

April 48

The COLLECTORS' DIGEST

No. 10.
(Volume 2)



*Richard [unclear]
1948*

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(Vol.2.)No.16

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APRIL 1948

Next Issue : May 1948

Editor, Miscellaneous Section
Herbert Leckenby, Telephone Exchange,
C/o. Central Registry, Northern Command, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR:

I don't as a rule step over into Blakiana territory but as an old stager I feel compelled to do so for once so that I can join in my colleague's protest in what he calls the "Tinker Mystery". I remember the lad's first appearance way back in 1905. I have grown old, or nearly so, whilst he has, until recently, remained in his teens. During those 40 odd years he has always been just Tinker. Its daft to change it now - just as daft as if Harry Wharton suddenly found himself in the fifth form after been just 40 years in the Remove. Whats wrong with Tinker? Surely the A.P. arn't afraid Mr. Shinwell made the name unpopular? Anyway, I refuse to recognise Ted Carter.

And we don't want a "knocking 'em back" Tinker either. I prefer the cherry, if sometimes cheeky (to Coutts and Co.) loyal lad who addressed Blake as guvnor. To make him different gives one the same feeling of resentment as if on re-visiting "Peter Pan" one found that youth enjoying himself in a night club.

Drop it, Mr. Editor S.B.Lib. please.

* * *

I have heard by air-mail from Jack Murtagh of New Zealand, that he is sending along shortly an article which includes a list of all E.S. Brooks stories in stiff covers, under his various pen-names. This in response to Mr. Hamilton's thoughtful suggestion.

* * *

Would you like to have the C.D. for a year for nothing? Well, there's an opportunity. Mr. H.A. Smith, of Scole, Diss, Norfolk, has very kindly offered to pay the subs. to the reader who submits what is considered the best article on "Why I Collect the Story Papers", about 600 words, please.

Yours sincerely,

Herbert K. Bentley

A VISIT TO A FAMOUS COLLECTOR

by

George C. Foster.

Many collectors of old boys' books will have heard of Mr. Barry Ono, who died a few years ago. He had, I think, one of the finest collections of them, which has ever been gathered, and he ended just about where most people begin. I have one or two books I bought from him still. Nicely bound

copies of very early Boys Friend Libraries. The range of time, over which the books he possessed were printed, was considerable. I think that the first was issued about 1840.

These early issues were quite well produced, with good illustrations, although the reading matter was not, perhaps, of a high quality. It was not, as far as I could see, until about twenty to twenty-five years' later, in the "sixties" and "seventies" that the term "penny dreadful" began to be earned. I remember seeing copies of some of these of the period, which were Mr. Ono's proudest possessions. There was "Varney, the Vampire", or "The Feast of Blood", which he told me was the book, which gave the idea of his plot to the author of "Dracula". There was another publication entitled, and sub-titled (for they were all sub-titled then) - "The Skeleton Clutch, or the Goblet of Gore". These were by another author called Thomas Prest Lloyd.

Another publication he possessed was "Sawney Beane; or the Man-eater of Midlothian" - a tale based on the true story of that odd character the Scottish cannibal and his family - all likewise cannibals, who lived in the time of King James the First of Scotland. Mr. Ono also had a series on May Turpin, supposedly Dick Turpin's sister. I saw amongst his collection "The Wild Boys of Paris", and an American "blood" of the "seventies", which boasted proudly "A Murder on Every Page!"

Of one freak issue I treasured the memory for a long time. It appeared that there was a series, very popular in the seventies, of certain characters which went on week by week, much as characters did in the schoolboy stories of a later time. The author of these was paid weekly on a Friday night, and was reckoned sober enough on the following Friday morning to write his story for the issue which would appear the following week, - things moved swiftly in those days.

One day another similar paper offered him more money to come over to them, and keep his deflection quiet from his present employers. He came in on the Friday morning as usual and killed off all the characters in the story in the last chapter by a terrible shipwreck. The publishers did not know this, and the paper went to press and appeared!

Even the boys of that day would not stand this - imagine the reactions of the modern boy before the war if someone had killed off the whole of the Greyfriars Remove in a final paragraph - So they, the publishers found a new author, and he revived the characters very speciously in the first chapter of the next issue. I saw these two issues, with the terminal paragraphs, in Mr. Ono's collection.

"Jonathan Wilde, the Thief-Taker" - "The Skeleton Horseman" - "Sweeny Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street" - "The Night Riders of Hounslow Heath" and many more. I often wonder what has happened to all Mr. Ono's splendid collection.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

Resume of a Meeting held at 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22, on Sunday, the 29th of February, 1948, at 6-0 p.m.

* * *

Although a number of our friends were not able to attend, this first meeting was very successful. Those present were as follows: Mr. R. Blythe, Mr. F. Kuling, Mr. B. Whiter, Mr. & Mrs. R. Whiter, Mr. J. Parrott, Mr. J. Herman, Mr. M. Haswell, and Mr. & Mrs. L. Packman (of above address).

After general introductions had been made the following matters were discussed:

1. Black List:- In view of certain people's methods of doing business it was felt by all that some form

of Black List was necessary. Various names came under discussion and it was agreed that the C.D. be asked to insert a notice in each subsequent issue of the Collectors' Digest or Collectors' Digest Annual to the effect that only those whose names appear in either of these publications are recognised as bono-fide Collectors (unless, of course, known personally to fellow-collectors).

2. Price Control due to Dealers' High Prices: It was agreed that the C.D. should be asked to insert a short article in the next issue to the effect "That some dealers are charging higher prices than can be afforded by most collectors, and that one of the purposes of the C.D.B. Club is to try to fix a reasonable price within the reach of all collectors' finances." Prices, apart from specialised numbers, agreed as a basis for sale and for exchange are as follows:-

1d, 1½d and 2d Papers (Amal. Press, etc): 1932 to 1940, 6d to 9d each; 1925 to 1931, 1/- each; 1920 to 1924, 1/3 each; 1915 to 1919, 1/6 each; 1910 to 1914, 2/- each; earlier, 2/6 each upward according to individual merit.

3d and 4d Libraries: 1932 to 1940, 1/- each; 1925 to 1931, 1/3 each; 1920 to 1924, 2/- each; earlier, price according to individual merit.

3. Advertisers: It is requested that the C.D. be asked to arrange that only Collectors of O.B. Books should be allowed to advertise and not to include in the Collectors Digest such items as Stamps and Gramophone Records, or any similar extraneous subjects.

The meeting felt very strongly about this, as it was understood that the Collectors' Digest was for the purpose of O.B. Books and not a miniature Exchange and Mart. The amount of money lost to the publishers as a result of excluding these other items could easily be recovered by increasing the

price of the Collectors' Digest to - say 1s.6d. Everyone present being only too ready to pay the increased price per copy.

It was arranged that the next meeting will be held at Mr. Whiter's house, 706 Lordship Lane, N.22, on Sunday, 4th April 1948, at 6 p.m.

The Meeting concluded at 9-15 p.m. after a very pleasant evening enjoyed by all.

** ** *

Editorial Comments

Well, our London friends don't appear to have wasted much time at their meeting on the year's extra day, do they? Sure it is they struck topics which simply bristle with difficulties, almost beyond the wit of man to solve. However, let me get down to showing some of them, though how I'm going to do it in the space available, heaven only knows.

First, the suggested "Black List". Phew! When I read that those who did not subscribe to the C.D. should be considered "doubtfuls", I got all hot and bothered. Whilst my colleague and I appreciate the compliment, honestly we could not accept it as a practical proposition. To illustrate, let me give a recent experience. Opening my mail the other morning I found the first letter giving me a pleasant thrill. It came from a Sheffield friend and it told of a very nice action on the part of another collector in the same City; how they had later met and had an enjoyable time. Said I "Nice work. That's the stuff". But, sad to relate, three other letters that morning gave me a feeling of sheer dismay. They all contained complaints and accusations against other collectors. My dismay increased when I noted that two or three of those mentioned were subscribers to C.D. However, I am sure these are exceptions, for I have always found the great majority jolly good fellows.

Now I am sure it will be agreed that it is impossible for us to make public these complaints. If we did there would be counter charges, until there would be room for nothing else in the magazine.

Last year we did use a lot of space in exposing the swindles. That was justified for everyone knows where Pearson is now. But that was something different.

No, we dare not go any further than to promise that we will certainly expose any case of plain fraud but cannot possibly start a witch hunt generally. We will, of course, give advice in confidence in cases where it seems clear some collector or dealer is not playing the game.

Now, that Price Problem. Believe me, that has been giving us headaches ever since prices started to sky-rocket. At first sight the table drawn up at the meeting looks business-like and reasonable, but when you probe further more and more pitfalls are discerned. For instance, I take it the meeting was thinking of the papers most in demand, but they don't say so. But what about the scores of other papers published over the period? If the table was accepted there would be the danger that it would not be just taken as a maximum for the Magnet, Gem, etc., but general for all. Someone with Chums or Young Britain for 1919 to offer (to choose names at random) might say "1/6 please, in accordance with the list". Absurd, yes, but there it is. Let me quote a case. Recently several collectors have shared hundreds of copies of a paper which follows closely behind the Magnet in popularity. They came from a dealer; they were in absolutely mint condition and the price was just half the one suggested in the table. If those prices had been published as a guide previously, would that dealer have been justified in doubling his price?

Then the meeting said "apart from specialised numbers". Well, whose going to decide what are

"specialised numbers"? We know, of course, that the St. Jim's stories in Pluck are worth far more, to most collectors, than any of the other numbers, but supposing one thinks more about the Wycliffe stories appearing about the same time, and sent us an advert. offering 4s.0d each for them - have we to refuse it because it exceeds the price laid down? One could give scores of similar illustrations.

Now a word about the dealers. I certainly hold no brief for them. I'm one of those who can't resist the temptation to buy if any of my favourites are on offer, so no one wants reasonable prices more than I do. But we must try to be fair; some of the chaps who are doing it from a purely business point of view have I know been spending considerable sums in advertising.

I have been furnished with proof of this for take it from me I have not been idle. Sometimes their adverts. have brought good results, sometimes not a reply. On the whole, however, the enterprise has brought to light thousands of papers. Some I have heard of which have been unearthed from attics or goodness knows where and have simply amazed me, for I wouldn't have thought if possible at this time of day, and they have been in mint condition too. I have also seen some of the prices dealers have been asked to pay and I am bound to admit that most people, whether recognised collectors or not, seem to have a good idea what Magnets, Gems, etc. are fetching to-day.

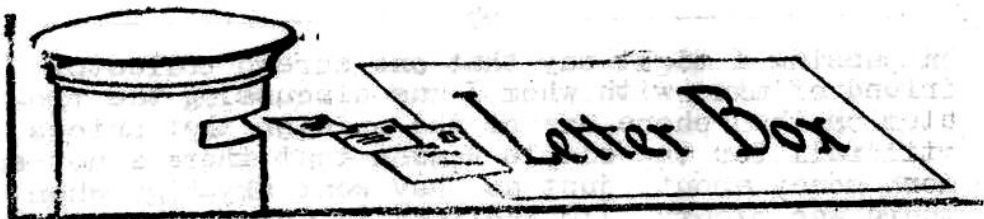
Now hitherto, all too few copies have been passing round between collectors, a dozen fellows eager to get hold of any one available until the copies are falling to bits. Have the dealers a case when they claim that they have brought much new blood within the reach of collectors and thus relieved the situation? Moreover, isn't it possible that ultimately, it will mean that prices will fall, merely as a result of the law of supply and demand?

In passing I might say that one shrewd collector friend of mine with whom I was discussing the problem on the 'phone was of the opinion that prices will fall for the simple reason that there's not so much money about, just as they went sky-high when there was plenty. I'm inclined to agree with him. If so, the problem will solve itself.

Now just a word about the third resolution - advertisements. It is true that in two instances adverts were accepted for other than books. We confess it never occurred to us that these would be objected to. However, we are prepared to agree that the mag. shall be 100% books. The loss in revenue is immaterial, but we should like to be frank and reveal that every copy of the C.D. we send out costs more than the 1s.0d charged for it. When everything is taken into consideration, even with the revenue from adverts, our budget isn't balanced. When we started the mag. my colleague said "Lets make it a good one. You'll get most of the work, therefore, I'll make good any loss". Well, since No.1 I think it will be agreed we have improved it out of recognition, despite the fact that costs of production have gone up 25%, as a result I can assure you that my colleague of Blakiana has had to replenish the exchequer on several occasions. Despite this we don't want to increase the price if we can possibly help it even if our friends said they were willing to pay 1s.6d (we greatly appreciate that compliment). It would help a lot, though, if readers would send their subs. along as quickly as possible and if they feel they can afford it a month or two in advance. We have nothing to complain about on the whole, there are just a few who are inclined to lag, probably through oversight.

Well now, I must stop, for the time being, or there will be room for nothing else in this issue.

WANTED: Aldine Publications, Dick Turpins, Claude Duvals, etc. E.R.Landy, 4, Nuneaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.



KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN !

14th March, 1948.

Dear Editor,

I have had a short talk with Mr. Skilton this week who informs me that the third Bunter Book will follow the second one very shortly, good news as I am sure you will agree.

Yours sincerely,
Mavin Haswell.

* * *

Dear Editor,

Mr. Baguley in his letter of 16th January, when speaking of the works of C.H. and E.S.B. remarks that "they are escapist fiction with a shockingly meagre basis of realism", a statement that proves ridiculous under analysis, for what is it he expects to find in escapist literature but a 'meagre basis of realism'? Surely a great necessity in such work is the departure from realistic representation, otherwise it would offer no escape, which after all is the quintessence of boys' stories. Although Mr. Baguley would appear to derive infinite delight from his disparagement of escapism, he is certainly not above indulging the desire for it, as he admits, and there is no doubt that such a desire may result in positive good if properly directed. How are we ever to point a moral or inspire a young

mind satisfactorily, and pleasantly, without taking advantage of its natural propensities for the atmosphere created by extravagant settings and situations filled with the characters of the imagination?

I suggest that Mr. Baguley examines the significance of his statements in the future lest his temerity should again lead him to make utterances which he is unable to substantiate.

John Hawes.

* * *

15th March, 1948.

Dear Mr. Editor,

In connection with Mr. Joseph Baguley's letter on the subject of Mr. E. S. Brooks, may I be permitted to contradict his comment that "readers have heard Eric before on the same subject". Prior to the original letter on the matter, "Eric" has never mentioned Mr. Brooks in the G.D.

Mr. Baguley mentions that C.H. and E.S.B. were small beer outside their own limited fields. Can he tell us of any writer who isn't?

Mr. Baguley pays a fine compliment to Mr. Hamilton, when he suggests that the latter had thirty plots in his stories. I have heard it said that there are four plots in the world of literature, and that the Bible contains them all. If Mr. Hamilton really had thirty, he must ne a superman.

If, as Mr. Baguley suggests, the work of E.S.B. was more essentially interesting to an average small boy, it is surprising that the Nelson Lee Library was incorporated with the Gen in the middle thirties, while both the Magnet and the Gen continued their prosperous careers till the paper shortage brought their suspension.

Yours sincerely,
Eric Fayne.

Dear Editor,

I think Mr. Baguley's letter rubbish. I've no doubt you'll get plenty of protests from the clan.

Robert Whiter.

* * *

Dear Mr. Editor,

I agree with Mr. Baguley when he says Mr. Hamilton wrote thirty stories and he's been repeating them ever since ... I can't understand why persons want to collect a complete set of Magnets when at the most, two years' issues contain all the plots and exhaust the interest. But I must say I had a particularly happy time reading those "Thirty stories".

Yours sincerely,

D. McGreevy.

FOR SALE: Hundreds of Magnets and Gens, 9d. to 1/- each; 700 Nelson Lees 1920-1933 (hundreds small series) 1/- each; 1893-1915 ½d & 1d Marvels, Plucks, Union Jacks, 2/- each.

2,000 various copies of following; 6d per copy, IN MINT CONDITION. Cheer Boys Cheer; Boys Journal; Pals; Rocket; Modern Boy; Boys Magazine; Champion; Triumph; Kinema Comic; Meccano Magazine; Hotspur; Skipper; Wizzard; Adventure; Ranger; Rover; Scout; between 1913-1939.

32 Dixon Hawkes 1920-1926; 100 Boys Friend Libs. 1920-1939; 100 Sexton Blakes, 1920-1946; 200 School-boys Owns; 200-400 Holiday Annuals 1920-1938; 26 Modern Wonders of the World. Best offers accepted.

W. Martin, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.

WANTED: Nelson Lees, 1st Ser. Nos. 112 to 130. Penny Populars 1919 to 1925. Good condition essential. Your price paid. L. Packman, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, S.E.12.

The Nelson Lee Column

Conducted by Robert Blythe,
81 Alsen Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

Since answering Mr. Smith's query last month concerning the 'Holiday Annual', I can now state quite definitely, thanks to Bob Whiter, that 1932 & 1936 were the only years in which stories of St. Franks appeared.

Mr. Smith also wants to know why it was the E.S. I wrote stories of Nelson Lee when the character was invented by Maxwell Scott. According to Mr. Brooks himself the facts are that he was asked to take over the character by the editor. There was no other reason.

Mr. Charles Wright of Greenwich asks "why did the N.L. die out after a comparatively short life?" I think it can be truthfully said that the decline of the Nelson Lee started about half-way through the 1st N.S. It coincided with a change of editors. Hamilton fans will be interested to know that it was the "Magnet" editor who took over from this point! This editor, for reasons unknown, decided to change the whole layout gradually. The result can be seen in the lamentable 2nd N.S. Circulation figures dropped continuously, until, after an effort to save the old paper with reprints of the earliest stories (3rd N.S.) it was compelled to cease publication. No doubt the then existing authorities had reasons for their change of policy but to say that it was not successful would be an understatement.

Another question that Mr. Wright raises is - "which series is the most popular?" Personally, I think that the first Ezra Quirke series (Nos. 542 to

549 O.S.) is by far the most popular. I may be wrong of course so how about others writing and letting me know what they consider to be the best?

Several questions are asked by Mr. Burrow of Leeds. He wants to know whether St. Franks and its environs are based on actual places. Sorry to have to disillusion anyone who thinks they were, but the truth is that they are purely imaginative.

Mr. Wright also asks for details of Mr. Brooks' life. I am unable to answer this satisfactorily as I know only that he was born in London, has spent most of his life in East Anglia, and is at present living in London.

Another question he asks, reminds me that I slipped up last month when giving the names of artists of the N.L. He wants to know who illustrated the N.L. in the numbers around No. 155 2nd N.S. This was of course our old friend R.J. Macdonald of the "Gem" who did quite a number of drawings in the 2nd New Series.

Have discovered two more No. 1's. Mr. Simpson's and Mr. Burrow's. Mr. Simpson tells me that Mr. Stannard of Chelmsford also posses a copy. Is that so Mr. Stannard? In any case, at the moment there are only 5 known to exist.

Mr. Charles Hamilton has suggested that we publish the titles of E.S.B.'s. novels. A good idea Mr. Hamilton. Thanks for suggesting it. Here goes with a few: "Thank you, Mr. Conquest", "Convict 1066", "Meet the Don", "Six to Kill", "Conquest takes all".

They are published by Collin's and can be obtained in paper covered edition at 1/-. There are others, of course, but they'll keep.

Cheerio! More next month.

THE CAPTAIN

by

L. M. Allen.

A Magazine well worthy of honourable mention amongst the ranks of Old Boys Papers is "The Captain" Although not so widely circulated as "The Magnet" family it had a faithful following and attained the ripe old age of twenty-five years. Published throughout by Geo. Newnes Ltd. first saw the light of day on 22nd March, 1899. survived World War No.1, and continued until March, 1924, when a curt four line announcement in the Editorial stated publication was to be suspended. Not even the satisfaction of a merger with a more popular paper was offered to the presumably few remaining subscribers. A magazine of the same name was produced in May 1934 by the Wilmo Press but had very little resemblance to the original.

The "Captain" was published once every month, starting at 6d a copy and eventually rising through the course of years to a 1/-. The price was probably the reason for its somewhat restricted circulation, one could find the wherewithal to purchase a cheaper A.P. product far more easily. A half yearly annual was published however, and personally I found a timely hint to relatives at Xmas and birthday produced the current volume. In fact on one occasion my advance work was so thorough that the gift was duplicated.

Throughout its career the Editorial was a feature, without being too formal good advice was offered and answers to correspondents dealt with care and thought. It is interesting to note that the block heading to this, drawn by Hassall, was used with every issue.

(Continued).

REBELLION!

b y
Robert Blythe
 (Contd.).

However, Martin gets bigger and better ideas of how boys should be governed, with the result that once again the Remove, led by Nipper, rebel; this time in the West Wing of the Ancient House. After much excitement, the Governor of the Board of Directors is forced to sign a document absolving everyone from blame. The element of detection is provided by Nelson Lee proving that Mr. Martin was guilty of a robbery three years previous.

We now come to the series which although dealing with a rebellion, differs from others inasmuch as only part of the Remove are in revolt (Nos. 336-348 O.S.). They are led in this case by Timothy Tucker and Armstrong. They took this step because of the actions of Dr. Stafford the Headmaster. Unknown to anyone except Nelson Lee and Nipper he is being drugged by the new Science Master, a Mr. Trenton, this drug having the effect of producing violent paroxysms of rage, and, as seems to be usual, it is the Remove that suffers; hence the revolt. However, Nipper persuades several of his friends not to join the Barring-out, and the two factions term themselves Loyalists and Rebels. The Rebels hold the Ancient House and the rising is conducted on the lines of a Boshevik Revolution, the parties referring to each other as "comrade", and insisting upon possessing equal rights with everybody, including the Head and the Masters!

This state of affairs does not long endure; and for various reasons, to numerous to discuss here, they are pardoned and allowed to run the school on Communistic lines as an experiment.

As this barring-out occupies only two books in the thirteen of the series, I shall not deal with

the details of the rest of the plot. Suffice it to say that Nelson Lee saves Dr. Stafford from madness, Mr. Trenton gets his deserts, and the Communists are finally subdued.

One of the most entertaining series was that which follows next, for the story of Petticoat Rule at St. Franks is certainly one of the most original of any of the barring-out stories.

Miss Jane Trumble had been elected Chairman of the Board of Governors, and chose to make an appearance at St. Franks at a time when the Head is administering corporal punishment. She countermands his orders in front of the whole school, and in such a way as to cause Dr. Stafford to resign on the spot. She thereupon decides to take the reins herself, in order that she may put into practice her ideas on the administration of a boy's school.

Miss Trumble was an elderly spinster with exceptionally curious views regarding bringing about this new state. She considered everybody from the Sixth to the Third were mere children, and should be treated as though they were attending kindergarten instead of a Public School. She tells the Masters that in future the school must be run in accordance with her views, but the Masters, not in the least relishing the notion of being told what to do by a woman of Miss Trumble's calibre, and moreover, disliking her intensely, resign in a body. Miss Trumble, now unable to find masters to teach under her direction, decides to install Mistresses. The prospect of St. Franks being run by women Teachers is more than any boy in the school could bear, and although, for the first day or two, the boys appreciate the humour of the situation, it is not long before they become rebellious, moreover petty restrictions are imposed culminating in a final blow when they are banned the use of their studies. After the decision to revolt had been taken, they take possession of a barn at the far

side of Little Side (Lee fans will I hope, know where these places are) which they call "Fort Resolute" and proceed to hold out in the face of adverse conditions which included a tribe of gypsies, starvation and floods. At one point Miss Trumble calls for an armistice, and, on certain conditions, the rebels agree to suspend hostilities and return to the school. Having achieved her purpose Miss Trumble goes back on her word, so enraged are the rebels that they refuse to allow Miss Trumble to remain at the school. Newspapers take up the story, and the Governors hold an enquiry; with the result that the boys are exonerated, and Miss Trumble and the Mistresses get their marching orders.

The William K. Smith series (455-463 O.S.) which comes next on our list was another very original story, and is so full of incidents, that, in order to do it justice, one would have to write at great length. In this article we can sketch only a very rough outline, leaving unanswered many a "why" and "How".

W.K.Smith is a German-American multi-millionaire who has purchased all the property upon which St. Franks stands, including a great portion of the surrounding countryside, for the purpose of erecting several large factories. Through his machinations Dr. Stafford is forced to resign and a Mr. Ponsonby Small is installed in his stead. Mr. Small is a "nasty piece of work" to say the least.

Smith very soon makes himself hated by the boys, so much so that when Mr. Small, acting on Smith's instructions imposes restrictions and harsh punishments the school is soon ready for revolt. Indeed, Handforth does stage a rebellion, but, in his characteristic way, makes no preparations whatever, with the consequences that he and his supporters are defeated.

It is Nipper (as usual) who decides when the time is ripe for a real "barring-out", and it is

decided to fortify themselves in the Power House which had been erected in the field adjoining the school. For a time they are successful, and Mr. Smith's schemes are handicapped, but not for long, for Smith, using huge tractors and hundreds of men soon break in, only to find the place deserted. In the meantime Nipper, knowing things to be hopeless, has installed the rebels on Willkards Island. This is another thorn in his plans for erecting large dynamoes. Once again Smith employs his men to evict them, with devastating results for the men, and this continual defeat so inflames them that they get completely out of hand and some of the boys are in danger of being seriously injured. Smith is by now so scared by the attitude of his employees that he signs a document promising not to interfere again in any way with St. Franks. However, it is too late, for the mob has lost all control, and when they finally over-run the Island and find it deserted, (for Nipper and Co. have left by a tunnel) they go completely berserk and decide to burn down St. Franks.

The whole school prepare to defend the college, and in the ensuing struggle many of the boys are injured. The situation is only saved, at the last moment, by the arrival of a regiment of Territorials who had picked up a wireless S.O.S. Mr. Smith of course, gets his deserts and spends a considerable time in meditation in one of H.M. Prisons.

This series, and I am sure that those of you who have read it will agree, is one of the most exciting that Mr. E. S. Brooks ever wrote.

WANTED URGENTLY: Schoolboys Owns, Libs. between Nos. 40 and 140. Good Prices paid for single copies or bulk. John Buckland, Hazlewood, Steyne Road, Seaford, Sussex. (Contd.)

ODD BOOKS: Sale or Exchange, Lists exchanged, complete stories, Boys Friend Library, etc. Henry J.H. Bartlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

NELSON LEES WANTED: Nos. 545, 559, 560, No. 38 (1st New Series). Many copies for sale or exchange. L.M. Allen, 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield, 7.

ERIG FAYNE

wishes to thank fellow-collectors and friends who have written to him during the past few months, and to offer his sincere apologies to anyone who may not have received a reply. Any seeming discourtesy has been due to extreme pressure of work and to a period of illness.

MAGNETS WANTED: Urgently, between 1922 and 1930. Good prices paid. Have Magnets 1936 to 1940 for exchange. J. Corbett 49, Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham.

WANTED: Odd copies of red Magnets, Plucks, Empire Realm, Lot o' Fun, Nugget Library, Aldines and similar papers. Particulars and prices to :- W.H. Clough, 3, Ponthill Grove Sale, Manchester.

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE:

Fee Lees, S.O. Libs., Boys Friends, Newnes Dick Turpins, Sexton Blakes, Gems, No. 17 Monster Library. Stamp for List. D. McGreevy, 17, Edward Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland.

Advertise in the Collectors' Digest



All Correspondence to
H.M.Bond, 10 Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE ROUND TABLE

Last month we published an article by Jack Cook "Meet Norman Conquest," alias Waldo the Wonder Man" in which the author stated his belief that the current series of bound novels dealing with the adventures of Norman Conquest and written by Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks under the pseudonym "Berkeley Gray" were, in part at least, copies of some of the "Waldo" series which originally appeared in "The Union Jack" and "The Detective Weekly". Soon after publication of No. 15 we received a letter from Mr. Frank Richards, renowned author of the "Greyfriars" and "St. Jim's" stories protesting that such an article should appear within the pages of the C.D. and suggesting that Mr. Cook had unfairly accused Mr. Brooks of "rehashing" his former stories. Mr. Richards says that when such an accusation is made it should be accompanied by actual quotations from both stories concerned, in other words the accuser must state chapter and verse. Now I can quite understand how Mr. Richards feels about this and

quite appreciate that one author would naturally feel a little perturbed when reading such revelations concerning the work of a colleague, but I cannot see that Mr. Cook showed any unfairness or malice in his article. In the first instance he did not fail to give details, in fact he definitely stated chapters, dates and even pages and titles. Moreover, he suggested only that certain scenes in the Norman Conquest stories were rehashes of certain scenes in the Waldo stories. This is very apparent when one compares the stories mentioned, although I suppose the word "rehash" was a little too strong as used in paragraph two of Mr. Cook's article. Mr. Richards goes on to say that one may as well accuse Scott, Cutcliffe, Hyne, Dickens, Cervantes and even himself of such rehashing just because one character does the same sort of thing in one story as another does in a second story, but I will say here that this observation is, to my mind, just a little weak, for it was not a case or Norman Conquest performing a single act in the same manner as Rupert Waldo, but of a whole series of acts with exactly the same background. The one about the dropping by parachute from a plane into the grounds of a mysterious house surrounded by a high wall with spikes, for instance. And the subsequent attack by a large dog. Surely Mr. Brooks had not forgotten that his Waldo had done this many years ago? It is very unlikely that he should make Mr. Conquest do the same thing again without a thought of his previous story. The same thing applies to the saving of the girl from the track of the fire engine. I myself have observed similarities in the Conquest and Waldo stories, too many of them to be sheer coincidence. But, be that as it may, the real object of Mr. Cook's article was NOT to belittle the work of Mr. Brooks so much as to show the reader that, contrary to Mr. Brooks recent declaration that he had "forgotten" all about his old twopenny paper stories and that he was concentrating on "adult novels", the

author was fully aware of their success in the past and was trying to repeat his former successes in the juvenile field with his newly found adult readers. And anyway Mr. Cook suggested that we should be pleased to see such things happening. I agree, we should. I, for one, would be delighted if some of the grand old stories were reprinted. After all, many other Sexton Blake stories have been reprinted and issued in "bound" form, and they have been a success. A recent example was the rehash of Mr. Anthony Parsons "Loot of France" which was published by Wright and Brown last year as "Death On the Mall", and there are many other examples. No, I cannot see any harm in Mr. Cook's article and am in entire agreement with his sentiments. How Mr. Brooks could ever deem the article as "reckless attack" (to use Mr. Richards own words) is beyond me. Were I the author I should be pleased to think that my work had lived so long and was observed so closely.

* * *

My remarks last month re Tinker alias Carter seem to have met with the approval of most Blake fans and I have received many letters echoing my sentiments. So far no word has come from the Editor of "The Sexton Blake Library" to whom a copy of the C.D. concerned was sent but should one come before publication date of this issue I will try and include it as a "Stop Press" item. Two volumes of the Library this month do not seem to mention Carter although at the time of writing I have not read the volumes. Let us hope that Ted Carter has disappeared for ever!

Another old Blake author returns to the fold this month I see. Yes, it is a long while since we had the pleasure of seeing the name "Martin Frazer" under the title of a Blake story, not since June 1942 in fact, all but six years! I was also pleased to note that Mr. Frazer introduced Blake in the first chapter. Far too many recent yarns have waited un-

til almost the end of the story before the detective was introduced, a policy that is not in keeping with the traditions of the Library. Anthony Parsons seems slap up-to-date again with his latest yarn "The Lost of Pakistan", in Vol.No.164. Eric Parker's best cover illustration for some time too!

It has often been stated (and sometimes by the A.P. themselves) that the first Blake story appeared in No.2 of "The Union Jack" in 1894. Most Blakians have, for some time, known that this was not the case and that Blake first appeared in a story in No.6 of "The Marvel" in 1893. Hopes of ever obtaining this issue had long since faded when my co-editor sent me an excited letter to tell me that he thinks he will be able to get hold of this valuable item. For days I held my breath (or so it seemed) and then - "I've got it" he writes with enthusiasm "and it's in MINT condition too - What a scoop!". And WHAT a scoop it is. As I write this I have not yet seen the copy in question for "Leck" says "bags I first" but already we have plans for a reproduction of the historic cover and I hope to give you the real "low down" on the story next month!

With effect from this issue I am presenting "Blakiana" completely as a "Round Table" feature. In other words I am not, in future, going to publish articles under their own headings but include them in this feature. Not only will this save a bit of space, but it will make the job easier for the duplicating agency and will, I think, give the section a more personal touch. Speaking of articles reminds me that I have not been able to include the further episodes in the career of Dr.Satira, so here goes:-

THE STORY OF DR.SATIRA. Part 5. After apologising for delaying him the policeman asked Satira if he had seen a cyclist on the road. No need to wonder further - they WERE on the lookout for him but

did not realise that he had discarded the stolen machine. Although relieved the master criminal was still very wary and he could have cursed himself for revealing to the constable the fact that "he had just landed from South America" and had hired the car to drive up to London, for, being an alert young officer the latter had immediately observed that in that case he could not hold a driving licence. It was no good beating about the bush, Satira had to admit the fault and so had to give his name as Clabon Cragg. The constable told him to would be summonsed and that he was continuing to drive at his own risk, but that did not deter Satira one bit and he drove on straight to London, escorted himself in the suite reserved at the Hotel Cosmo by Cragg and contacted one of his associates, one Crooper, of whom, more later. In the meantime Blake, Tinker and Coutts had given up all hopes of tracking down the criminal doctor and had returned to London. Blake was very puzzled as to how Satira had eluded them and was forced to wait for further developments. Imagine his excitement when, after a very short interval it came to his knowledge through an item in the stop press column of an evening paper that the body of Satira had been found in the consulting room of a Hampshire Village doctor! And to further his excitement it seemed that the Doctor himself was also dead, having been brutally murdered. Post haste the trio raced to the place and it was not long before they had discovered that the dead man in Satira's clothes was most certainly not their man. It became obvious, at least to Blake, that Satira had committed a double murder and his determination to lay him by the heels became almost an obsession. He must be caught and caught quickly if further reckless slaughter was to be avoided. But although wireless S.O.S. bulletins and newspaper requests for information about the dead man were tried, no results were forthcoming and when Blake finally got on the track of Satira once again it was by sheer chance, for it was the manager of

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Sorry to leave you ... again but I
 think all our space has been taken up by now and
 so I shall have to sign off. I hope you like this
 new idea of presenting "Liberians" and shall be
 pleased to hear from any of you. To those who
 have written me and have not yet had a reply I
 offer my most sincere apologies and hope to con-
 tact them in the near future.

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