

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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THE LOST BOOKS OF BUNTER

MANY WHO READ and enjoyed the works of Frank Richards will remember the several references to the "lost books of Livy," and the regrets of Bunter, Coker, and others that the whole lot had not been lost. Now that Frank Richards is, unfortunately, no longer with us to write his stories, I think that the following, about the lost books of Bunter, will be of interest.

We corresponded over a period of some twenty years, and I have before me a letter, from him to me, under date of October 30th, 1950, in which the following occurs:

No, I never wrote under the name of "Prosper Howard" yet some of my writings did appear under that name, owing to the amazing and extraordinary ideas of the editorial Hinton. It almost made my hair stand on end, when he told me that he was printing some of my stories, under that name, to give P. H. a "leg-up." Who the man

was, I don't know, though I suspect that his surname was Hook. He borrowed from me fairly freely, and I think two or three, perhaps more of my numbers were assigned to him, as well as a lengthy serial, called The School Under Canvas. Hinton was quite an astonishing man, in some ways. Not the only astonishing editor I have known! Indeed, I think I could write a book called Amazing Editors!

I had asked him about the name Prosper Howard, under which some Rylcombe Grammar School stories appeared, and also about the chances of ever reading the completion of that series interrupted by the sudden end of *The Magnet* in 1940. Those which were to come and, to my sorrow—and that of many others—never came, were: *The Battle of the Beaks*—No. 1684, May 25th, 1940; *Bandy Bunter*—No. 1685, June 1st, 1940; *What Happened to Hacker?*—No. 1686, June 8th, 1940; *The Hidden Hand*—No. 1687, June 15th, 1940. Mr.

Richards continued his letter on the matter:

About those old Magnet numbers which never appeared, they are "lost," but I have little doubt that the lost treasure will be discovered some day. I hardly think that the A. P. would be disposed to make me a present of them, if found. They paid for them, like good little boys, though never published; I forget how much, but it must have been about £200. Moreover, that series, though never completed, must have run to at least 150,000 words, so far as it went; and a present-day publisher would, I think, perish of the shock, if asked to publish a book of that length. The fact is, laddie, that I can produce Bunter ad lib and ad infinitum by the simple process of sitting at the typewriter, and tapping the keys so I wouldn't have much use for old stuff.

Your mention of it, reminds me that Merrett had a Bunter story, which he never published. The last I heard of him was several years ago, when he told me he was going to South Africa, to look into publishing possibilities there—the rest was silence! So there is yet another "Bunter" lost to the world! However, there are three booked for next year; so; perhaps, the world will not feel the loss unduly!

I do not remember that name, Merrett, in any connexion with the Bunter stories, though it is

possible, if not probable, that many others may. It would be pleasant to get in touch with Mr. Merrett and the story, which would now be valuable.

NOW TO THE LAST letter I received from Frank Richards, written on October 27th, 1961. In it, he said:

Just lately, I have been making a long-player record—talking about myself, as usual. But an interesting point is that I have written a special Greyfriars School Song in Latin, which is to be set to music and included in the long-player. I think the record is to be put on the market early next year, but no definite date yet. I wonder how many fans will cough up a guinea to hear the old boy chewing the rag on his favourite subject!

An odd thought came to me, that now I shall be able to say with Horace, "non omnia moriar!" Records last longer than the makers thereof, especially when the latter have counted eighty-five birthdays! "Vox Ricardi" will still, like the voice of the turtle, be heard in the land! Somewhat like the Cheshire Cat in Wonderland, who vanished leaving only his grin behind!

That last paragraph was prophetic. Truly Frank Richards has left behind much at which we may grin, laugh, and be amused for many years!

—GEORGE CECIL FOSTER

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Priceless

VICTORIAN KING-PIN

By TOM HOPPERTON

IT IS STRANGE that in over a century of boys' papers only one dominating figure has emerged on the publishing side. That Napoleonic pair, Alfred Harmsworth and D. C. Thomson, conducted their juvenile publications by deputy and, despite fifty years' successful trading, who knows anything of James Henderson? But Edwin James Brett lost no opportunity of impressing his name and fame on his customers, down to the point where he could not even sell a penny stage-front for a toy theatre without cautioning them to look for the facsimile of his signature and so avoid "fraud."

Brett, in fact, worked hard on the legend of himself as the onlie begetter of boys' weeklies and the sole custodian of their purity and worth. When launching *Jack Harkaway's Journal* for

Boys in 1893 he said: "I was the pioneer of youths' literature. No weekly journal for boys existed before I grasped the idea." This, like many of Brett's claims, is demonstrably untrue if taken at its straightforward face value: it is the tricky wording which enabled him to wriggle through and persuade people to take him at his own valuation. That no weekly existed before *The Boys' Companion* in 1865 is obviously a ridiculous assertion, but who is to say when Brett "grasped the idea"?

He would have had to have grasped it pretty early, because he was born as late as 1828 at Canterbury, the son of an Army officer. There is a vagueness about his early years, but he turned up in London as an artist in 1848, where he was a political associate of G. W. M. Reynolds.

Reynolds, of course, was a "Physical-Force" Chartist, an anti-clerical, and a sufficiently unscientific socialist for Karl Marx to growl at him as "a bourgeois adventurer." He remained staunch to his early creeds, but Brett either drifted into orthodoxy or deemed it expedient to submerge his opinions.

Brett was probably wise to divert his talents from art. The few illustrations he made for Harrison's *Blue Dwarf* show a mediocre style and a remarkable perspective in which things grow larger instead of less as they recede in the distance. From the fringe of the trade, he somehow passed into the centre as a partner to a small publisher, Ebenezer Landells, until the latter's death in 1860.

HE THEN JOINED forces with William Lawrence Emmett and Joseph Hardiman, but Hardiman and Brett quickly pulled out, leaving Emmett with *The English Girl's Journal* and creating rancour which was to have later repercussions. Emmett went on with the Temple Publishing Company, while Brett went into the Newsagents' Publishing Company, which was where he really found his feet.

His early efforts were penny-number reprints of the Boys' *Miscellany* serials *Mazeppa* and

Sixteen-String Jack but he soon progressed to original works which became the leaders in the field. *The Boy Detective*, *The Boy Pirate*, *The Skeleton Horseman*; or, *The Shadow of Death*, *The Wild Boys of London*, *The Wild Boys of Paris*; or, *The Mysteries of the Vaults of Death* and the rest are still, without exception, sought-after today, when most of their rivals are forgotten. They were typical "gallows literature," glamorising and romanticising crime and criminals, and well suited to raise the choler of Victorian papas, who would hardly be placated by finding such things as real daggers among the "prize distributions."

This penny-dreadful publishing could be most lucrative, and two of the practitioners were credited by James Greenwood with clearing £8,000 a year each — worth over £20,000 today. "An Old Publisher," writing in 1906, explained the economics. Brett was his own engraver and the artist was generally a beginner. The author was paid £2/10/0 per number, which cost another £2/10/0 to set up in type, and were printed for 5/- per thousand. The sale price to the trade was £2/10/0 per thousand. This payment to the author sounds pretty high. Edward Lloyd paid only 10/- a number some ten years before, although using a

smaller page, and we know that one of the reasons for Bracebridge Hemyng leaving Brett was that the publisher stuck fast at £2/15/0 for a nine-column instalment of the remarkably successful *Jack Harkaway* series, while R. A. H. Goodyear recounted that he could only get £3/3/0 out of Brett for long novelettes and that some of his authors were paid as little as 2/6d a page.

Anyway, even on these figures, a 4,000 sale would clear expenses. Reynolds, who was his own author and always had six or eight tales in numbers, selling anything up to 100,000 a story, must have been well over this £8,000 mark. The 40,000 sale *Charley Wag* clearly earned over £80 a week and while Brett did not divulge his circulations they were considerable. He was perhaps the other £8,000 man, with E. Harrison or George Vickers as the most likely rivals.

THE INCREASING DEMAND for cheap literature brought a surprising number of penny magazines on to the market and the trend was naturally reflected in the juvenile field. The dreadful publishers, who had the contacts and the authors already lined up, were the obvious people to meet the demand, and Lea, Harrison, Emmett, and Brett all tried

their luck. Brett's first venture had the peculiar title of *The Boys' Companion and British Traveller*. It travelled groggily for 33 weeks and then was absorbed by *The Boys' Own Reader*. This took in more new blood at Number 13 by incorporating the short-lived *Boys' Herald*, but the blood must have been anaemic because the *Reader* collapsed at Number 16.

The format of boys' papers had gradually been improving. *The Boys' Journal* pages were only 8¼x5¼", scantily illustrated. *The Boys' Miscellany* pushed them up to 9½x7" and improved the pictures, although these were still distinctly old-fashioned looking woodcuts that Lloyd might well have used twenty years before. Brett now carried the process a step further and on November 27th, 1866, he brought out *Boys of England*, the best-looking journal to have made its appearance, with sixteen 11½x8½" pages for a penny.

Number 1 appeared as "Conducted by Charles Stevens" and published by the Newsagents' Publishing Co. Number 10 was "Conducted by Edwin J. Brett and Charles Stevens." With Number 11, Stevens was pushed out and for the first time appeared what was to figure on the front page of every Brett journal until his death—

"Conducted by Edwin J. Brett."

The fare provided was three serials, *Alone in the Pirate's Lair*, by Stevens, *Who Shall be Leader?*, by Vane St. John, and *Chevy Chase*; or, *The Battle on the Border*, by John Cecil Stagg, plus five pages of oddments, a free gift of the first sheet of characters in a toy play of *Alone in the Pirates' Lair*, and a chance in the distribution of 1,400 prizes headed by two Shetland ponies. The first printing was no doubt optimistic, but the demand was so great that newsagents came to blows about supplies in Brett's shop, and in weeks the circulation steadied itself at the then meritorious figure of 150,000.

BRETT HAD STRUCK OIL, and he was naive enough to believe that others should not dip their buckets in the gusher. Naturally they did, and the first on the scene was his former partner, W. L. Emmett, with *The Young Englishman's Journal*, which had a precisely similar lay-out to *Boys of England*. The acrimony resulting from the split had not been helped by their rivalry as dreadful publishers with such parallel titles as *Crusoe Jack*; *the King of the Thousand Islands* conflicting with *Lion Limb*, *the Boy King of the South Sea Islands*, and *The Poor Boys of London*; or, *Driven to Crime* vying

with *The Wild Boys of London*; or, *The Children of the Night*.

Now, Emmett's paper first appeared on April 13th, 1867, and *Boys of England* went to press three weeks before its nominal publication date. Nevertheless, in his issue of April 27th, Brett began in his replies to correspondents a remarkable stream of vituperation. "Bad imitations got up by men who trade on the good fortunes of others," "It is conducted by a party of unprincipled, uneducated men, in whom no dependence can be placed," "Do not be imposed upon . . . We have no connection," "a low imitation," "gross imitation . . . very contemptible," are average samples, and he even got down to informing a probably imaginary correspondent that it was in a poem by Dr. Watts that he would find the line, "The ants and the Emmets how small they appear." He would have done better to reflect on the Doctor's lines about "Let dogs delight to bark and bite," etc., but instead he proceeded with bald hints that Emmett's prize distribution—which included an outrigger and a yacht—was a fraud, actually getting the words "a swindle" into the mouths of anonymous correspondents.

Emmett held his fire until the end of June, when he really blasted his detractor. "A

conductor, whether of a paper or an omnibus, may be a gentleman or what is vulgarly termed a 'cad,' and the individual in question certainly takes pains to establish his claim . . . to the latter." He pointed out that Brett had never been an editor, real or "sub," and was a very poor hand at his own craft, that he had not included the promised ponies in his prize distribution, and for the first time opened up on the fact that *Boys of England* had been Charles Stevens' conception: ". . . to rob a poor author of his brains, to speculate upon his ideas, and then filch him out of a just share in the profit and fame of their success, this is the basest and meanest infamy . . ."

The warfare continued in words and deeds. Brett brought out *Young Men of Great Britain*, a replica of *Boys of England*, for which he soon claimed another 150,000 circulation. Emmett added *Young Gentlemen of Great Britain* and took the initiative with *The Young Briton*, a halfpenny sheet which he soon promoted to full size and a penny. Incidentally, Ralph Rollington described this, wrongly, as the first halfpenny paper, overlooking George Maddick's *Boys' Halfpenny Paper* (July, 1864). Brett rushed out the abortive *Boys of the World* within three

days and, after a prickly manifesto about publishers who issued halfpenny papers meaning to shove up the price, followed it with *The Boys' Favourite*, which he promised would always remain at a halfpenny. Like every other paper entitled *The Boys' Favourite*, it wasn't, and Number 41 saw its end.

IN ALL, BRETT issued 21 papers (the succeeding Edwin J. Brett, Ltd., adding six more). The leaders were *Boys of England* with 1702 issues (Reprint Series, 574), *Young Men of Great Britain*, 1117 (Reprint Series, 430), *Boys' Comic Journal*, 787, *Halfpenny Surprise*, 600, and *Our Boys' Journal* (a reprint paper), 330. Against this, eleven of them did not reach 70 numbers. This high proportion of failures is partly due to the fact that some were not properly organised but were just dumped on the market at a few days notice in spiteful competition.

Brett could never resist the temptation to have a bash at a competitor, his masterpiece being when he brought out *Rovers of the Sea* on the same day that Emmett produced *The Rover's Log*. He tried to poach on *Kind Words* with *The Boy's Sunday Reader: A Magazine of Pure Literature*. This had an angel holding up the title scroll and

a faintly nauseating preamble which provoked George Emmett into calling him "a mealy-mouthed hypocrite." That sort of thing, coupled with Brett's denunciations of penny dreadfuls, must have been highly irritating to his Fleet Street contemporaries, who were well aware of his antecedents. He had not even Edward Lloyd's excuse, who turned his back on penny bloods once and for all. At the same time that Brett was fulminating about "vile penny books" he was farming out the right to reprint Newsagents' Publishing Co. dreadfuls to Fred Farrah and George Howe, and when he found that excessive piety did not pay he turned the *Sunday Reader* into *The Boys' Weekly Reader* and serialised two of them in it—*The Skeleton Horseman* and *Ivan the Terrible*; or, *The Dark Deeds of Night*. When the Harmsworths began to make their mark, he put out *The Half-penny Surprise*, modelled on and in answer to their *Libraries*, and this was the only instance in which his imitative competition paid.

BRETT MUST HAVE BEEN a difficult person to get on with. Stevens, who was married to his cousin, quitted him within the year. That irascible top-liner, William Stephens

Hayward, wrote one serial for him (*Thirteen of Them*) and then took his pen elsewhere. The prolific Vane St. John, despite Brett's "conductorship" the original editor of *Young Men of Great Britain*, was a happy-go-lucky Bohemian, too debt-ridden to quarrel lightly with his bread and butter, but even he packed up. His biggest draw, Bracebridge Hemyng, jibbed at continual interference and niggardly pay. Within a very few years none of his original staff was left, and none of them ever returned, except Hemyng. He, poor fellow, fell on evil days and probably was glad to get work where he could, but even he made a second exit to Aldine and did not work for the firm again until after Brett's death.

Little or none of this was known to the readers, who were only interested in the papers, and there Brett's achievements were impressive, with no other Victorian publisher able to show even half his success. He was what the Emmetts most distinctly were not, an astute business man, an adroit publicist, and if he knew nothing of editorship in 1866 he learned fast. His whole career demonstrates that he was an excellent judge of a story.

At the same time, it must be admitted that his tales were no

better than and perhaps a little inferior to those put out by the Emmetts and Charles Fox, and Esmond Hebblethwaite as a cover artist was of doubtful superiority to Maguire. Yet, and it must have counted for much, Brett's papers always *looked* better. He used new type and a better quality paper, while his knowledge of engraving would help considerably with the eye-catching illustrations.

BRETT DIED IN 1895, wealthy, cocky, assertive and self-advertising to the end, and no doubt convinced that with the successful *Halfpenny Surprise* he had put those upstart Harmsworths in their place. Whether he could have long resisted

the encroachments of Carmelite House is more than dubious. To do it, he would have had to revise most of his well-established tenets, and he was both proud of his early successes and eager to cling to them. He was still publishing his old stories in numbers and most of the books in his hundred-plus list were his very early serials with practically none later than 1880.

It was perhaps as well his end came when it did. His was not the temperament to endure with equanimity the humiliations suffered by the House of Brett during the next ten years. As it was, he died while he was still what he had been for thirty years—the king-pin of the boys' publishing world.

JACK, SAM, AND PETE

I WAS VERY INTERESTED in the part of the article, *These Were Once Great Names* (in S. P. C. Number 77), by C. M. Down, that concerned Jack, Sam, and Pete. When I was quite young I enjoyed those stories in *The Marvel* and also in *The Popular*. I think the taste for Pete's way of talking had to be acquired. I used to think the stories were very funny.

Another interest was that they travelled all over the world. I don't suppose the stories would read as well today. That is the difference between middle age and youth, no doubt. For some reason *The Marvel* was a difficult paper to try to swap. Very few boys seemed to care for it, at that time.

—CHARLIE WRIGHT



CHARLES HAMILTON

CHARLES HAMILTON: A TRIBUTE

By W. O. G. LOFTS

CHRISTMAS, 1961, will long be remembered by many people the world over. On the eve of Boxing Day, in the midst of many a gay party, the sad news became known through the medium of T.V. and radio of the death of Charles Hamilton on Christmas Eve at the age of 86 years.

A gloom must have settled on many a festive gathering, and to me at least it was like losing an old friend who was very close to me. "Frank Richards," "Martin Clifford," and "Owen Conquest" have been to me life-long friends and like separate individual people; as different and as lifelike as the famous characters at Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood.

To write a suitable Tribute to such a great and popular writer is far from easy. No words of mine could ever compute the countless hours of pleasure he gave to several generations of readers through his brilliant school stories. This humble effort of mine for the pages of *The Story Paper Collector* will, I hope, echo the thoughts of many, who

read these words, about the greatest school writer that ever lived.

A FEW MONTHS AGO I stood on the sea-front at Kingsgate, Broadstairs, Kent. A short distance away was the famous house of "Frank Richards," *Rose Lawn*, where he spent most of the last 35 years of his life. The local guide books describe in detail three very famous houses in the nearby district. At various times they were all lived in by England's greatest novelist, Charles Dickens. It was at Broadstairs that he had the inspiration to write *Pickwick Papers* and *Bleak House*.

Many writers, including Mr. C. M. Down, Editor of *The Magnet* in the 1000th issue away back in 1927, have claimed that Charles Hamilton was the greatest writer since Dickens. It has been a source of wonder to me that two great writers who wrote so similarly in style should live in houses that were so close together. The local authorities at Broadstairs could not do better than erect a plaque at the house,

Rose Lawn, in Percy Avenue. In this house a man wrote millions of words which not only entertained countless thousands of boys and girls, but helped to educate them and gave them inspiration to live decent and honest lives and to be a credit to all with whom they came in-to contact; to, in brief, "Always play the game."

ONE OF THE MAIN characteristics of "Frank Richards" was his extreme kindness at all times. The son of an editor friend of mine who collected and read with avid interest all the "Bunter Books" and *Annuals* was going to a new school. To surprise him, I asked "Frank Richards" if he could autograph an *Annual* for me. Not only did he do so, although he was in poor health and busy, but he wrote a few lines of advice as well: on what a young boy may find a handicap at times when entering into a school of learning and into a Second form.

Conscientiousness was another main factor of this kindly man. Letters to him from readers all over the world numbered several hundreds weekly. If he had failed to answer them, he could well have been excused. Apart from being a busy man, failing eyesight was a very big handicap to him in his later

years. Yet, despite all this, he never to my knowledge failed to answer any letters received, and many collectors will now treasure the small typewritten letters in mauve or purple, a colour which was some slight aid to his most unfortunate poor vision.

I remember, I remember

*The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn.*

THE OPENING LINES of Thomas Hood's famous poem must have crept into "Frank Richards'" thoughts many a time when compiling his *Autobiography*, published in 1952, and more so when questioned on his early background, parents, and schooldays. But for his own personal reasons he always remained silent about them. Some day the full story will be made known, and it will tell of sheer determination, long studying, and initiative; of a boy born with a humble background, when class distinction was rife in the Victorian era, who became a classical scholar with the knowledge and ability to write to the staid London *Times* quoting Latin and Greek and commenting on Homer.

Charles Harold St. John Hamilton, to give his full name, was born in a house on Oak

Street, Ealing, Middlesex, on August 8th, 1876. He was sixth in a family of eight, five sons and three daughters. His father, John Hamilton, was a carpenter who, too, was born locally, being the son of a gardener who was also named John Hamilton. The father of our favourite author died at the age of 45 when Charles Hamilton was only 7½.

THE TREMENDOUS OUTPUT of "Frank Richards" for the Companion Papers is so well known to readers that I would only be re-telling old history by relating it here. The period starting with when he wrote his first story in 1894 until about 1910 was, in my opinion, his most prolific. Long before Harry Wharton & Co. had appeared in *The Magnet* or Tom Merry & Co. in *The Gem*, the output of our favourite author was simply astounding. Under some twenty-odd pen-names he turned out five or six stories weekly for the firm of Trapps, Holmes & Co. Apart from stories about dozens of different schools, they included stories of adventure, travel, crime, and light romance.

It was in one of these publications that the now world-famous school, Greyfriars, was featured for the very first time, before *The Magnet* was started—

but this and other information is awaiting publication in *The Collectors' Digest*.

IT MAY COME as a surprise to many that "Frank Richards" was also the creator of Gordon Gay & Co. of Rylcombe Grammar School, who appeared in the pink-cover *Empire Library* in 1910. This information was given to me by a former Editor of the paper, and although later stories were written by several authors under the "Prosper Howard" pen-name, it is our favourite author once again whom we have to thank for creating another well-known school that has delighted many, including our Editor.

Stories of Rookwood started in the green-paper *Boys' Friend* in 1915 and featured the happy-go-lucky Jimmy Silver & Co. I have very good reason to assume that Rookwood was based on "Frank Richards'" old school, which had a classical and a modern side. The memorable event of Jimmy Silver arriving with coach and horses probably was based on an incident in the early part of his life. (This incident was again related in 1921 when Jack Drake arrived at Greyfriars.)

Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, Highcliffe, Cliff House, Cedar Creek, Courtfield County

Council School, Redcliffe, Rycombe Grammar School, St. Clive's . . . Harry Wharton & Co., Tom Merry & Co., Jimmy Silver & Co., Gussy, Mr. Quelch, Mr. Prout, Mr. Mobbs, the Rio Kid, Ken King of the Islands, and the immortal Billy Bunter . . . Like the brook in Tennyson's poem which goes on for ever—to use a favourite

quotation of "Frank Richards"—the list is endless of the schools and characters that will remain in our minds for the rest of our lives.

This very inadequate Tribute to a great writer I now close. Thank you, "Frank Richards," for all you have done for us. We will never forget you.

O. A. E. O. GATHERING: THOSE WHO WERE PRESENT

THE FOLLOWING is a complete list of the editors, writers, and artists who were present at the "Ourselves and Each Other" Gathering, a photograph of which was reproduced in *The Story Paper Collector* Number 77:

Seated, Left to Right:

1—Will Gibbons—Author of *Champion* and *Triumph* stories; also "Helen Gibbons" of girls' stories. Present whereabouts are unknown.

2—S. H. Chapman—Artist on, mainly, girls' papers.

3—E. L. McKeag—Author and editor; writer for Aldine publications, *Chums*, girls' papers;

"Pat Haynes" and "Jack Maxwell" of *Triumph* and *Champion*; creator and writer of *Come Into the Office*, *Boys and Girls* feature in *The Magnet*; retired as Editor of *Schoolgirls' Picture Library* in September, 1961.

4—T. Laidler—Artist, mainly on girls' papers.

5—C. H. Blake—Artist on boys' and girls' papers.

6—W. B. Home-Gall—Author; perhaps better known as "Reginald Wray"; deceased.

7—W. Buckley—Lettering Artist.

8—J. W. Bobin—Author; "Mark Osborne" of Sexton Blake fame; deceased.

9—Lewis Carlton—Editor and author; at one time Editor of *The Union Jack*; "Louise Carlton" of girls' stories; believed deceased, but not confirmed.

10—L. H. Pratt—Editor of *Sexton Blake Library* approx. 1920-57; now retired.

11—S. Boddington—Assistant Group Editor on *Champion* and *Triumph*, later on *Lion* and *Tiger*; now retired.

12—R. T. Eves—Started in *Magnet* office; later rose to be Editor of *The Boy's Friend/School Friend/Champion/Triumph/Rocket* group of papers; retired as Director after more than 50 years service with The Amalgamated Press.

13—Reginald Kirkham—Author of boys' and girls' stories; deceased.

14—Horace Phillips—Author and editor; one of the earliest Editors of *Scout*; later, Editor of *Cheer Boys Cheer* (A.P.); probably most famous under the name of "Marjorie Stanton" for his *Schoolgirl* Morcove School stories.

15—G. M. Dodshon—Artist on girls' papers; deceased.

16—D. Westfield—Sub-editor on R. T. Eves group of papers.

17—Leslie Swainson—Sub-editor on R. T. Eves group of papers.

18—Stewart Pride—Sub-editor on R. T. Eves group of papers;

now Group-editor of modern *Princess*, *School Friend*, *Girls' Crystal*, etc.

19—D. Birnage—Sub-editor on R. T. Eves group of papers; now Editor of *Tiger*.

20—R. Simmons—Artist on R. T. Eves group of papers.

21—J. McCail—Artist on R. T. Eves group of papers.

22—E. R. Home-Gall—Author; "Edwin Dale" and "Rupert Hall" on *Champion* and *Triumph*.

23—C. Eaton Fearn—Author and editor on Fleetway House publications.

24—Bernard Smith—Formerly Sub-editor on *Scout*; now Editor of *Lion*.

25—A. V. Crawley—Artist.

Standing, Left to Right:

1—J. McKibbon—Author.

2—Derek Phillips (son of Horace Phillips)—Sub-editor on R. T. Eves group of papers.

3—L. E. Ransome—Author.

4—R. Jameson—Author and Editor.

5—C. L. Pearce—Author, and Editor of "Annuals"; deceased.

6—J. W. Wheway—Author; probably the most prolific writer of boys' and girls' stories of all time, mainly for R. T. Eves group of papers; now Editor of *Pets Annual*.

7—Draycott M. Dell—Author and Editor; Editor of *Chums* when taken over by The Amal-

gamated Press, until almost the finish; deceased.

—W. O. G. LOFTS

FAREWELL TO THE MASTER SCHOOL STORY WRITER

GLANCING THROUGH a copy of a Winnipeg daily newspaper on Boxing Day, December 26th last, we were saddened to read an item of five or six lines. It told of the death on Christmas Eve of Charles Hamilton, who was a writer of school stories for boys and better known as Frank Richards. A few days later, almost every letter to us carried the news, many of them with newspaper clippings from London dailies.

During the following weeks other items in newspapers came to our attention: a Canadian Press dispatch from London in the *Vancouver Province* (which somehow never got into the columns of either of the Winnipeg dailies); an article by a columnist in the same *Vancouver* paper, and another in the *Calgary Herald*, both written in a kindly and sympathetic vein; an editorial in *The Daily Telegraph* of New Zealand and an

article prompted by the death of Charles Hamilton and which also told of Jack Murtagh's wonderful collection.

* * *

THE FEBRUARY ISSUE of *The Collectors' Digest* formed a 40-page Frank Richards Memorial Number that will long be treasured by all to whom copies went. It would have been our wish to do similarly with *The Story Paper Collector*, but the manner in which this magazine is produced—over a period of many weeks, starting this time early in December—made this impossible. But at least we do have, from W. O. G. Lofts, a "Tribute," and there is a reproduction of another photograph of Charles Hamilton. We hope that the permission given by the photographer and copyright owner, Peter Powell, Broadstairs, back in 1951 to use a companion portrait also applies to this one. It was printed from a Scan-a-

FAREWELL TO MASTER SCHOOL STORY WRITER 45

graver plate made in the printing plant of *The Transcona News* in Transcona, where page 38 was printed.

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FROM LETTERS that have come to us are taken these tributes to the memory of Charles Hamilton, master school story writer:

I know that you will have experienced all the pangs of sorrow at the passing of our dear Charles Hamilton. People I have spoken to here who have not handled a Magnet or read a "Billy Bunter" in years were deeply moved. Items have appeared in many sections of the Press. Mr. Hamilton has left behind a legacy that thousands will continue to share for many decades to come.

—LESLIE VOSPER

London, S.E. 18.

It was a great blow to hear over the radio of the passing of the "Great Man," Charles Hamilton. How he will be missed; but what a wonderful memorial he has left behind in the immortal heroes he created so long ago.

—STAN KNIGHT

Cheltenham, Glos.

Dear Martin Clifford! Dear Frank Richards! It will be a long time before he really dies.

—C. F. F. RICKARD

North Vancouver, B.C.

It was sad to hear of the passing of our old friend, Frank Richards; on Christmas Eve, too. It wasn't

the happy time I had looked forward to, when I heard the announcer read out this sad piece of news. I felt that his passing was a personal loss.

—EDWARD THOMSON
Edinburgh, Scotland.

When I heard of the passing of Charles Hamilton a wave of sadness swept over me. I felt that I had lost a great friend. For fifty years he has given me many hours of pleasure. But to live on in the hearts of those who love us, is not to die.

—ARTHUR V. HOLLAND

Wellington, N.S.W.

I have learned with very deep sorrow of the passing of Frank Richards, the kindly, gentle, wise old man to whom so many of us, both old and young, owe so much. I shall always remember him with gratitude and affection, not alone for the many hours of happiness he gave me through the printed word, but also for many acts of personal kindness and generosity. May he sleep in peace.

—JOHN STOKES

Dublin, Eire.

(Reprinted from *The Collectors' Digest*.)

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THE NEWS of Charles Hamilton's death was handled in various ways in various newspapers—from the sensational treatment (usually with a few inaccuracies such as "he was writing 25,000 words a week": a striking understatement) in the "popular press," to a sober

recital of the facts in *The Times* of London. We quote some paragraphs from feature writers; they are given under the titles of the articles from which they are taken:

A BOYS' AUTHOR

The news from London that Frank Richards has died will awaken fond boyhood memories for many men of mature years. He wrote stories about boys in imaginary English public schools—Greyfriars and St. Jim's—and successive generations of schoolboys regularly spent their pennies on *The Magnet* and *The Gem*. Of Frank Richards's creations, one has passed into the tradition of literary characters living with the community: as surely as "Bill Sikes" attaches itself to the burglar, so does "Billy Bunter" to the boy, or man, of excessive *avoir-dupois*. Indeed, Billy Bunter is an international figure, for was it not a Frenchman who once described someone as "gros comme le Bunter"? . . .

Frank Richards wrote for several generations of boys who, as adults, know he served them well. They will cherish his memory.

—From editorial in *The Daily Telegraph*, New Zealand.

GREYFRIARS

Maybe it is just as nice a world for the young these days. In material ways, it may even be a better world. Certainly any of the oldsters who

start looking back to the "good old days" are likely to be seeing them through rose-tinted glasses.

The death of Charles Hamilton in England last week did not mark dramatically the end of an era, or a footnote to important history. It was not even a matter worthy of note in the world of literature, even though he was an author of some considerable output and wide following.

He wrote stories for schoolboys. He wrote them for magazines such as *The Magnet* and *The Gem*, which chronicled the doings of pupils at Greyfriars School in England. He wrote under many names and produced, at his peak, up to 25,000 words a week.

There were articles [some ten years ago] written by learned fellows who explained that what made the Greyfriars articles [sic] attractive to the urchins of the times was a sort of reverse snob appeal. Through *The Magnet* and *The Gem* the unfortunates could associate themselves with the upper classes who were privileged to attend the schools for young gentlemen.

It could be, I suppose, but I doubt it. In Western Canada a good many of us used to read them simply because they were cracking good stories. I can't recall any secret tears at not being in attendance at a private school. The adventures of the boys at Greyfriars were sufficiently removed from our way of life to be interestingly different and

close enough to be within our field of association.

They were, as I recall, quite well written, with the language used properly, allowing for school boy slang.

Mr. Hamilton's writings lasted through almost a half-century of rapidly changing times. They may be outdated because the physical world has changed so much. But they were good stories. Perhaps if we should not lament their passing we can at least hope there is something just as sound to take their place.

—Andrew Snaddon in *Calgary Herald*.

OF TIFFIN, TUCK . . .

I noted with a pang of regret that was accompanied by a surge of memories the passing of Charles Hamilton at Kingsgate, England. Mr. Hamilton, who wrote under the name of Frank Richards, went to the big cricket field in the sky after a fruitful life that lasted 86 years during which period he enthralled youngsters around the world with stories of Greyfriars School, an imaginary English institution that I was positive, for many years, existed.

My first contact with Hamilton/Richards came when I noted, in a small novelty shop in our neighborhood, a package of English magazines. They were several weeks old and could be purchased for the not too exorbitant sum of two for five

cents. I entered and bought a few and that started me on my Anglo-ophile period. I went around for so long with a stiff upper lip that alarmed friends thought I was constantly being attended by a dentist.

I even took an interest in cricket matches, demanded tiffin at home and took to describing a nearby confectionery as the tuck shop. There was quite a vogue in English magazine reading at the time and for the most part I wasn't considered any more deranged than many other youngsters in the district.

Handsome Harry Wharton was the leader of the fourth remove at Greyfriars. I presume a remove is a class but I never thought to question the word then. . . . Clown of the school was fat Billy Bunter, known to his associates as the "beastly rotter" and "the fat owl." His one goal in life was to stuff himself full of tuck and in his pursuit of viands no device was too low to be employed.

—Himie Koshevoy in Vancouver, B.C., Province.

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TO BRING TO A CLOSE this section, here is a short piece we contributed to the "In Memory of Frank Richards" issue of *The Collectors' Digest*, dated for February. It appears here, not as a specially outstanding tribute, but because we feel we would like to have it in these pages. Eric

Fayne, Editor of *C.D.*, ran it under the heading . . .

GATEWAY

IN THE YEAR 1910, a lad of twelve discovered a door that led into Frank Richards country and the world of St. Jim's and Greyfriars, and later of Rookwood. That it was a side door did not matter a great deal: it was *The Empire Library*. He would have done better to go through one of the main gateways: *The Gem* or *The Magnet*. But a halfpenny was easier to come by in those days than was a penny.

That was in England, in Croydon, which is not so very far from Frank Richards country. In Canada, in 1911, the main gateways were discovered. (They had been known earlier, but not actually discovered.)

During the years since, that lad, a lad no longer, has wandered in and out of Frank Richards country, sometimes at will, but sometimes the coming out was due to his location, where *The Gem* and *The Magnet* and other "gateways" could not be obtained except on subscription.

It is now more than 25 years since he last entered by way of *The Gem* and *The Magnet*, and he has no intention of ever leaving that entrancing land

again. The Frank Richards country is a wonderful country, not the less so because it is in a part of England of which I (to change the pronoun) had personal knowledge.

And now Frank Richards, the man who created that wonderful world and country, has left us. The everyday world is the poorer for his passing, but we have from him a priceless legacy, a legacy of stories that are not only entertaining but also inspiring: I am sure that no-one can read Frank Richards' stories without being not only entertained but also inspired to aim at least a little higher in everyday living.

I have personal memories formed by the kindly and informative letters that Mr. Richards wrote to me during the last war, but what I have written here will serve as my tribute to a man who endeared himself to many thousands of readers. To others, better qualified and better informed than I am, I will leave the writing of more lengthy tributes. —W. H. G.

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