that he was probably a more popular character with the readers, but, considered as a character in fiction, he tended to be somewhat colourless, like his counterparts Mr. Lascelles at Greyfriars and Mr. Railton at St. Jim's; none of them played parts of major importance in the stories. At any rate, collectors may feel disposed to wish that Mr. Bootles had not, after all, come into a fortune and left Rookwood.*

No-one at Rookwood would have been sorry, however, to see the last of Roger Manders, the housemaster of the Modern House, under whose expert tuition the boys of his house studied such variegated subjects as chemistry, German, and double-entry book-keeping. Yet whereas the unpleasant Mr. Ratcliff of St. Jim's seemed at times to be only a caricature, Mr. Manders, with his elastic-sided boots, his

* Readers may be interested to note that it was the character Bunny Bootles, the fat boy at St. Kit's (the school featured in *School and Sport*) who was the real reason for Mr. Bootles' departure from Rookwood. It was felt that one character with that surname was enough.

fussiness, and his inquisitiveness was carried a stage further, and became a plausible personality. "The Rookwood Rebellion" in No. 94 of the library is a splendid account of how his temporary headmastership caused considerable trouble in the old school. Equally readable is the last Rookwood story to appear in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*—No. 392 entitled "The Sneak of Rookwood" which relates how Marcus Manders, his nephew, came to the school to take up the position of tale-bearer in chief.

THERE WERE altogether 53 Rookwood stories in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, an average of two stories every seven months, though there were sometimes long intervals without any at all, like the period from August 1934 to February 1936, during which time they were replaced by the Grimslade reprints. Taken as a whole, the Rookwood reprints in the early 64 page issues of the library were better stories than those in the later 96 page issues (though there were, of course, a number of exceptions to this rule). This situation was largely brought about by the fact that there was only a limited number of Rookwood series in *The Boys' Friend*, and most of them were reprinted in the early issues of *The Schoolboys' Own Library*. The later issues

of the library contain either very early series like No. 182—"The Terror of Rookwood"—or collections of as many as seven single stories from *The Boys' Friend* lumped together under nondescript titles like "Rookwood Calling" (No. 368) or "Rookwood Ragers" (No. 380).

There was one ugly duckling amongst the Rookwood tales in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*, just as No. 15 marred the Greyfriars series. The Rookwood story to beware of is No. 112 entitled "For the Honour of Rookwood," a concoction by J. N. Pentelow. This introduced a cousin of Clarence Cuffy's who was a source of surprising ideas—another Goggs, Grammarian, in fact. This story was unsatisfactory for a number of reasons: several facts were wrong (Carthew was placed on the Modern side); certain customs were erroneous (the quad was called the playground); but above all, the whole style of writing jars.

POSSIBLY the secret of Charles Hamilton's success with the Rookwood stories lies in the fact that for eleven years, as Owen Conquest, he consistently penned a Rookwood story, week by week, and this unceasing attention had marked results. Rookwood as a school reached maturity at a surprisingly early date, and, having reached the

heights, it stayed there to the very end. The attention paid to Rookwood yielded results in other quarters also; discerning readers of these reprints may find it interesting to trace therein a number of themes which were more fully developed in the larger space available in the *Magnets* of the nineteen-thirties.

It may come as a surprise to some to learn that apart from a handful of stories in *Holiday Annuals* and Mandeville books, no new Rookwood story has

been written since 1926. It is remarkable how well the popularity of this school has survived this gap of a quarter of a century. That it has in fact done so is due in no small measure to these reprints in *The Schoolboys' Own Library*—virtually the only medium now available to collectors for increasing their knowledge of Rookwood, the most finely drawn of all Charles Hamilton's creations. Let us hope that Owen Conquest will write many more stories for us in the future.

PLUCK AND THE MARVEL

By T. W. PUCKRIN

IT IS NATURAL for collectors of the old boys' papers to concentrate on the most successful, for the biggest and most successful ventures always catch the eye. While this must be so, one can linger over those publications which played their part even though to a lesser degree. Among these I would include *Pluck* and *The Marvel*.

Pluck ran from November 24th, 1894, to October 29th, 1904, in the first or halfpenny series. In these days of juvenile comics priced at threepence it makes

one wonder. Those were the days! "Old boys" who number more years than they care to think about look back and in fancy they see the generous proportions of the old papers and compare them with today's. The price of *Pluck* was increased to one penny with the commencement of a new series on November 5th, 1904, and the paper then ran until March 18th, 1916—a respectable run, considering the large number of boys' papers published at that time. The stories in *Pluck* were topical,

adventure being to the fore. The most enduring were those of the Captain, the Cook, and the Engineer, written by Harry Belbin. Trios seemed to be fairly popular in boys' papers. We had Sidney Drew's Gan Waga, Tom Prout, and Barry O'Rooney, Stanley Portal Hyat's Alec, Jim, and Tinpot, and of course Martin Clifford's Tom Merry, Harry Manners, and Monty Lowther.

Quire a variety of authors was featured in *Pluck*. J. G. Rowe wrote extensively for the paper under different names. S. Clarke Hook was a contributor, as was his son H. Clarke Hook. J. N. Pentelow, as Jack North, wrote the stories of Wycliffe School. *Pluck* had its share of school stories and others who wrote on this never-failing theme were George Garrish, Lewis Hockley, and Charles Hamilton. If the paper had no other claim to fame than that Mr. Hamilton was among its contributors it would be sufficient.

"Jack Blake of St. Jim's," the first of the famous St. Jim's stories, appeared in *Pluck* in 1906. What would have happened to *Pluck* if Jack Blake and Co. had remained there instead of moving over to the new paper, *The Gem Library*? But the transfer was made and *Pluck* missed the enduring fame that came to *The Gem*.

ON MARCH 15th, 1893, *The Marvel* commenced its run as a halfpenny paper, and continued as such until January 23rd, 1904; then the price was increased to a penny in a new series which ran until April 22nd, 1922. Henry St. John wrote school stories for *The Marvel*, but that paper had one outstanding feat to its credit: the first Sexton Blake story, "The Missing Millionaire," by Harry Blythe, appeared in its pages. I think there were three more Blake stories before they were transferred to *The Union Jack*.

The Marvel is best known because of Jack, Sam, and Pete. Of the three Pete was the main character and the humour was mostly of the slapstick variety, Pete getting into all sorts of absurd situations. In *Marvels* that I read Pete was always spanking someone or stuffing him into a sack. Really I never thought much of these stories, but they enjoyed a very long run. You read one and you had read them all.

The author, S. Clarke Hook, had a style all his own. "Storm-point," a school story, was by the same writer, but I am unable to report on its quality. It was in 1909 that Jack, Sam, and Pete commenced to share the paper with Arthur S. Hardy's boxing character Tom Sayer. Mr. Hardy

was an authority on sport, as those who read his football serials can testify. "The Idol of the Crowd," "Captain Jack," and "The Blue Crusaders" were three of the very best, and I read each one from beginning to end. Mr. Hardy showed consistent ability in all his work and maintained a steady level that seldom varied.

After a considerable success in the boxing world Tom Sayers developed into an actor manager. This was a reflection of the author's artistic side, for he was himself an actor of no mean calibre. As the stories went on the boxing seemed to be sacrificed to the acting.

The stories in the later issues were concerned with boxing from a lower angle. Fighting railway porters, fighting costermongers, fighting newspaper-vendors, all came under the boxing champion's eye. Tom Sayers was always willing to help these budding aspirants to fistic fame, no doubt remembering his own struggles along the same hard road.

But it was a theme that could not be used for ever. In 1922 *The Marvel* came to the end of its run. If not among the elite it was a good second and could boast of one thing: it was not haunted by ghost-writers.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY

VARIOUS reasons have been given for the decline and fall of *The Nelson Lee Library*. In the first instance, I feel that the Night Hawk stories lowered the tone of the paper. The school stories in the second new series began to show a marked decline from the high standard to which we had become accustomed, and on March 12th, 1932, they were

superseded by "The Quest of the Silver Dwarf." This story made its appearance to the accompaniment of a fanfare of trumpets and was followed by its sequel, "The Missing Heir."

These stories were really very good, but they were offered as new and were presented as four complete yarns. No name was appended to the stories, but I discovered later that they were

written by Maxwell Scott, the creator of Nelson Lee and Nipper. They first appeared in *The Boys' Friend* in 1901-2; later they appeared in *The Boys' Friend Library*. Still later they were again reprinted, in *The Nelson Lee Library* in 1923, as a serial in the Detective Section. Finally they appeared once again in *The Nelson Lee* as already stated.

SMALL wonder that old readers of the paper, feeling that they were being "stung," dropped it. The only reason I kept on was that I hated to part with such an old friend. In any case, I felt sure that Edwy Searles Brooks would make a comeback.

Eventually the St. Frank's stories did re-appear, but the damage had been done and in spite of the fact that Mr. Brooks made great efforts to regain lost ground the writing was on the wall.

It was a tragedy that such a grand little paper as *The Nelson Lee Library* was allowed to lapse. Mr. Brooks was entirely blameless in the "Silver Dwarf" fiasco. The Amalgamated Press showed a sad lack of tact in serving up "The Silver Dwarf" once too often, especially to such a discerning group of readers as the followers of *The Nelson Lee Library*. —JOSEPH MEECHAN

BACK ISSUES REQUIRED

—by Anthony Baker, Christ Church Vicarage, Barner, Herts., England: *The Story Paper Collector* Nos. 1 to 37.

—by Syd Smyth, 1 Brandon Street, Clovelly, N.S.W., Australia: *The Story Paper Collector* Nos. 9, 11, 22, 24.



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