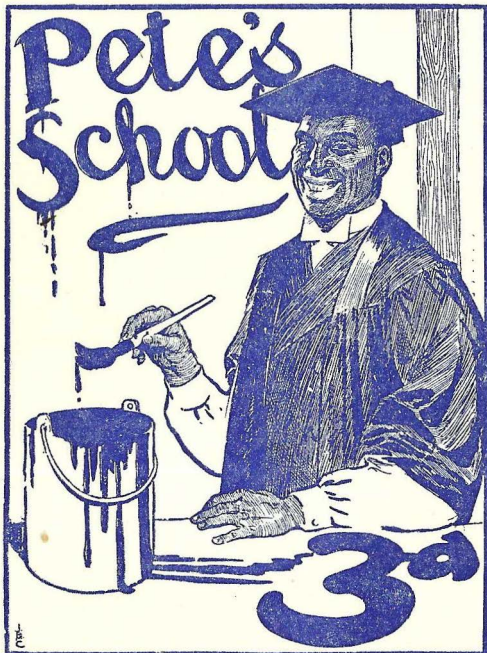


THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

APRIL 1956
No. 58 :: Vol. 3

A NEW, Long, Complete Tale—By S. Clarke Hook.



No. 122.—"THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

When Pete Was Living in B. C., He Paid His Way With £. s. d.
The Boys' Friend 3d, Library No. 122, 1910—See Pages 112-114

Following a considerable amount of investigation
W. O. G. LOFTS says, in what may prove to be an
interim report—

THERE WAS NO REAL SWEENEY TODD!

BEING VERY interested in the article *Was There a Sweeney Todd?* in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 57, I did some research in the old Directories as suggested by Charles W. Daniel, in the British Museum. Despite an exhaustive search through the Directories of London through the years 1768 to 1850, I could find no Sweeney Todd. The nearest I could get were, a Samuel Todd whose occupation was that of pearl-stringer and who lived just off Fleet Street in the 1830's, and Todd & Crooke, tea merchants at 70 Fleet Street in the 1800 period.

A search through the print and old drawings rooms at the Museum failed to uncover any trace of or reference to the supposed "rare old painting by Reading" of Sweeney Todd. Nor was there any record of an artist named Reading. I was told that it was a practice of the old "blood" and "romance" publishers to use drawings supposed

to have been reproduced from rare old paintings, to give more authority to the tales.

The Tell-Tale was started on January 1st, 1824, by Henry Fisher and ran for one year.* It does seem rather a long time for Thomas Prest to wait, before publishing his version of the story: until the Lloyd edition appeared in 1850, or 26 years.

THE FIRST TIME the story of Sweeney Todd was published was not, I now find, in 1850, but in 1846-47, in a weekly paper called *The People's Periodical and Family Library*. The story appeared in serial form, commencing in No. 7, dated

[Turn to page 115, please]

*Being informed of this, Charles W. Daniel wrote: "I was obviously wrong in thinking that the date of *The Tell-Tale* was 1804. I took this from *Summers' Bibliography*. Evidently this was a misprint, or a mistake on the part of the writer. Considering the large number of books he gives, it is not surprising that there is an occasional error."

An Amateur Magazine :: Published Since 1941

The Story Paper Collector

No. 58--Vol. 3

Priceless

THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL

By ROGER M. JENKINS

REMBER, Remember, the First of September, It Brings the "Holiday Annual!" ran a jingle that appeared in the 1927 edition, but in actual fact The Amalgamated Press did not leave the advent of this important publication to the memory of their readers. Frequent advertisements of *The Holiday Annual* appeared in the companion papers and many others as well. There is no doubt that from first to last it was a highly profitable venture, but it was nonetheless well deserved:

how many other publishers in those uncertain days who made their living by charming the pennies from youthful readers would have attempted to sell those selfsame readers a bound volume for six shillings—almost a whole year's subscription to *The Magnet* or *The Gem*? *The Holiday Annual* was never very good value for money, comparing the cost of its readingmatter with that of the weekly papers, but it had many merits and well deserves consideration. Incidentally, it may be taken that all

PART ONE

A detailed list of all the Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's stories contributed by Charles Hamilton to The Holiday Annual, including the origins of all such reprinted stories, will be found following the concluding part of this article.

the Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's stories not referred to in the following review are the work of substitute writers, as are all the stories supposed to have been written by the boys themselves.

1920 WAS THE DATE on the first *Holiday Annual*, though it was of course published in the autumn of 1919. This number is a collector's item for many reasons: not only did Warwick Reynolds illustrate the cover and the St. Jim's stories inside, but Charles Hamilton wrote three long tales specially for this issue—*Ructions at Greyfriars*, dealing with the Famous Five's attempt to get Bunter out of trouble, *The Wandering Schoolboy*, relating how Mr. Ratchliff caused Gussy to "retire" from the school for a while, and *Rivals of Rookwood School*, featuring a new boy called Loring to whom Lovell took an unreasoning dislike. (The last story is particularly notable, for never again was Rookwood allowed an 18-chapter story in *The Holiday Annual*.) In addition, an abridged reprint of two red Magnets was thrown in for good measure: entitled *Fighting For His Honour*, this story dealt with the wrongful expulsion of Bob Cherry who was accused of stealing and cashing Nugent's Postal

Order. As Charles Hamilton has admitted, the theme was inspired by the famous Archer-Shee case, later dramatized so successfully as *The Winslow Boy*. Finally, there was *Out of Bounds*, a tale of St. Jim's in 1950, which formed the beginning of an intermittent series of Charles Hamilton's glimpses into the future: they were not very re-assuring.

1921 WITNESSED a change that was to become permanent—the title was now *The Greyfriars Holiday Annual*. Another innovation was the first of a long series of imaginary trips to Greyfriars. R. J. Macdonald was back from the navy to illustrate the St. Jim's stories, though Warwick Reynolds contributed a number of small items, alas for the last time.

The Greyfriars story (like most specially written for *The Holiday Annual*) revolved around the Owl of the Remove: Billy Bunter's Butler related how he took a party of Removites to tea at the newly-opened Chunkley's stores, and then made them pay the bill. In attempting to escape their wrath he floundered from one morass to another in a story deliciously outrageous. Rookwood had 12 chapters in a tale entitled *Jimmy Silver's Rival*, but it was not up to the standard

of the previous year. St. Jim's was allowed two long stories—*All Gussy's Fault* being a new story concerned with a cricket match against the Benbow, and *The Master's Secret; or, How Tom Merry Came to St. Jim's* being a very abridged reprint of three halfpenny *Gems*.

1922 SAW NO falling-off in the high tradition, though the Rookwood story, *Who Did It?*, was by a substitute writer. There were, however, Greyfriars and St. Jim's tales specially written for *The Holiday Annual* by Charles Hamilton: *The Rivals of the Remove* related how Drake and Rodney, late of the Benbow, pretended that they couldn't play cricket, and then blackmailed their way into the team—a story with a pleasant air and a dramatic ending; whilst *The Two Heroes* were Gussy and Baggy Trimble, one genuine and the other counterfeit, both contributing to an equally fine tale. St. Jim's was again given double representation by an abbreviated reprint of three blue *Gems* entitled *To Save His Honour*, in which no less than 35 chapters were devoted to the story of the introduction of Marie Rivers and the return of the Professor in their attempt to co-erce Talbot into rejoining the gang.

Other attractions were a *Ferrers Lord* story, a tale of life on the Bombay Castle, and one of Michael Poole's St. Katie's stories, this time about the wedding of Mr. Blunt, or "Jolly Roger" as he was usually called. Michael Poole had a carefully contrived atmosphere at St. Katie's, but little idea of storytelling—the boys' plot was successful at every turn, and consequently it all seems quite pointless.

1923 PRESENTED Bunter in an unusual and most unpleasant light. A *Shadow Over Greyfriars* was the only new story by Charles Hamilton to appear in this year's *Annual*; one cannot help wishing he had chosen another theme. There was a cricket week at Greyfriars, and teams from Rookwood and St. Jim's were staying at the school. Bunter was in a spiteful mood, and set about removing articles from jackets in the changing room with a view to arousing mutual suspicion between the various schools and spoiling the cricket week generally.

Rookwood and St. Jim's were represented by long reprints: *The Mystery of the Priory* was taken from the 1916 double number of *The Boys' Friend*, originally entitled *Jimmy Silver's*

Christmas Party, by Owen Conquest in collaboration with those world famous authors Frank Richards and Martin Clifford; this was an account of Private Silver's desertion from the army; the other reprint was *Captain of St. Jim's*, being an account of the celebrated occasion on which Tom Merry was voted into that high office for a short but memorable career.

1924 WITNESSED the strange phenomenon of Martin Clifford's visit to Greyfriars: *A Great Man at Greyfriars* was specially written by Charles Hamilton, and contained a number of very amusing sidelights on the author's opinions about story-writing:

"I've read a lot of his stuff," said Wibley. "There's no doubt that chap is clever. The way he strings a story together shews the dramatic gift. Some men write a story as if it were a furniture catalogue, or an almanac. This man Clifford has an eye to a situation—he makes his characters explain themselves—before you've got a dozen lines into the story you know the fellows as if you'd met them."

Another new story was Morny's *Master-Stroke*, which ran to 17 chapters: this related the dire consequences of Jimmy Silver's action in hurling a snowball through Tommy Dodd's study

window when Mr. Manders was snooping around inside. The St. Jim's story, *The Schoolboy Treasure Hunters*, was one of the many reprints of the tale of the famous trip to the South Seas searching for Spanish doubloons. The volume was rounded off by a number of short items, including a Cedar Creek story and a tale by P. G. Wodehouse.

1925 RESTRICTED St. Jim's to a reprint once again, *The Bishop's Medal*, in which Cousin Ethel persuaded Figgins to enter for a difficult examination. The Rookwood story, *Getting Quits with Greyfriars*, was one of the worst type of imitation. Greyfriars, however, was better represented: *The Greyfriars Cup* was a new tale, dealing with Mr. Bunter's sudden change of fortune on the Stock Exchange. He presented a cup on the condition that Bunter played in all the matches competing for it. *The Rival Editors* was a Magnet reprint dealing with the early days of *The Greyfriars Herald*. Other stories included another by P. G. Wodehouse and also a languid St. Katie's story from Michael Poole.

1926 WAS A YEAR in which Charles Hamilton exercised his rarely-used vein of fantasy in a story entitled *Lucky for Parkinson*.

Parkinson, who shared a study with Trevor, was one of the great scholars of the Remove, but his one ambition was to play for the junior eleven. He was reading in German the story of Peter Schlemihl, who was offered all the treasures of the earth in return for signing away his soul to the Man in the Grey Coat, and Parkinson began to see a way to achieve his life's ambition. Although he was not, in the end, called away to the nether regions, he was in point of fact never mentioned again. The other Greyfriars story, *The Form-Master's Substitute*, was a *Magnet* reprint, the subject of Wibley's impersonation this time being Mr. Mobbs: Ponsoby & Co. were more than astonished at the changed attitude of the master who had always toadied to them hitherto.

The Rookwood tale entitled *Pulling Carthew's Leg* was an imitation, but there were two genuine St. Jim's stories again, *Grundy's Great Idea* being a reprint of a *Gem* story about an anonymous letter which was sent to Mr. Linton, and *The Scientist of St. Jim's* being specially written; this was an account of Glyn's latest invention, the death ray. In addition there were also Cedar Creek and St. Katie's stories, a school yarn by P. G. Wodehouse, and contributions

by Sidney Drew, Alfred Edgar, and others.

1927 ALMOST rivalled the 1920 *Annual* for sheer hilarity in the chief stories about Greyfriars and St. Jim's. *What Happened to Bunter* was specially written, and described his flight to St. Jim's and Rookwood respectively in an attempt to evade retribution for his misdeeds; there was a laugh in every line of this story. *Lord Eastwood's Experiment* was giving D'Arcy a cheque book to teach him economy, but it was the noble Earl who was taught a lesson, not his son: this famous tale came from an old blue *Gem* and was well worth resuscitating.

The two Rookwood stories were both in a cheery vein, but both were imitations. The concluding item, however, was genuine Hamiltoniana, having been taken from an early double number of *The Magnet*: *Nugent Minor's Bad Start* was a fine tale of a spoilt boy who expected to have his own way at school, and was quickly disillusioned—an unusual and very readable story.

1928 WAS THE LAST (and funniest) of the early thin paper *Holiday Annuals*. *Batling Bunter* was an account of the trouble that ensued when Bunter annexed a theatre ticket belonging to Bob

Cherry, while *The Arm of the Law* related how Messrs. Gammon and Gobble, solicitors of Wayland, threatened D'Arcy with legal proceedings, being unaware that he was a minor. Both these stories were specially written for *The Holiday Annual*.

The reprints were equally amusing. *Tea With Manders* came about as a result of an invitation which that pleasant gentleman sent the Fistical Four in order to keep them out of a football match; it was a party that ended with the host chasing his guests down the corridor

with a cane. This was an early Rookwood story, but the remarks of Mr. Bootles were attributed to Mr. Dalton in order to bring it up to date—a device which was frequently resorted to. The other Rookwood story was an imitation, but *How Horace Coker Got His Remove* was of course by Charles Hamilton, being a reprint of an early red Magnet. This was an historic occasion, but this story did not wear quite so well as some others chosen for reprinting; perhaps it had dated a little, and Coker's character had altered as well,

Part Two Will Appear in the Next Issue



**The Late Henry Steele Edited
The Old Boys' Journal**

PERUSING one of the late Henry Steele's scrapbooks I note that there was in existence in 1929 a collecting paper called *The Old Boys' Journal*. Enquiries amongst older collectors showed that none of them had heard of it. Here are the details as recorded: No. 1, August 7th, 1929; No. 2, August 19th, 1929; then issued weekly, running to 8 volumes, it finished at No. 209, July 31st, 1933. Edited by Henry Steele, it is reported to have been issued in mss. form also, for benefit of Mathew Hunter.—W.O.G. LOFTS

**Back to Double-Column Page
For The Sexton Blake Lib'y**

WHILE it is hardly likely that our comment on the matter in No. 55 had anything to do with it, it is of interest to note that the format of *The Sexton Blake Library* has been changed back, commencing with the December issues, to the two-column page.



I WISH - - -

To obtain *The Story Paper Collector* Nos. 1 to 42, 44, 45, 47.—A. S. Fick, Box 58, Fort Johnson, New York, U.S.A.

TITLES OF "BLOODS"

FOLLOWING the reprinting of *The Skeleton Clutch*, by Stanley L. Larnach, in *The Story Paper Collector* No. 56, two readers wrote regarding some of the "blood" titles as given in the article. One of the letters reads:

DEAR EDITOR:

It was with much interest that I read Stanley L. Larnach's article *The Skeleton Clutch* in S.P.C. No. 56. Unfortunately, in compiling his *A Gothic Bibliography* the late Dr. Montague Summers made a number of mistakes in titles and subtitles — due to misinformation — as did J. P. Quaine when compiling his catalogue.

The late John Medcraft, in his *Bibliography of the Penny Bloods of Edward Lloyd*, most probably hits the nail on the head when he says in the preface: *The late "Barry Ono" complicated matters by a tendency to alter titles and subtitles which he thought were insufficiently "fierce."* To this may be added the fact the British Museum are most unreliable.

Thus, anyone preparing a catalogue without actually having the items before him cannot do so with any definite accuracy. I

believe John Medcraft's *Bibliography* to be reliable, for he told me he actually had the items — I did in fact see most of them when visiting him from time to time.

May I therefore be permitted a few corrections to items in the *Summers Bibliography* and J. P. Quaine's catalogue (as quoted by Mr. Larnach)?

Varney the Vampire; or, *The Secret of the Grey Turret* is incorrect. The sub-title is *The Feast of Blood. The Secret of the Grey Turret* is the sub-title of *The Black Monk*.

The sub-title of *Pedlar's Acre* is *The WIFE of Seven Husbands*.

The earlier *Black-Eyed Susan* (1845) was in 25 numbers. This was a second edition.

Mabel; or, *The CHILD of the Battlefield* (54 numbers).

The Lady in Black; or, *The Widow and the Wife* (71 numbers. 1847. Prest).

Helen Porter; or, *A Wife's Tragedy and a Sister's Trials: A Secret of the Sewers*. This title is persistently misquoted.

LEONARD PACKMAN

Ronald Rouse wrote making the same points as Mr. Packman,

plus a few additional ones. Extracts from his letter follow:

"I note the titles quoted as not being mentioned in Summers' *Bibliography*. As I have some of these, some at least definitely were published. But some of these titles have been 'doctored' and mistakes made in others. With regard to *The Wild Witch of the Glen*, I don't think it was ever published by Edward Lloyd. It was written by 'Wizard' and published by Thomas White, Strand, who also published *George Barnwell*.

"I never heard of *The Dance of Death*; or, *The Hangman's Sweetheart*, published 1874. *The Dance of Death*; or, *The Hangman's Plot* was published about 1866 by Newsagents Publishing Company. I suppose this is the one.

"Neither have I heard of *Mysteries of a Dissecting Room*, 1846, although there were similar titles. There was *Secrets of the Dissecting Room*, published in six numbers, publisher unknown.

"I have all these mentioned and others, such as *Mysteries of Bedlam*; or, *The Annals of a Madhouse*, and *Melina the Murderess*. One or two of the other titles listed I have not heard of. They may be made-up, ones like *The Morgue-Keeper's Daughter*. Others which I think were concocted are *Varney the Vulture*; or, *The*

Footsteps of the Doomed, and *The Vampire's Dream*; or, *Ten Different Ways to the Scaffold*. Whether they were or not, they have never come my way.

"RONALD ROUSE."

A COPY of Leonard Packman's letter was sent to Stanley Larnach. As Mr. Larnach's reply seemed to cover the additional points, printed above, made by Ronald Rouse in his later-received letter, this letter was not forwarded. Mr. Larnach's reply reads:

DEAR EDITOR:

On the face of it Leonard Packman's criticism was well-merited, although some of it was based upon an omission in *Biblioneus*. Between *Varney the Vampire* and or, *The Secret of the Grey Turret* the following words were omitted: "or, *The Feast of Blood*" and "*The Black Monk*." Otherwise, with the exception of the list from Mr. Quaine's catalogue, the titles were merely transcribed from Montague Summers' *Bibliography*. That I was fully aware of errors there is indicated by my final observation that it should be used with caution.

The "blood" of which the title Mr. Packman says is frequently misquoted seems to me to have a number of "right"

titles. Who is to say which should be used?

1) Mr. Packman says it is *Helen Porter*; or, *A Wife's Tragedy and a Sister's Trials. A Secret of the Sewers.*

2) John Medcraft gives it as *Helen Porter*; or, *A Wife's Tragedy and a Sister's Trials. A Secret of the Sewers of London*, and notes that the title is persistently misquoted.

3) Summers lists it as *Helen Porter*; or, *A Wife's Tragedy and a Sister's Trial. A Romance.*

4) A catalogue issued by Francis Edwards transcribes the title as *Helen Porter*; or, *A Wife's Tragedy and a Sister's Trials. A Romance, by the author of Amy; or, Love and Madness.* This agrees substantially with Summers.

5) My own copy is entitled *A Wife's Tragedy: A Secret of the Sewers of London. A Romance. London, 1847.*

Undoubtedly this "blood" was issued with more than one title, a state of affairs by no means unknown with Lloyd. What is the use of asking which is "right"?

Agnes Primrose; or, *The Wreck of the Heart* was also issued as *The Wreck of the Heart*; or, *Agnes Primrose.* Every list I have seen gives the title of another "Lloyd" as *Alice HORNE*; or, *The Revenge of the Blighted One.* My own copy spells it as *Alice HOME*, and the surname is so spelled throughout

the text. My own copy of *The Lady in Black*; or, *The Widow and the Wife. A Romance*, agrees with Len Packman.

The problem of Lloyd's titles is not a simple one, and is not solved merely by transcribing a title from one copy. I wish it could be. Some day a full bibliography may cover all of the variant titles—or should. It would require an examination of as many copies as possible.

STANLEY L. LARNACH

PROOFS of these three pages were airmailed to Leonard Packman for his comment. Mr. Packman wrote:

"Thanks for your letter with the 'bloods' proofs. It is as well that you sent them, for, seeing that I was quoting from the John Medcraft *Bibliography*, I find that I omitted two words from a sub-title. I refer to page 111, 1), wherein Mr. Larnach quotes me as giving the sub-title of *Helen Porter* as (finally) *A Secret of the Sewers.* I should have written *A Secret of the Sewers of London*, which, as Mr. Larnach states, is the title given by Mr. Medcraft. I apologise for the omission of the words of *London.* I can only plead that having, at that time, just recovered from a severe illness I was not at my best.

"LEONARD PACKMAN."

JACK, SAM, AND PETE

By GEORGE CECIL FOSTER

I WONDER how many people remember Jack, Sam, and Pete, the once well-known characters of S. Clarke Hook, who appeared weekly in *The Marvel*. I am told that no-one collects their stories any more, and that interest in them is almost dead. Certainly nothing about them has been published for thirty years, and that is a long time; sufficiently long for them to cease to be remembered. Yet *The Marvel* with the Jack, Sam, and Pete stories was contemporary with the first *Magnets* and *Gems*, and continued publication for a number of years after the First World War.

The Marvel, indeed, with its Jack, Sam, and Pete tales, was my own first introduction to the world of Old Boys' Books, as they are now termed. It was one of the early adventures called *Mountain Foes* and was a good story, which made me want to buy the next number and, later on, collect earlier issues. S. Clarke could write a good story.

Charles Hamilton, the creator of Billy Bunter, knew S. Clarke Hook and has recently described him to me as a *very pleasant old chap*. I remember one

occasion, before 1914, when their characters met. Mr. Hamilton, as Martin Clifford, sent the St. Jim's boys to London—I think to do some Christmas shopping—and there Herries' bulldog, Towser, met Pete's dog, Rory, in Regent Street. Nothing would convince Herries that a narrowly-averted fight had not saved Rory, though the opinion of his friends was that Rory would have made mincemeat of Towser. Later on, when Rory was in peril in the *Serpentine*, he was rescued by Tom Merry.

Pete, the principal character in the tales, was a negro, very strong, a first-class boxer, and a good ventriloquist. In *Pete's Boyhood*, which appeared in No. 6 of *The Boys' Friend* 3d. Library, he is shewn as living and having been born in Zanzibar, which makes him a British subject. In No. 23, *Pete's Schooldays*, he arrives in England. In *Pete at Eighteen*, No. 9, he is in Cape Town.

These are stories of Pete on his own, but he first met Jack and Sam in No. 2 of the *Library*, called *Jack, Sam, and Pete's Treasure Hunt*. The scene is laid at the foot of the Andes. Jack Owen is an Englishman who is

an Oxford undergraduate, and Sam Grant, a young American.

Curiously enough, in No. 1 of the *Library*, issued at the same time as No. 2, it is stated on the first page, *For many a year have these staunch comrades travelled together.*

THE TIMING of these stories was distinctly odd. No. 2 of *The Boys' Friend Library*, to which I have referred, was not the introduction of the characters to readers. They had been appearing for some years before in *The Marvel*, which began as a halfpenny paper, later starting a new series at a penny. They had also appeared in the weekly *Boys' Friend*, from which the *Library* took its name.

They met, by the way, in a setting very characteristic of S. Clarke Hook's stories—a kind of English "pub" or inn situated at the foot of the Andes! Such an establishment appeared nearly everywhere the trio went. The landlord was frequently a German, although occasionally a Spaniard, but the place, whether it was in South America, Darkest Africa, or elsewhere, was always like an English country inn. This, of course, solved the language difficulty, although it made others. It has to be admitted that S. Clarke Hook, although he could tell an excellent story,

was not good at local colour. In *Pete in Canada* (No. 18 of the *Library*) Pete pays his way with British gold sovereigns, and in *Pete's School* (No. 122), which was situated in British Columbia, pounds, shillings, and pence are used as currency!

It has been said of S. Clarke Hook that he was quite capable of putting a kangaroo into Africa if he felt like it, but I think that was an exaggeration. He did once put a rhinoceros into South America, but that had escaped from a circus!

The stories in *The Marvel* sometimes went into a series in which the characters toured England, with such titles as *Pete in Leeds* and *Pete in Bradford*. Then they would return to the wilds, which many readers preferred, and which certainly gave the author wider scope for his imagination. People were not then so critical of detail as they have since become. It was not long since Ballantyne had made coconuts on his *Coral Island* grow as they are seen in shops, never knowing that they had any outer casing. And Rider Haggard in *King Solomon's Mines* had made an eclipse of the sun last for two hours, unaware that by no manner of means could such an event last longer than seven minutes. S. Clarke Hook could take many more liberties

with his local colour than anyone now can.

THERE WERE several "series" in the stories. One was that of *De Old Hoss*, Pete's balloon, in which they drifted over the world. Later, with the march of progress, they had an aeroplane. Then there was the *Steam Man*, an automatic man, driven by steam, which Pete bought. It would, occasionally, get out of control and smash its way through other people's doors and greenhouses and similar places, greatly to their detriment. Sometimes a fourth character would attach himself, for a time, to the trio. Ira, the Huron Chief, was one of these, who accompanied Jack, Sam, and Pete for a considerable period. Later, after he left them, they were joined by a boy called Algy, who, to my

mind, never fitted in. This was when the stories were nearing their end.

The first touch of inflation during the First World War caused *The Boys' Friend* 3d. *Library* to become *The Boys' Friend* 4d. *Library*, the type smaller and the books thinner. *The Marvel* for its last few years was similarly affected. Then there came a day when a story appeared, *The Rollicking Adventures of Jack, Sam, and Pete*, not by S. Clarke Hook but by Gordon Maxwell. Gordon Maxwell continued to write about the characters for some time. The last *Library* issue I have is *The Sport-Shy School*, by this author, in which Pete was engaged as Sports Master at Saintsbury College.

So much for Jack, Sam, and Pete. They were great fun, while they lasted.

HAL STONE

THE DEATH occurred in January last of Hal Stone, whose home was in Gordon, New South Wales, Australia, at the age of 84. Mr. Stone was known to present-day amateur journalists and "old boys' books" collectors as the father of Leon Stone. Hal Stone was a life-long amateur journalist, and in the early days of the century he

travelled around the world "on a shoe-string," visting fellow ajs in Britain and the United States.

TOD SLAUGHTER

NEWS HAS COME of the death, on February 20th last, of Tod Slaughter, actor noted for his playing the part of Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, at the age of 70.

There Was No Real Sweeney Todd!

Continued From Page 102

November 21st, 1846, and ran to No. 24, March 20th, 1847. There were 37 chapters and the title was *The String of Pearls*, subtitled *A Romance*. No author's name was given, but the editor was Edward Lloyd.

In 1847 a play was performed in the theatre at Hoxton under the title *A String of Pearls; or, The Fiend of Fleet Street*.

ANOTHER remarkable thing regarding the authenticity of the story is that in 1835 Prest published a weekly paper entitled *The Magazine of Curiosity and Wonder*. Each week this paper contained small stories of all the strange people, freaks, and eccentric individuals of all times. All these stories were true and were 100% checked for accuracy. Altogether there were two hundred of these stories, and not one mention of a character named Sweeney Todd.

As some of the characters in his weekly paper were minor ones, it seems very hard to believe that Prest would have left out Todd if the story was true, especially if he was to write a world-renowned story about this character a few years later.

A play of Sweeney Todd was produced at the Bower Theatre in 1862, which is much earlier than the one produced at the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, in 1878.

One of the main difficulties in finding information as to whether Todd did exist has been uncertainty regarding the period in which he might have lived. By the dress and shaving tools in the "painting" it might be the early 17th century.

THE "BLOOD" of Todd has been famous for many years and was even more famous in the days when the play was produced. I am quite sure that in those days people who were interested in the origin of the story (if true) would have known if there had been a person named Todd who lived in Fleet Street.

Another point is that in the early part of the 18th century there were issued "Chap-books" of every trial of any importance and these were published by dozens of firms. Why is it that none about Sweeney Todd were ever issued?

DURING THE 1880's there were some very old houses in Fleet Street and, according to Prest, Todd was supposed to have lived at 186, next door to St. Dunstan's Church. The pie-shop where the barber's victims went was located in Bell Yard, a narrow street which is still by the Law Courts. The popular belief in Sweeney Todd's reality was strongly supported in 1880 when a large pit of bones was found under the cellars of No. 186. Everyone who believed in the authenticity of Todd said: *Here are the remains of his victims.* But on police investigation the explanation was simple: the old St. Dunstan's Church, rebuilt about 1830, used to stand east and west, and a portion of the old church vaults ran under No. 186—hence the bones!

I WOULD HAVE liked to have found that there was a person named Todd who was a barber and lived in Fleet Street;

but one thing has been gleaned, and that is, the remarkable coincidence that there was an S. Todd whose occupation was that of pearl-stringer (*The String of Pearls*), and who lived just off Fleet Street. It is quite possible that Prest saw this name and occupation whilst walking along Fleet Street, and so the name for his story was suggested to him.

— W. O. G. LOFTS

THE FORGOING paragraphs are excerpts from letters written by Mr. Lofts while he was delving into the subject of Sweeney Todd. His latest reference to it at the time this page was being prepared for the press suggests that the heading for a further report may have to be changed:

I have found something else which may support the idea that there was a person named Todd, but I still have to test a lot of theories.

Watch S. P. C. for further developments! — W. H. G.

For the too-frequent appearance of typographical errors in this issue, our regrets. We are garbed in the well-known sackcloth and ashes but call attention to just one of the errors: p. 108, col. 1, line 10, the title of the Rookwood story should read "Tea With Mr. Manders."

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