

ROSE LAWN,

KINGSGATE-ON-SEA,

KENT.

September 24th, 1947.

Dear Mr. Snell,

I ought to have written before to thank you for the lovely views of dear old Clovelly which you kindly sent me, and which are now spotted about the walls of my study. But I have been up to the neck in the second "Bunter" book, which I have now just finished, so you will excuse me. As you say, the pictures revive pleasant old memories---though these did not really need reviving, for Devon scenes are as fresh in my mind now as they were fifty years ago. You tell me that Clovelly is crowded out, these days, and I am not surprised to hear it--it was not so crowded at the time of my visit: but of course there are a good many changes in half a century. According to the pictures, that jolly old High Street is unchanged: and if I were a native Clovellian I would resist any proposal to change a single stone of it. It is curious that people go to foreign countries for beauty spots, with such lovely scenery as the Devon coast almost at their door. But there, I have done the same thing myself, in thoughtless youth. But I remember that even when I was running along the lovely Neapolitan coast, by Amalfi and Sorrento, I said to myself that it did not come anywhere near to beating Glorious Devon. That is a good idea of yours about Harry Wharton and Co. dropping in at Clovelly, and I shall see Frank Richards about it!

Yes, there have been delays and delays with the Bunter book, but everything comes to an end, and the book positively does appear in about a fortnight from now. Paper is always the first head-ache: but the book-binders take their time, like everyone else in these leisurely days: and the system of government in this country really does seem to consist of sticking as many obstacles as possible in everybody's way. I have no doubt that our good friends in Whitehall mean well--but sometimes I wish they would take a long, long holiday---and give us one! However, 20,000 have now been printed, which is something to go on with, though alas! copies are to be "rationed" to the booksellers. But I hope that the third edition of 10,000 will set that

right. The final figure is fixed, provisionally, at  $\frac{7}{8}$  50,000. I can hardly imagine that more than this will be wanted---but you never can tell. I have been astonished, not to say bewildered and obfuscated, by the demand for the book, and almost expect to wake up presently! Who would have thought it?

I have been browsing on the Bideford Guide. May I say that you are a lucky man to be living in Bideford? I knew all about it long before I saw it, for I first read "Westward Ho" when I was about ten years old: and in those early days, I had a deep longing to go westward--ho with a rumbelow, and would have given all my school books for one glimpse of the Spanish Main. What I want now is a Magic Carpet from the Arabian Nights to float me across from Kent to Devon, and drop me lightly on the bowling green!

No doubt you have recovered by this time from the effects of your exertions at Exmouth. I can guess that you put some beef into it if you were in the last quartette out of 188. I can guess too that you had a good time. It must have been fairly warm! But what a glorious summer we have had! Now it is autumn, and just now the rain it raineth every day:--but so far as I can read the weather signs, I believe it is going to be a lovely autumn and a mild winter. One must hope so at least, for last winter was a real corker---the worst I remember since ~~1898~~ 1892.

I fully agree with you about the C.D. It seems to me that Herbert Leckenby is on to a good thing in this, and I expect to see it extend and flourish. I am looking forward to the C.D. Annual.

About the duet, you wouldn't be able to get it just yet. The first edition has been out of print for at least thirty-five years: and the new edition now in hand isn't out yet, though it is ~~expected~~ expected to materialise in a few weeks. Music publishers, like book publishers, have the perpetual paper-headache. Sometimes I wonder that anything ever gets published at all. These be tough times for the scribbling fraternity!

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Frank Richards

Just heard from  
Archerberg's that  
it is now out.