

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JANUARY 1962

No. 77 :: Vol. 4

S. P. C. 10, 75, 76: A READER'S COMMENTS

I FOUND *The Story Paper Collector* Number 10 (reprint) most interesting. The frequent mention of, and intense interest in, books Victorian, show how times have changed. Just a mere nineteen years and most of those old "blood and thunder" lovers are no more with us, gone along with Jack Harkaway, Blue-skin, and Claude Duval. What is left now is mostly of Charles Hamilton's creation. When we have travelled a further nineteen years will there then be a new era of frantic searching for, and collecting of, the strip-cartoon picture periodicals of the 'fifties and 'sixties by those ruddy-cheeked, laughing youngsters who, complete with school satchel, travel more or less unwillingly to school, clattering up the bus I use every morning?

In nineteen years' time, perhaps, Tom Merry and Harry Wharton will be considered in much the same light as Eric (of

Little By Little), while Superman and Captain Marvel, Superboy and Mighty Mouse, will play their part in the next act of our hobby; while we, of the pre-space age, will sit in semi-darkness, clutching our tattered *Magnets* and *Gems* in desperate endeavours to recall our youth!

I WAS MOST interested in the article in S. P. C. Number 75 on J. N. Pentelow, written by G. R. Samways, who knew J. N. P. far more intimately than those of us who find fault with his editing of *The Gem* and *The Magnet* during the difficult years of the First World War. I am one of those who enjoy re-reading the "sub" stories written by J. N. P., because as a boy I was dull enough not to know the difference between a story by Charles Hamilton and one by J. N. Pentelow—or any other substitute writer! Perhaps for that reason I enjoyed the stories

far more than those who were not as dull as I was. On the other hand (and I suspect this to be the true state of things), those who condemn the substitute writers for not being the equal of Charles Hamilton may be condemning, not as early teen-agers for whom *The Gem* and *The Magnet* were principally produced, but as adults.

We can all find fault with the stories by the substitute writers, and as J. N. P. was one he is classified with the others. As Mr. Samways so rightly points out, without J. N. P. we would probably have had no *Gem* and *Magnet*. He was a first-class writer in his own right, and so were some of the other "sub" writers. We can't all be as good as Charles Hamilton!

IN REFERENCE TO Bill Lofts' contribution to S. P. C. Number 76 on the subject of the "sub" writers: I think that if Charles Hamilton had been able to keep pace with requirements, and so had kept the "sub" writers in a state of being "un-born," our hobby would have lacked that touch of salt which makes all things interesting. Many pages of *The Story Paper Collector* and *The Collectors' Digest* have been filled with the pros and cons, and the resultant friendly controversies have made

interesting reading.

Perhaps it is best, when dallying with this topic, to exclude the propensity to adult criticism, and revel in J. N. Pentelow *et al* and all their good or bad works, remembering the debt we owe to them, too, for the happy hours they gave us when our critical talents were submerged, or non-existent, in the beatific state of just being young!

I READ WITH REGRET in Number 76 that S. P. C. may be "placed on the shelf" for an indefinite period. Twenty years of setting type by hand, printing, and publishing a magazine such as S. P. C., involving as it does a large amount of editing and correspondence, is a wonderful achievement.

A periodic rest, a pruning of one's activities, even from a labour of love, may be a good thing. At least, doctors are fond of so advising the over-fifties. Doctors may think they know what is best for the patient, but advice of this sort usually falls on the deaf ears of artists, musicians, poets, and, yes! old boys' book collectors!

Al Fick of *Shambler* has said all there is to say, in the best possible way, and I wish to join him in expressing my many

(Concluded on Page 22)

The Story Paper Collector

No. 77—Vol. 4

Priceless

THESE WERE ONCE GREAT NAMES!

By C. M. DOWN

IN THE COURSE of my long connection with boys' papers published by The Amalgamated Press I had to deal, of course, with many authors whose names were household words to many thousands of boys. Many of the boys of those days are now, I know, readers of *The Old Boys' Book Collector* and they may perhaps be interested in my random recollections of some of the "big name" boys' authors of other days.

The first of these that occurs to me is S. Clarke Hook, author of the immortal Jack, Sam, and Pete stories. One of my jobs when I first joined the A. P. as a junior sub. was to read the proof-pages of *The Marvel*, the big feature of which was the weekly story of these three

famous characters. At the time, I think, *The Marvel* had passed the peak of its popularity—which at one time had been very great—and its circulation was declining somewhat. Jack, Sam, and Pete were losing some of their appeal, though still immensely popular.

At first my own reactions to the stories were of a definitely luke-warm nature. They seemed to me to be incredibly naive and completely divorced from reality. In those days, however, no one asked me for my opinion, so I kept it to myself! Week by week I went on reading these stories, until gradually I began to fall under their spell. Their very simplicity, the elementary humour of their slapstick comedy, began to exercise a peculiar sort of

charm over me. Pete's regular comment to the pompous official whom he was engaged in pushing backwards into a pail of whitewash, "It's lucky for your wife dat you ain't married, old hoss!" began to strike me as funny. Even his perpetual "Yah, yah, yah!" began to amuse rather than irritate me. I became quite a Pete fan.

Jack and Sam—Pete's partners—were for the most part mere ciphers—foils for the extravagant antics of the gigantic negro—who was, incidentally, a multi-millionaire.

The author of these extraordinary stories used to pop in to the office occasionally to see Percy Griffith, the then Editor. He was a dark, dapper man, with a pleasant face and a neat black beard, beginning to turn grey. Always neatly dressed in rather formal dark clothes, he had a very courteous and charming manner with a ready smile. And what a glutton for work S. Clarke Hook was!

At one of these visits he would get, perhaps, a commission for a couple of long stories for *The Boys' Friend 3d. Library*, in addition to his ordinary series for *The Marvel*, and in spite of the fact that each of these *3d. Library* stories was then about 75,000 words in length, he would turn in the whole of the "copy" in

little more than a week—and then ask for more work!

Jack, Sam, and Pete were famous characters in their day and they had a long run; and S. Clarke Hook made hay while the sun shone. While eventually there came a decline in the demand for his stories, Clarke Hook will be remembered by many as one of the most popular boys' authors of the early part of the twentieth century.

TO SHARE THE PAGES of *The Marvel* with S. Clarke Hook came Arthur S. Hardy, with his popular character Tom Sayers, the young boxer. This happened, I think, some time early in the year 1909. Tom Sayers was originally the child of Percy Griffith's brain, Percy being himself something of a boxing fan. Arthur Hardy, however, seized eagerly on the idea, and made of Tom Sayers a character after his own heart. The stories gained a considerable popularity and ran for a long period. Having had to read the proof-pages of dozens of these Tom Sayers stories I will now confess—for the first time!—that I could never raise much enthusiasm for them. Though I count myself a sportsman, I am not a boxing fan. I have occasionally been to a big fight, and have always come away with the same impression—

namely that the behaviour of the majority of the crowd shows human nature at its most deplorable! However, no doubt I'm wrong. Certainly Arthur S. Hardy would never have agreed with me. He was exactly what one would have expected him to be, from reading his stories, in which he revealed his own personality to a remarkable degree. Tall, good-looking, and debonaire, Arthur Hardy was keenly interested in boxing, racing, football, cricket—and in fact, in every form of sport, and there were few sports about which he could not write a good story.

He dressed in smartly cut tweed suits, usually of a somewhat pronounced check design, wore his bowler hat at a rakish angle and smoked large cigars. He was a genial and companionable fellow, and his delight was on a Friday night, after collecting a fat cheque from the office, to go off with one of his cronies to the West End of London for a slap-up dinner with a bottle of wine, and afterwards to repair, large cigar in mouth, to the National Sporting Club or to some other sporting venue, where there was a fight to be witnessed.

For many years Arthur Hardy's sporting stories were a feature of a number of A. P. publications and there must be few

readers of *The Old Boys' Book Collector* who have not read some of them.

THEN DO YOU remember David Goodwin? His real name was Sidney Gowing, and for many years he was a very popular author, whose large output was mostly published by the A. P. Gowing was a writer of great ability, who took a great deal of trouble over his stories, each one of which he polished and re-polished most conscientiously, until he was satisfied that it measured up to the high standard he set himself. He was very versatile, too, and regularly wrote the big autumn serial for *Answers* and stories for the magazines and for the old *Penny Pictorial*, as well as serials for many of the boys' papers. Few of the popular writers of those days had a larger public than David Goodwin—and none was more deserving of success. Where his stories were woven around particular industries, such as cotton mills or iron foundries, he would take great pains to familiarise himself thoroughly with the conditions in those industries before starting on the story.

You would rely on him to get his facts right. He was a comparatively slow worker and tapped out his stories on the

typewriter direct. He must have turned out millions of words in this way, but in his case practice did not make perfect! His "copy" was an awful mess and barely readable! The quality, however, was there all right. In this matter of his almost indecipherable "copy," Sidney Gowing was a great contrast to Charles Hamilton, who also worked directly on to the machine, but whose "copy" was a miracle of neatness, page after page of practically flawless typescript.

Gowing was by nature an out-of-doors man. He lived in a charming old farmhouse in Norfolk and delighted in country life. He rode and shot and lived the life of a country gentleman, when he was not working. A pleasant and cultured man with easy manners, he did not enjoy very good health, and when he overworked, as he not infrequently did, a spell of illness usually resulted.

AN AUTHOR of those days, whom old readers of *The Boys' Friend* will remember very well, was Duncan Storm. His stories of the Boys of *The Bombay Castle* ran in that paper for a long time and gained considerable popularity. There was a freshness and originality about these yarns of the famous schoolship which reflected the breezy

personality of "Skipper" Gilbert Floyd, who wrote them. Floyd was at one time on the staff of *The Amalgamated Press* as a sort of departmental manager under Hamilton Edwards, but being of an independent mind—and having independent means—he resigned and took to writing, in a rather leisurely fashion. He was a man of wide experience, well read, and with literary tastes. He had a passion for the sea and for ships and his favourite holiday was to embark as a passenger on a cargo ship bound for foreign parts. He would hob-nob with the skipper throughout a long, leisurely voyage, and when on his return he blew into the office, tanned to a deep bronze, he had a fund of sea stories and experiences from which he drew freely in his writings. He was a big man who took a broad view of life and he was always ready to help a young sub-editor with kindly advice.

Floyd took a sort of avuncular interest in me and also in Hinton, whom he invariably addressed as "Trooper," and on occasion we used to visit him on the Norfolk Broads, where he had a sailing yacht, and where he usually spent his summers. In the winter he lived near London, unless he was abroad. Gilbert Floyd only wrote

to please himself, and there was a certain charm in his writing. Under the sharp spur of necessity—which he never felt—I think he might have produced work of really high quality.

As I write, I have before me a novel called *Sea Lavender*, by Sidney Floyd Gowing, published by Hodder and Stoughton. This is an airy trifle about a seaside pierrot troupe written by Gilbert Floyd in collaboration with Sidney Gowing (David Goodwin). On the flyleaf, in Floyd's handwriting, is the inscription, *To G. M. D. from Storm, Goodwin & Co., Ltd. August 1925*. The book is excellent entertainment, being written in a light and humorous vein, with a love interest handled with a delicate touch—that was Floyd's department! I often dip into the book for the pleasure of recognising the bits that were Floyd's and the bits that were Gowing's.

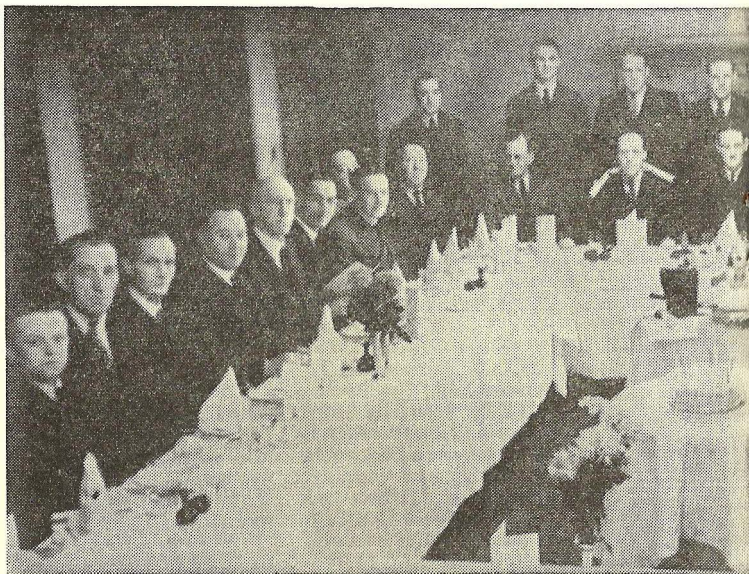
By the time that book was finished, Floyd and Gowing were heartily sick of one another. It nearly caused the break-up of a lifetime's friendship—but not quite, I am glad to say.

ONE MORE STALWART of the old days, and I am done. Sidney Drew—that name will ring a bell with many of you, I am sure! Sidney Drew—or E. J. Murray, which was his

proper name—had been writing for years before I came upon the editorial scene, and almost all the A. P. papers seem to have featured him prominently at one time or another. He wrote good, sound, if not particularly inspiring stories, and he specialised in somewhat peculiar characters like Gan Waga, his famous Eskimo. Ultimately, I am afraid, I found that Gan Waga began to bore me personally, but there remained a large body of readers who could not have enough of him.

E. J. Murray was himself a rather curious character. Tall and slight, with a bushy "Old Bill" moustache, he spoke in a quick, staccato fashion, as if each sentence were literally squeezed out of him. He lived on the South Coast, where he was able to indulge to the full his passion for sea fishing. A rod and line, and a pier from which to fish—that was all Murray asked.

He was a bachelor, living with his mother, to whom he was devoted, and his wants were few. He liked to work only when it was necessary to earn some money. Having delivered the ms. of a commissioned serial and received the money for it, he would disappear for about three months. When money became tight again he would suddenly turn up at the office, looking for



AN O.A.E.O. MEETING: MEANING—

ONCE EACH YEAR from the early 1920's until the late 1930's an O. A. E. O. Gathering was held. With a different Chairman and special guest each year, it could be

regarded as an R. T. Eves group of Amalgamated Press Contributors Annual Party. Here are the names of those in the group pictured above:

Seated, Left to Right:

- 1—Will Gibbons.
- 2—S. H. Chapman.
- 3—E. L. McKeag.
- 4—T. Laidler.

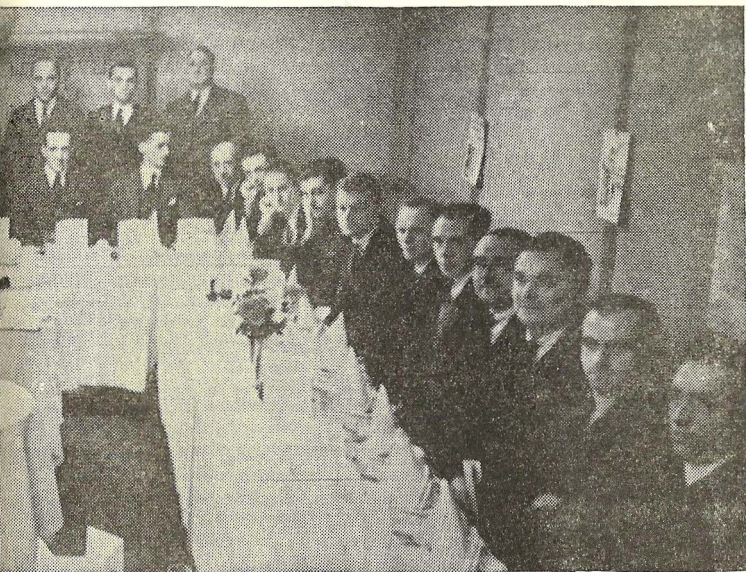
5—C. H. Blake.

- 6—W. B. Home-Gall.
- 7—W. Buckley.
- 8—J. W. Bobin
- 9—Lewis Carlton.

10—L. H. Pratt.

- 11—S. Boddington.
- 12—R. T. Eves.
- 13—Reginald Kirkham.
- 14—Horace Phillips.

Picture printed from a Scan-a-graver plate by *The Transcona News*, Transcona.



—“OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER”

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 15—G. M. Dodshon. | 22—E. R. Home-Gall. | 2—Derek Phillips. |
| 16—D. Westfield. | 23—C. Eaton Fearn. | 3—L. E. Ransome. |
| 17—Leslie Swainson. | 24—Bernard Smith. | 4—R. Jameson. |
| 18—Stewart Pride. | 25—A. V. Crawley. | 5—C. L. Pearce. |
| 19—D. Birnage. | | 6—J. W. Wheway. |
| 20—R. Simmons. | Standing, Left to Right: | 7—Draycott M. Dell. |
| 21—J. McCail. | 1—J. McKibbon. | |

☆ *It was intended that this list should include the activity—editor, author, or artist—of each individual, but space did not work out to allow this to be done. It is hoped that it will possible to give this information in The Story Paper Collector Number 78.*

The photographic print and the list of names were supplied by W. O. G. Lofts.

work. His "copy" was unique in that he always turned it in entirely hand-written. He used the ordinary lined school exercise book, every page of which he covered with his small, closely-written, but very neat, handwriting. There was scarcely a correction or an erasure in a dozen pages of it, but I found it very trying to read. When I first had dealings with him I expostulated vigorously: "Why can't you get your ms. typed like everybody else?" I asked, not unreasonably, I think. Murray smiled, almost pityingly. "Never do, never have done," he jerked out.

"Printers can read it—have done for years—you'll soon get used to it!" I found this was true and I had to get used to it!

Murray remained the only author who sent in anything but typewritten "copy."

S. Clarke Hook, Arthur S. Hardy, David Goodwin, Duncan Storm, Sidney Drew—these names were once familiar to thousands of boys. Not one of these writers is alive now, but their work still lives in the memory of many an old reader of the classic boys' papers of the past.

☆ *This article was written for Tom Hopperton's Old Boys' Book Collector. It not having been used in his magazine, Mr. Hopperton has kindly made it available for use in The Story Paper Collector. Mr. C. M. Down was for many years Editor of The Gem and The Magnet and others in the "Companion Papers" group.*

A READER'S COMMENTS

(Concluded from Page 14)

thanks for hours of happy reading, and the fervent wish that *The Story Paper Collector* will be with us for many years to come.

Although my collection of S.P.C. only begins with Number 44, I readily understand the huge amount of conscientious endeavour—and love—which the 76 numbers contain, and I am sure it is appreciated by all in our circle.

—MAURICE KUTNER



TWO-WAY BLOOD TRANSFUSION!

By TOM HOPPERTON

ONE OF MY minor regrets is that by the time I arrived in this vale of tears the gory glory of the blood-and-thunder theatre was dimmed almost to extinction. I was not too late to catch stock company revivals of *Maria Martin*, *The Face at the Window*, and *The Man They Could Not Hang*, and the occasional touring *Sweeney Todd* still braved it out, but the rampant old war-horses of transpontine melodrama had long since gone to the knacker's.

A pity! They were so intimately connected with the penny dreadful and the older boys' papers that they hold an unusual and strangely unexplored interest for the collector of those works. There was, in fact, a continual two-way blood transfusion going on. A successful melodrama was promptly seized on by the penny-number writers, while the playwrights reciprocated by swooping down on a popular blood and transferring it to the boards.

The piracy was open and unabashed, with little juggling of titles to obscure it. It was a frank

attempt to exploit the notoriety gained in the other medium, with an added sting from the dramatists in that they forestalled the writers by supplying their own endings. Charles Dickens vainly clamoured to high heaven about the staging of his novels with improvised endings before his parts-issue was completed. Lesser fry saved their breath, while G. W. M. Reynolds accepted the inevitable and commended the performances when *The Mysteries of London*, *The Bronze Statue*; or, *The Virgin's Kiss*, and others of his tales received similar treatment.

The writers were, as it happened, the first offenders. When penny-number publishing came in, in the 1830's, T. P. Prest and Co. found a reservoir of ready-made material in the popular theatre. J. T. Haines' *My Poll* and *My Partner Joe* and Douglas Jerrold's *Black Eyed Susan* had both grossed over £70,000 in their first runs at the Surrey. Such material, re-worked into serial romances, was assured of success. But long before the authors cleared up the arrears, as

it were, dog ate dog with avid impartiality.

Taking 65 Lloyd's dreadfuls of which dramatic versions can be traced, his writers used 33 earlier plays, 27 dramas were drawn from his more-or-less original stories, and five cannot be determined. The proportions would run similarly through the productions of George Purkiss and the other publishers.

THE PLAYS throw some interesting light on disputed titles. Montague Summers may or may not be right in ascribing *Varley the Vulture*; or, *The Track of the Doomed* to Lloyd, but *Varley the Vulture*; or, *A Race for Life* certainly ran at the Britannia in 1845 and again in 1860. *Varney the Vampire* was staged too, and was not by a long, long way the first vampire play.

Is it *Alice Home* or *Alice Home*? Both, it appears, but the original play was *Alice Home*; or, *The Revenge of the Blighted One*, 1843. *Sawney Bean, the Man-eater of Midlothian* may be a faked title, but it would be amazing if no dreadful writer grasped so luscious a theme, particularly as there were two plays, *Sawney Bean, the Terror of the North*, Coburg Theatre, 1823, and *Sawney Bean the Cannibal*, City of London Theatre, 1864. A less likely subject for a pantomime

is difficult to imagine, but there was even one of those—*Sawney Beane*; or, *Harlequin and the Man-Eater* at Sadler's Wells in 1839.

A group of theatres, including the Surrey, Britannia, City of London, Bower, Standard, and what is now the Old Vic., snapped up almost everything to come out, whether *The Black Band*; or, *Mysteries of Midnight* (possibly the first of the super-duper Master Criminals) or J. F. Smith's sedater serials such as *Amy Lawrence*; or, *The Freemason's Daughter*, which invariably were staged as soon as—or before—he finished them. Some character actor had a plum in *The Blue Dwarf. A Romance*, by Lady Esther Hope (and I fancy "Lady Esther" will take some locating in the *Red Book of the Aristocracy*). Fred Marchant put this on at the Britannia as *The Blue Dwarf*; or, *Mystery, Love, and Crime* (1862), which must be where Percy B. St. John got his sub-title when he dug up Sathwa to transplant him into Hogarth House's *The Blue Dwarf. A Tale of Love, Mystery, and Crime*.

Highwaymen naturally abounded, with Dick Turpin in at the early doors. Hollywood may think it devised the horse-opera: it should take a look at *Dick Turpin's Ride to York*; or, *Bonny Black Bess. An Equestrian Drama*

by H. M. Milner. The British Drama League catalogue this as c1820, which is likely to persuade some unwary student that Harrison Ainsworth (*Rookwood*, 1834) did not invent the Ride—or at least steal it from “Swift Nicks” Nevison—and send him haring down a false trail looking for Ainsworth’s sources. The League’s copy must be coverless: the pictorial wrapper states: “First performed at Astley’s Amphitheatre on Whit Monday, 1836.”

Rookwood was repeatedly dramatised, and no play had a more grisly or effective an opening. The hero has such a shockingly bad memory that he descends into the family vault at midnight and cuts off his dead mother’s hand, which he wears round his neck to remind him to avenge her. This, of course, was before the days of Pelmanism. But Ainsworth did not originate Turpin’s popularity; he only boosted it to new heights. *Richard Turpin*, *the Highwayman* (sans Ride) was being played as far back as 1819.

One actor, R. A. Roberts, toured a remarkable Turpin version in which he played every part but Black Bess. His rivals asserted that if he could only have found a convincing make-up he would have played her, too, and there is perhaps something in this, because the

protean Roberts also toured a specially concocted *Cruel Coppinger* (a gory wrecker) in which he *did* take every role.

UP TO EDWARD LLOYD’S withdrawal from number publishing about 1855, such works had been addressed to the unsophisticated in general. A more specific appeal to a younger element then developed, with Edwin J. Brett’s Newsagents’ Publishing Company soon achieving dominance. One would expect these stories to have had less appeal to the playwrights: on the contrary, Colin Hazlewood and William Travers seized on them wholesale. *Spring-Heeled Jack*, *The Wild Boys of London*, *Moonlight Jack*, *the King of the Road*, *Wildfire Ned*; or, *The Skeleton Crew*, *The Boy Detective*, *The Boy Pirate* (a married man!), *Black Rollo*, *Ivan the Terrible*, *The Jolly Dogs of London*, *The Work Girls of London*, and even *Lion Limb*, *the Boy King of the South Sea Islands* were all rushed onto the stage. True, *Charley Wag* and similar competitors suffered in silence, but Brett was not the man to let revenue slip through his fingers without a struggle.

It is only on N. P. Co. bloods that I have seen the legend: “The Right of Dramatising is Reserved,” although if Brett ever managed to enforce his claim he

was more than lucky. In an action fought by Charles Reade in 1861, the Court made the peculiar ruling that unauthorised performance of a fictional work was not a breach of copyright, but printing the dramatisation was.

After Brett turned "respectable," the same culprits raided nearly all the serials in *The Boys of England* and *Young Men of Great Britain* and he began to advertise that he reserved the dramatic rights in any story he published. With or without his approval, and probably without, *Alone in the Pirate's Lair*, *Wild Charley*, *the Link Boy*, *The Night Guard*; or, *The Secret of the Five Masks*, *Poor Ray*, *the Drummer Boy*, *The Black Tower of Linden*, and *Rupert Dreadnought* were only some of those staged.

Brett drove a flourishing trade in toy theatres and plays therefore, mainly derived from his serials with the odd old blood such as *The Skeleton Horseman* and *Jack Cade* included. It is possible that part of his activity here was to preserve dramatic copyright under a "copyright performance" procedure. In any case, by the mid-'seventies the wicked had ceased from troubling so completely that even such "naturals" as *Jack Harkaway* and *Handsome Harry of the Fighting Belvedere* (which owed much

to *The Boy Pirate*) escaped kidnapping.

PETTY LARCENY did persist, as shown by H. Chance Newton, who incidentally reveals how some of the old playsmiths could notch up a couple of hundred plays. He is writing about Colin Hazlewood, long the resident dramatist at the Hoxton Britannia and, for £3 a week, frequently expected to nail together a play a fortnight. At that rate he could hardly rival Shakespeare. . . .

He had a very good method, however. He used to take in all the popular periodicals of the time, such as The London Journal, The London Reader, Reynolds's Miscellany, The Welcome Guest and other such publications, alas! long since defunct. To these Hazlewood added all the penny bloods of his young days, and later of mine, such as The Boys of England, The Young Men of Great Britain, and all the highwaymen stories and similar cheap books.

Hazlewood, or one of us working with him, would run through these periodicals, jotting down the main incidents in the stories thereof, and scissoring out here and there sundry aphorisms, axioms and moral sentiments, and so forth. These were docketed alphabetically, and when Colin (a dear old fellow) was engaged in writing, or sticking down, a

new play for the Brit., etc., he or his assistants would take down from the shelf sundry envelopes containing these aphorisms, such as "Ambition is" etc., or "Kindness of heart," etc., and would pop these moral, patriotic and other reflections into the playscript then under way.

THERE ARE a number of factors explaining the shift in emphasis, but the only one to concern us here is that the theatre was developing and boys' weeklies were not. The success of *The Boys of England* in 1866 tied publishers down to slavish imitation of its format until the Harmsworths disrupted the market nearly thirty years later. Worse still, the directorship was so complacently static that Brett's much-fanfares *Boys' Coloured Pictorial* in 1903 turned out to be an inferior re-issue of *Boys of the Empire* (1888), and it re-serialised for the fifth time Vane St. John's hardy *Who Shall Be Leader?* which first began in Number 1 of *The Boys of England*.

Melodrama persisted for many more years, but it found its inspiration elsewhere. The final flicker (since television is outside our scope) came about

twenty years ago, when Tod Slaughter toured *Jack the Ripper* by that George Walkley whom, as a boy, I followed as the "heavy" in Joseph Millan's Stock Company. Slaughter kept brandishing a knife, glittering it in the blue lime, and showed admirable restraint by not once bursting forth into "I'LL POLISH HIM OFF!" But Walkley destroyed any psychological coherance by making Jack murder his harmless and respectable landlady, and the last scene opened with Jack the Ripper in the condemned cell.

Just as I was wondering why he should so flagrantly flout the facts, I found out. It was so that he could pinch William Corder's death-cell frenetics from *Maria Martin*; or, *The Murder in the Red Barn*, and so provide Tod with an agonized ten minute soliloquy of terror and remorse. It was a poor play, but I came away delighted. The sanguifuminous drama was born in ruthless piracy, plagiarism, and predation: on its death bed it remained staunch to what I suppose one might term its principles.



LAST-PAGE NOTES

TO REMAIN ON the S.P.C. mailing list it will be necessary in future to acknowledge receipt of at least one in each four issued. There are two reasons for this ruling: 1) so that copies will not be sent to those who are no longer interested; 2) to cut down the number of copies required.

This acknowledgment ruling does not apply to Libraries or active amateur journalists.

"PUTTY" GRACE has now arrived at Rookwood [in *Knock-out*], but has been renamed Simple Simon, the reason being, I suppose, that he was there before he arrived, as it were, because the stories are not being given in the original order. It is the Levison-Snipe business over again.—T.H.

KNOCKOUT ANNUAL for 1962 has two 5-chapter Rookwood stories and a 2-page *Who's Who at Rookwood*. In one illustration "Dicky" Dalton is not pictured as the athletic young school-

master we knew, but more like a rather tougher Mr. Greely of the Fifth Form: elderly, portly, and bald!

THE VOLUME 3 Title/Contents/Index pages have been printed, as has a reprint of S.P.C. No. 10. Copies sent on request.

D. C. THOMSON papers: *The Victor*, picture-story paper—No. 1, February 25, 1961; *The Beano*, comic paper—No. 1000, September 16, 1961.

Whom We Remember

BERYL PORTER, wife of Tom Porter, Old Hill, Staffs, England, and reader for many years of S.P.C., died on August 7th, 1961. Mrs. Porter was convalescing following surgery when she had a fatal relapse.

J. W. Martin, Sacramento and at times other places in California. Jim Martin also was a long-time reader of S.P.C.; he collected American dime and nickel novels and amateur journals. Details are scanty, but it is reported that Jim passed away in March or April of 1961.

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