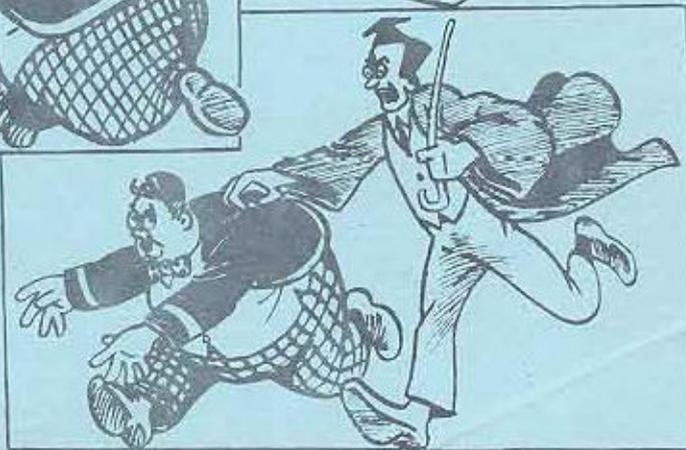


COLLECTORS DIGEST ANNUAL



15/-

1966

GHARRISON

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Collectors' Digest Annual

CHRISTMAS 1966

TWENTIETH YEAR

Editor: ERIC FAYNE, Excelsior House, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey, England.***

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Another Christmas! Another Annual! The years slip by so relentlessly that we hardly seem to note their passing. The only drawback to yet another Annual is that we are all yet another year older. The advantage of an accumulation of years is an accumulation of memories. I hope that this edition of our famous Annual may serve to bring back to you a flood of happy memories which, without it, would have remained dormant.

It was Charles Dickens who said that we never tire of the friendships we form with books. We are lucky. For beyond forming friendships with books, we have all made many, many friendships as a result of those old books which we love.

As 1966 gradually passes away into history, it is fitting that we should look back for a moment. In some ways it has been a sad year, for a number of the old stalwarts have been taken from our midst since the last Annual appeared. The hobby is much the poorer for their passing. Our happy memories of them live on.

For Collectors' Digest it has been a remarkably successful year. The magazine has gone from strength to strength, thanks to the loyal support of our increasing band of readers and thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of our gifted contributors.

Looking ahead, 1967 should be a milestone for our world-famous C.D. Towards the end of the year it will reach, not only its 250th issue, but also its 21st birthday. Maybe we shall be given the key to the door, and certainly we shall have to celebrate the event in some way. And next year, all being well, Collectors' Digest Annual will reach its 21st edition. 1967 promises to be an exciting year.

Finally, happy thankful memories of Herbert Leckenby who did so much for so many in years gone by. Happy thankful memories of Bill Gander who played an unforgettable part in making our hobby what it is today.

And, back in the present, thanks to our writers and our artists whose spring of keenness and loyalty never runs dry, and to our printers, York Duplicating Services, who strive with undiminished success to give us perfection in their side of the hobby - month after month, year after year.

Lastly, dear friends and readers, my personal thanks to you - for without you it would all be nothing at all. I count you all among my many blessings.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS, EVERYONE. A PROSPEROUS AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR.

Your sincere friend,

Eric Fayne

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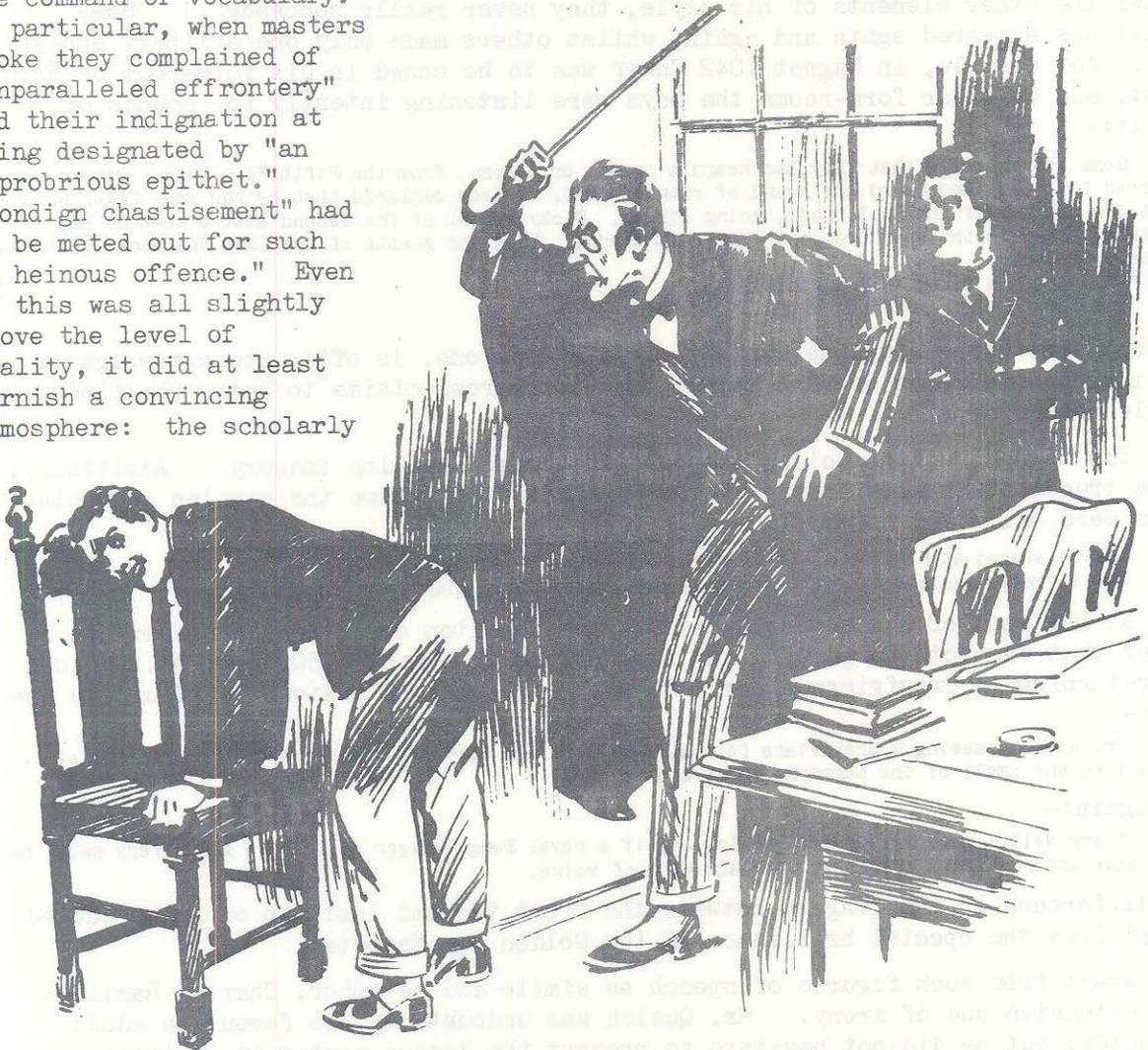
Charles Hamilton's Style

By Roger M. Jenkins

"No one can ever write as I do. Whether it's good, bad, or indifferent, it's quite individual," said Charles Hamilton, and on another occasion he remarked, "If Frank's writing could be so easily imitated, why did not a dozen other writers just go and do it, and become surtax payers like Frank?" Discerning readers will readily appreciate the truth of these remarks, but it is not so easy to provide a detailed analysis of Charles Hamilton's style. At the best, it may be possible to highlight some of its more outstanding qualities.

Perhaps the most obvious element in his writing is the extensive and impressive command of vocabulary.

In particular, when masters spoke they complained of "unparalleled effrontery" and their indignation at being designated by "an opprobrious epithet." "Condign chastisement" had to be meted out for such "a heinous offence." Even if this was all slightly above the level of reality, it did at least furnish a convincing atmosphere: the scholarly



"Bend over that chair!" ordered Mr. Quelch. "Very well," said Wharton; "but I'd like to say that I pitched into that Highlife man because he catapulted my Form master, sir!" explained the junior meekly.

shades of Greyfriars and St. Jim's really were inhabited by scholarly pedants whose respect for dead languages was extended to cover the vernacular tongue. A school story writer who has no respect for scholarship can never hope to convince all his readers. Charles Hamilton's intense interest in the literature of many languages was of supreme importance in providing a credible background: this was a real school where (subject to certain interruptions!) real work was being done. The joke about declining the article in Magnet 1306, a pun on the mechanics of German grammar, is typically Hamiltonian. He may not have been educated at a public school, but he was at least well up in public school work, and his abounding references to academic studies are all authentic.

Another well-known element of his style is his use of classical quotations and allusions. This habit was not much in evidence in early days, but became commoner with the maturing of the author's style, and was readily noticeable from about 1923 onwards. (The substitute writers soon fastened on to this trait, and repeated Hamilton's favourite quotations like parrots, but, as they could not master the other elements of his style, they never really succeeded.) Some quotations appeared again and again, whilst others made only one solitary appearance: for example, in Magnet 1042 Coker was to be caned in his form-room by Mr. Prout, and in other form-rooms the boys were listening intently for sounds of tumult:-

Some fellows said that they had heard a crash, or a bump, from the Fifth Form room. Others averred that they had heard the sound of running feet. Hobson declared that he had seen Coker whisk past the doorway of the Shell room, going strong. Dicky Nugent of the Second stated that he had glimpsed Coker in the quad from his Form-room window. Like the guests of the Lady Branksome in olden times:-

"Some heard a sound in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight not seen by all."

A story containing a unique quotation, like this one, is often above average in quality, and in point of fact Magnet 1042 has strong claims to being the finest single number of all.

The Magnets of the Golden Age contained some striking imagery. Admittedly, it is true that in some stories before and after this time the similes and metaphors were trite and commonplace:-

Sefton stared at Figgins as if he would bite him. (Gem 369)
Carne reeled against a tree. His face was like chalk. (Magnet 1274)

but, at the peak of his performance, Charles Hamilton could handle imagery in a manner that was both surprising and amusing, as in Magnet 1150, when Mr. Quelch was returning to Greyfriars after a long absence, and was anxious to return to the fray:-

Mr. Quelch, seeing a Greyfriars fellow, felt like the war-horse snuffing the battle from afar. It was like the smell of the barracks to an old soldier.

and again:-

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch grimly, and if a royal Bengal tiger could have said "Very well" he would have uttered it in precisely the same tone of voice.

The difference in the imagery between the first two and last two examples quoted exemplifies the special brilliance of the Golden Age Magnets.

Apart from such figures of speech as simile and metaphor, Charles Hamilton made extensive use of irony. Mr. Quelch was undoubtedly his favourite adult character, but he did not hesitate to present the Remove master in an ironic light when he wished to amuse the reader. Sometimes we are invited to smile at Mr. Quelch's lack of understanding, as in Magnet 1086 when he caught Bunter

imitating his voice, but did not recognise it as an imitation of himself:-

"Did you suppose, when this absurd boy spoke in that gruff, unpleasant, ridiculous voice, that it was I who spoke?"

Sometimes we are intended to chuckle over his self-conceit, as in Magnet 1269 when he was reading one of his own articles in a magazine:-

Like most authors, Quelch was fond of reading his own works. They seemed so superior, somehow, to the works of anybody else.

Perusing that masterly article on an important subject, Quelch could not help feeling pleased. The June sunshine at his window was reflected in the frosty but genial smile on his countenance.

Sometimes we are invited to smile ironically at the contrast between his real feelings and the facade he was compelled to keep up, as in Magnet 1215 when he was catapulted by a Highcliffe junior who ran away:-

"One moment, Wharton,"

"Yes, sir." The junior turned back.

"Did you - h'm - did you administer a severe castigation to the - the Highcliffe boy, Wharton?"

"Yes, rather, sir. I mean, certainly, sir!"

"I cannot, of course, approve of anything of the kind," said Mr. Quelch, coughing. "But you are certain that the castigation was severe?"

So far as irony is concerned, Bunter is of course an even better subject for comic deflation than Mr. Quelch, for many people consider that irony rests on the contrast between appearance and reality. Bunter had no means of appreciating his true appearance, as was made painfully clear in Magnet 1160 when he was offered a job in a circus:-

Rollo had told him to look in the glass; but Bunter might have looked in a dozen glasses without guessing the dreadful truth. When Bunter looked in a glass, he saw a handsome, well-set-up fellow, with rather aristocratic bearing. His glasses, he fancied, rather added to his distinguished appearance than detracted from it. He had no doubt that had Apollo looked in a mirror, he would have seen something like what Bunter saw there. Never in his wildest imaginings would it have occurred to Bunter that his mirror reflected anything suitable to be added to a freak show in a circus.

"The actual fact is that if you want to write for boys you must write for adults," said Charles Hamilton, and in that one sentence lies the key to the enduring magic of his stories. Boys could not have understood all his extensive vocabulary, his classical references, quotations, and figures of speech, but they could undoubtedly appreciate the humour the author intended to convey. Fourteen years ago I quoted the following extract from Magnet 1325 as the epitome of the mellow humour of his style, and I have not discovered anything to better it since that time:-

Mr. Hinks was one of those born with a natural disinclination to work. Under happier auspices he might have been a Cabinet Minister or an ornament of the Diplomatic service. But, as a matter of sad fact, he was a tramp.

Boys might know little of the government or the civil service, but the anti-climax in the last sentence could be appreciated by all. Equally amusing was the humorous presentation of Mr. Prout, again ironic in its comic emphasis between the vision he had of himself and the reality that everyone else could observe, as in Magnet 1129:-

But those days were long past. Since those days Prout had found, with every passing year, more and more difficulty in buttoning his waistcoat. Perpendicularly, Prout was not impressive; but his diameter and circumference were imposing. His form - not in his hearing, of course - likened him to the "huge earth-shaking beast" mentioned by Macaulay.

and again :-

Henry Samuel Quelch was a man of few words, and those were not always pleasant words. Chatting was not much in his line. Prout, on the other hand, was a chatty gentleman. Prout would take a colleague by the arm and walk him from the common room to his study for a chat; and the expression on the victim's face might have moved a heart of stone. Prout would drop into the games study to chat with members of his form. He believed in keeping up a spirit of free and friendly confidence between master and pupil. What the Fifth form men felt like on these occasions Prout never knew, and never suspected. Sometimes, in a chatty mood, he had found the games study deserted at an hour when it was

usually full of the Fifth; but he never guessed that that was because he was espied from afar, and warning given in time that Prout was coming for one of his talks. He did not know that Fitzgerald of the Fifth had suggested having a fire escape fitted to the window of the games study so that fellows could escape by the window when Prout got to the door. Prout valued those free and friendly chats with his Form in leisure hours. He had no doubt that his Form valued them; and he often spoke of them in Common-room.

The delightful humour of this long discursive passage is typical of Hamilton at his best, and by Hamilton at his best I mean the Magnets of the Golden Age.

Hamilton's style owed much to his reading of the classics. He himself thought he resembled Thackeray, and of Thackeray's more famous contemporary he said, "Dickens I loved when I was young - I don't care much for him now." Yet his own work resembled that of Dickens' in many ways. They both liked type-names, whether it was Lord Mutahead in "Pickwick Papers" or Mr. Tiper the printer in Rylcombe. The Day and Martin boot-polish referred to in chapter 25 of "Oliver Twist" was often used as an uncomplimentary reference to Hurree Singh's complexion. When Martin Chuzzlewit went to the United States, he observed that everyone was a colonel and all food was devoured in a revoltingly greedy manner, as the Greyfriars fellows discovered for themselves in the Hollywood series. Perhaps it is no coincidence, too, that Hookey Walker was mentioned both in chapter 22 of "David Copperfield" and in the blue Gems. Certainly Bunter was often compared with Jagers' famous witness in "Great Expectations" who was prepared to swear to anything in a general kind of way, and many things were compared with Sam Weller's knowledge of London which in "Pickwick Papers" was stated to be extensive and peculiar. But apart from these little details, Charles Hamilton shared with Dickens the faculty of being able to create memorable characters, characters that were sometimes a little larger than life, but characters that really lived. And, again like Dickens, Hamilton was prepared to allow these characters to dominate the story-telling. The situation never really mattered: what was important was the way these characters re-acted to new events.

As Hamilton grew older, his liking for Dickens decreased, but Lewis Carroll's appeal apparently never waned, and "Jabberwocky" was fruitful source of new words. Many other writers adopted "frabjous" and "chortle," but Charles Hamilton was probably unique in using the portmanteau words "burble" and "Bandersnatch." From "The Hunting of the Snark" came the frequent references to the Baker, who, on sighting the Boojum, softly and suddenly vanished away. The mad logic of Lewis Carroll is probably one of the most enduring enchantments.

Perhaps the most teasing and provocative element in Charles Hamilton's style is the way in which he parodied some well-known quotation without explanation. These little jewels are usually embedded in the text and have to be prised out like jewels from an oyster. For example, in Magnet 1110 we read:-

Mr. Quelch's indigestion had ceased from troubling, and his rheumatism was at rest.

which is a parody of the last line of Tennyson's poem "The May Queen" (itself a quotation from the Book of Job in the Old Testament). Again, in Magnet 1566 Mr. Quelch was disturbed when he was typing the History of Greyfriars, and:-

His fingers ceased to wander idly over the noisy keys.

which is a parody of the words of Sullivan's song "The Lost Chord." These parodies are probably the most refined aspect of his style, and were put in solely for the adult readers: yet they are amusing in themselves, and the boy who did not spot them would not have his pleasure in the story marred in any way. This is part of the secret of Charles Hamilton's universal appeal.

For these reasons, therefore, I am led to the conclusion that Charles Hamilton at his best stood head and shoulders above all other writers of boys'

stories, simply because of his style alone, quite apart from the merits of his characterisation and plot-construction. In a way it is amazing that an author of his calibre should have devoted himself almost exclusively to the ephemeral world of weekly papers. To be able to combine prodigious output with high quality is a rare achievement and, though he was unusually gifted as a story-teller, his success was undoubtedly due more to cultivated art than to natural ability. It is doubtful whether a comparable writer will ever again choose to shine in the world of boys' literature, but Charles Hamilton would assuredly have echoed the words of Virgil, one of his favourite Latin authors:-

Hoc opus, hic labor est.

* * * * *

W A N T E D : Monster Libraries, Magnets, Bullseyes, Comics, Hotspurs.

WILL EXCHANGE: Gems (1938,9) - 40 (Frank Richard stories in back); Modern Boys - 24 (Captain Justice and Charles Hamilton stories in back); Silver Jacket - 6 (Frank Richards stories); Dreadnought - 1 (Frank Richards story); ½d Marvel - 1; 1d Marvel - 2; 2d Marvel - 1; The Captain - 1; ½d Sports Library - 1; ½d True Blue - 1; 1d True Blue - 1; 1d True Blue War Library - 1; Boys of England (dated 1874) - 1; The Startler - 24; ½d Boys Realm Football Library - 5; Schoolgirls Own Libraries - 50; Hospital Romance Libraries - 30; American Detective Magazines - 30; Fantastic & Weird American Stories - 12; B.O.P. 1902, 1919, 1918, 1898; Chums 1927/28, 1941; Scout Annual - 1; Greyfriars Holiday Annuals - 4; Champion Annuals - 3; Cigarette Card Album - 1; Knockout Comics, Knockout, Rover & Adventure, Billy Bunter's Knockout, Valiant & Knockout, Lion, Tiger, Hurricane, The Victor - 65; Boys Friend Libraries; Champion Libraries; Comics; Pix People; Post; Parade; etc. etc.

F. KNOTT, 29 COLSON ST., AVALON, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND.

* * * * *

The two full-page pictures on the following pages are the work of G. M. Dodgshon. He was not a great illustrator - he paid too little attention to detail in his pictures - but he had a genuine flair for portraiture as our examples show. Our pictures are, in fact, reproductions of "Art plates" which were given away with the School Friend in 1920.

Dodgshon's work can be found in the publications of the Amalgamated Press and their predecessors right back before the turn of the century, but he is solely remembered with affection to-day as the School Friend artist. He illustrated all, or nearly all, of the Cliff House stories in that periodical.

Cliff House, owing to its remarkable history, will always be well remembered while the memories of Morcove grow fainter and fainter. But the Schoolgirls' Own had that wonderful artist, Leonard Shields - while School Friend had Dodgshon. So, even now, Schoolgirls' Own is the more attractive paper of the two.

All the same, Dodgshon had his moments - as our pictures show.



PEGGY PRESTON
PLAYING MANY PARTS





THE FOURTH FORM AT CLIFF HOUSE



KEY TO PORTRAITS. 1. Phyllis Howell. 2. "Olive Wayne" (Augusta Anstruther-Brown). 3. Marcia Loftus. 4. Ferna Lee. 5. Philippa Derwent. 6. Marjorie Hazeldene. 7. Bridget O'Toole. 8. Bessie Hunter. 9. Lucy Morgan. 10. Gwendoline Cook. 11. Elsie Trevelyn. 12. Barbara Redfern. 13. Nancy Bell. 14. Mabel Lynn. 15. Freda Foote. 16. Dolly Dilling. 17. Meg Lenthall. 18. Agnes White. 19. Katie Smith. 20. Peggy Preston. 21. Vivienne Leigh. 22. Clara Clark. 23. Annabel Hibbins.

The Leonard Shields Story

By W. O. G. Lofts



DARKE TOWERS

The small, slight, elderly artist, now in retirement, struggled painfully to complete the illustration he was attempting of smiling boys on his drawing board.

His once so clever and capable hands were now, alas, crippled with arthritis. They had, in their day, drawn thousands of brilliant illustrations, which not only had delighted generations of boys and girls, but undoubtedly contributed much towards the success of the papers in question.

His name, of course, was Leonard Shields - one of the most brilliant of the Amalgamated Press illustrators - and also, in the opinion of many, the best of the MAGNET artists. This statement comes from none other than that fine old gentleman, and prolific Greyfriars illustrator, Mr. C. H. Chapman, who was not only a great friend of his but worked closely with him for many years, and was his greatest admirer.

Leonard Shields was born at Mexborough in Yorkshire on the 18th November 1876, and was the son of Robert James Shields, the local High Street chemist and druggist. Certainly there were no other artists in the family. Originally his ancestors came from Sunderland, and were seafaring folk, some of them being Master Mariners.

As a boy, Leonard loved to draw and was considered well above average in art at school, but his father had high hopes of him

following in the family footsteps and had him trained at Sheffield University where he became a Bachelor of Science. Still greatly interested in art, he entered an Art Competition held by Alfred Harmsworth and not only won first prize but also an invitation to come to London and illustrate for them. Putting all ideas of being a chemist behind him, much to the dismay of his father, and also leaving Mexborough, where the family was greatly respected, Leonard Shields left Yorkshire for London, to seek fame and fortune as it were.

It must be recorded that Leonard Shields had had no training to be an artist nor had he attended any art school. Apart from story illustrations he was just as clever with comic art and most of his early work is to be found in the comic papers ILLUSTRATED CHIPS/COMIC CUTS type - an example around 1896 being the Bunsey Boys on the back page of the latter, (the English version of the famous Katzenjammer Kids) whilst proof that his work was thought highly of in those days can be gauged from the fact that he was commissioned to illustrate the Christmas Double Number of the UNION JACK in 1899.

Gradually turning more and more towards story illustrating, a fact not generally known to collectors is that he drew the very first St. Jim's stories in PLUCK in 1906 - before the GEM came out; apart of course from turning out a terrific amount of material for other boys' papers in that period.

The coming of the first world war saw Leonard in active service, when he served in Anti-Aircraft, and did not go overseas because of some slight disability to his foot. How many of the older generation can recall that famous war-time poster - asking the population to eat less bread - and depicting a sheaf of wheat and soldiers in the background? This was the work of our Leonard, drawn whilst on active service, and what a famous "saving bread for our forces" poster it was, too!

Returning safely from the war he resumed his work for the Amalgamated Press and his slight familiar figure - with blue naval demobbed jacket - closely cropped sandy hair - boots (he never wore shoes in his life) and Yorkshire accent, was greatly liked, and in tremendous demand by all editors at Fleetway House.

About 1926 Mr. C. H. Chapman who had carried on the illustrations from Arthur Clarke in 1911 on Greyfriars in the MAGNET and HOLIDAY ANNUALS - almost single handed - was finding the strain too much, and his work was beginning to suffer. Readers have only to look at the cover illustrations from MAGNETS 956/959 to see what I mean. This is certainly not meant to be any reflection on Mr. Chapman - whose sterling work, and ability will always be greatly admired by myself. But the plain fact is that Mr. Chapman was being grossly overworked and he had to have a companion artist to take some of the work from his shoulders - and what better illustrator was there than Leonard Shields?

Leonard, had of course contributed to the HOLIDAY ANNUAL in 1923 in a plate of "Fire-Drill at Greyfriars School" and possibly other features - but according to my researches his first illustration in the MAGNET was in No. 960, July 10th 1926 - the start of the India Series - the covers in this period being occupied by portraits of famous cricketers - in connection with a free gift scheme. At the same time Leonard Shields was also illustrating the delightful SCHOOLGIRLS OWN and Library - of Morcove School. GIRLS FRIEND LIBRARY, BOYS FRIEND, FILM FUN, KINEMA COMIC, WONDER, BUTTERFLY, BUBBLES, SUNBEAM, JESTER, PLAYTIME, COMIC LIFE, PUCK, were also a few of the papers his story illustrations can be found - currently with week July 10th 1926! So the reader can judge what a busy man he was!

Many readers have found difficulty in distinguishing Mr. Chapman's work from Leonard Shields at times. The simple explanation kindly given to me by Mr. Chapman

is that often they used to do half each of certain illustrations - and so its impossible to tell in some cases. A 100% Shields illustration however is easily recognisable by his seemingly younger Greyfriars boys with bright cheery faces. Shields always looked to detail and all his art work was drawn with meticulous care. The best of his work can be found in the famous Water Lily series in the 30s - probably one of the best Holiday series ever written by "Frank Richards."

Like Mr. Chapman, Leonard Shields used to take the original manuscripts home with him and pick out incidents to make up illustrations for the story in question. His favourite character was Herbert Vernon-Smith - and this may be the reason why he drew him less of a bounder than as portrayed by Mr. Chapman. He disliked Harry Wharton, and could not stand the character, and thought him too much of a prig. If Shields did have any failings it was in drawing horses! He used to hate drawing them, and had to look up text books to get the exact position of them as desired in the illustration. I should add that in this department Mr. Chapman excelled. Having two as pets in his lifetime, Mr. Chapman has always made a great study of them - and still watches what he calls the greatest animals God ever gave to this earth closely in show-jumping on T.V.

A fast worker, Leonard Shields could finish a front cover illustration in an hour and was on the whole an extremely hard working man. In fact, he worked too hard, which made an impact on his health much to the dismay of his wife, who was always begging him to take things easy.

An extremely modest man, he never bothered to keep any originals of his work. He knew his limitations in the artistic field, and never tried to go on to better things - as did Warwick Reynolds. His son, whom I was privileged to meet, is an editor on one of the leading Sporting papers, whilst his daughter does show an interest in art - painting in oils - though not commercially. The artistic skill, however, is shown in the family by a grandson who is a trumpeter in a leading Theatre Company.

Thrifty by nature, he was a great home-loving man and devoted to his wife whom he met working down Fleet Street in the early part of this century.



CORA COLLIDES WITH POLLY! "Bother!" cried Cora, as if she were vexed with herself. "I've just forgotten that I --- Oh, I'm so sorry!" The laughing apology came as Cora knocked violently against Polly, scattering all the books upon the floor.

Thrifty though he may have been, like Johnny Bull of the Greyfriars Remove he was at heart an extremely kindly man, and never failed to help any fellow artist or friend in need. A caricature of Leonard Shields appeared in MAGNET 1036 December 24th 1927, which certainly did not do him justice as Leonard was quite pleasant looking in real life, and

far from being a comical character as the unknown artist portrayed him.

A keen photographer, he was never happier than on holiday taking snaps of his family; whilst still even working on illustrations for the various papers.

The end of the MAGNET in 1940, saw him gradually fade into retirement, when he continued to draw boys just for the sheer pleasure of doing so. Comfortably well off, through careful investments and legacies, he had no need to work at all. The last few years of his life were spent in visits to the theatre and long rides to the countryside in Surrey. He simply loved viewing the landscapes, and who can forget his delightful Greyfriars river scenes.

As already mentioned at the start of this article, Leonard Shields had the misfortune to become crippled with arthritis in his hands at about the age of 70, but despite great pain and difficulty still tried to draw the boys that he loved so well. The great handicap made him extremely moody at times and he passed away aged 72 on the 11th January 1949.

Probably the most astonishing thing that the press was able to write about such a great illustrator was the size of the fortune he left £67,902, of which £17,589 went on death duties. His wife Mrs. Ada Shields died only a few months later. Both were cremated at Putney.

Two early water-colours; a portrait of his father complete with mutton chops, and a book of cartoons are the only originals that his son Mr. E. S. Shields has, whilst our Yorkshire friends may be interested to know that in the Parish church at Mexborough, Leonard Shields had a stained-glassed window put in, with the Shields name underneath in memory of his father.

For over fifty years Leonard Shields gave pleasure to millions and his work is still admired and treasured today by collectors. He worked hard all his life, to keep generations of people happy.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Shields illustrated "Darke Towers" in one of the girls' papers a few years after he had illustrated the first St. Jim's story in Pluck in 1906. The other picture is a Shields Morcove picture of the early nineteen-twenties. The cartoon in the Magnet, referred to by Mr. Lofts, was a self-portrait.)

FOR SALE: Gems, Magnets, S.O.Ls., Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, B.O.Ps.

THOMSON, 6 RITCHIE PLACE, EDINBURGH 11.

BEST WISHES to GERRY ALLISON, ERIC FAYNE, JIM SWAN, and ALL HOBBY FRIENDS

From: J. McMAHON, TANNOCHSIDE.

Sprague-De-Camp, L. Ron. Hubbard, E. R. Burroughs, Francis Gerard, Edgar Wallace "Sanders" yarns "Captain" enthusiasts. Please contact:-

ELLIOTT, 17 LANGDON CRESCENT, London, E.6.

JULIUS LENNARD wishes ALL READERS, HOME and ABROAD, A VERY MERRY XMAS, and A HAPPY and TROUBLE FREE 1967.

Reminiscences of an Old-Timer

By Frank Vernon Lay

CHUMS

THE DARK HORSE

By

EDMUND
BURTON



*A Fine
Sporting
Yarn of
Racing and
the Ring*

Regrettably there are, to-day, very few of the old-time authors left with us. So you can imagine my surprise and pleasure, when, a few months ago, answering a ring at the door, I was confronted with a gentleman who introduced himself as Edmund Burton Childs, sent to see me on the recommendation of Mr. Samways. As, under the name of Edmund Burton, he has been steadily writing for "juveniles" since 1912 and is still actively writing to-day, he may truly be said to be one of the old-stagers.

Born in Drumcondra, Dublin

on the 25th February, 1887 Edmund Burton is now, apart from a few twinges of arthritis, a hale and hearty 79. He was educated at Merchant Taylors endowed school,

CHUMS

More Mirth at St. Anne's. That Boy-Inventor Hard at Work Again

**The Miracles
of
Mulligan**

by **THE INFALLIBLE
BURGLAR-TRAP**

Edmund Burton

Wellington Quay, Dublin and, at the age of fifteen entered the Yorkshire Insurance Company, followed by a period in the Gresham. In 1911 he abandoned insurance for a writing career and, early in 1912, had his first three stories accepted for "Horner's Weekly" and "Sunday Circle," to be followed later in the same year by his first

two boys' stories, both published in "The Boys' Friend." Thereafter he more or less specialised in writing for boys. Lewis Carlton was editor of "The Boys' Friend" in those days and Burton's first story was originally only 600 words.

Lewis Carlton, wrote back a most friendly and encouraging letter telling him that although he liked the story, it would have to be 6,000 words. With much sweating (and swearing!) Burton managed it and was overjoyed to get a cheque for £3. 10. Od. Carlton accepted his second story, same length same pay.

Apart from his first few stories and certain later unavoidable exceptions Burton was one of the few writers who only sold the first-serial and under-shilling book rights. In consequence of this he was able to sell most of his stories elsewhere and many of them are obtainable in much more permanent form, with much benefit to his income.

When Edmund Burton recently dropped into my "den" for one of our interesting chats he was in very reminiscent mood. He recollects many Fleet Street personalities and quite a few of the "Fleetway Bunch" in Farrington Street with whom he was in regular contact for many years. The first editor he met, after crossing over from Ireland to settle here, was Herbert Hinton who was then running several publications, followed by C. M. Down. Then came others including Addington Symonds, Alfred Edgar and so forth.

"My recollection of Hinton is always tinged with sadness, for that really grand personality met with a tragic finish. I could never get the precise details of what happened, but I understood that he accidentally fell out of a train on his way home and was killed by another one. I believe he lived at Chertsey at the time. When I first met him, he told me something I'd never suspected. Only a year before I came to England I'd written a serial for 'The Magnet' entitled 'The Silence,' and it ran in that paper during 1920. The story was right off the common run for those days, though we have had plenty of science stuff since. It dealt basically with a kind of magnetic control, which, employed by an enemy, could reduce all movable metal to immobility. In short, nothing could stop an invasion because nothing could move - except horses for transport."

"Some people I knew called it 'daft'. Perhaps it was, to them, but they forgot the 'daftness' of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, before my time, which later developed into solid fact. Jules Verne's own family had him 'put away' for a while as not responsible, because he visualised a boat which would live under water with a living crew. In fact, it was said that a relative actually shot him in the leg, so mad did he get with Verne's 'madness.' H. G. Wells prophesied an airship of the Zeppelin type in 'The War in the Air,' even describing the many separate 'balloonettes' which the main gasbag contained, some of which could be shot away and still enable the airship to remain airborne and probably make a safe landing. And, as observers admit, when Count von Zeppelin, produced his first successful airship, in 1906, it was at once remarked how alike in detail it seemed to the 'Wellsian' dream.

"When I wrote 'The Silence' the first World War had recently finished, leaving a continent in wreckage. China, at that time, was still more or less an 'unknown' quantity, although countless stories and rumours about the 'Yellow Peril' abounded. So I decided to cash in on the possibility of a huge Chinese aerial navy arriving over a crippled Britain and having it all its own way through an amazing equipment for spreading paralysing magnetic waves.

"But it wasn't so daft, after all," Edmund Burton told me, "because shortly after I'd finished the serial, I read that an Italian inventor had hit upon much the same idea, and had actually succeeded in stopping motor-cars at a considerable distance.

"Anyway, my yarn worked well. During my very first meeting with Hinton, he

mentioned 'The Silence' and told me it had done 'The Magnet' a lot of good: it was something new and readers were gripped by it.

"Of this I had full proof a little later, when my late wife and I left London to live at Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. One day an S.O.S. came from friend Herbert asking me to meet him at the Authors' Club, Whitehall, as he was launching a new weekly and wanted me to write its first serial. Enclosed in his letter were sketches of a weird-looking contraption showing two boats connected by a 'bridge' suspending a large metal tank: a diving-bell from which the sea-bed could be explored to find rich wrecks sunk during the U-boat campaign of World War I and salvage attempted.

"H. H. gave me a free hand otherwise, and - blessed inspiration - the magnetic idea which had produced 'The Silence' could be well employed again, in the hands of a rival treasure-seeking gang. So the story for the new paper 'School and Sport' known as 'Mackinlay's Millions' and afterwards issued in book form, went down very well. But the paper itself 'went down' in another sense, although it was quite a decent production.

"I clearly remember one occasion when my wife and I went up to London to see H.H. again. We sat in a bare room over a shop in Fleet Street - I believe we sat on two empty boxes - for the new office of 'School and Sport' had not yet been properly equipped. We were awaiting the return of H.H. from Bermondsey, where he had gone to see his 'backer.' He was in good spirits, full of enthusiasm for his new venture - but alas, I never saw him again. I got paid for 'Mackinlay's Millions' all right, and it ran its course, but shortly afterwards the paper ceased fire. Speaking later with some of the Fleetway chaps, I was told that the probable cause was that it too closely resembled 'The Boys' Friend' in make-up. Hinton had been editing the 'B.F.' for a good while, hence the similarity. Indeed the main difference between the two papers was that the 'B.F.' was green and 'School and Sport' was white.

"Captain C. M. Down, editor of the same Fleetway group, I knew very well and often saw him. He took many yarns from me, including one which was very well received everywhere - 'The Sword of the Temples.' This was a story about the Civil War and offered exceptional opportunity for thrills. Addington Symonds I met only once or twice, but a remark of his still makes me chuckle when it comes back to me. He had asked me to do a 12,000 word pirate yarn for 'The Champion' - 'The Lure of Crescent Isle' and, as I was leaving his office to concoct a plot, he called after me: "Don't write five hundred words more than twelve thousand. You'll only be paid for twelve thousand." Which I thought very nice and business-like from a chap who knew exactly what he wanted!

"But probably the fellow I knew best of all at Fleetway House was Alfred Edgar, who was then a 'sub' in the same office, and who used to deal with many of my stories. He specialised himself in motor-racing yarns, for he was an expert on that subject, and he used to keep me in touch with what was wanted. And herein lies another reminiscence which shows the fellowship which exists among people of the pen, and how they are always ready to do one of their band a good turn if they can.

"Alfred Edgar, as many know, also wrote under the pen-name of 'Barre Lyndon' and was the author of that famous stage success 'The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse,' in which the late Godfrey Tearle played the lead. It was afterwards filmed with Edward G. Robinson in the name-part.

"About this time I had lost sight of Edgar for a good while. In fact, I

don't remember having contacted him since I spent a very pleasant day with him and his family at their Hendon residence, where we held a great pow-wow about Fleetway House and its widespread influence. Then someone told me that he had offices in Old Square, Law Courts, so I chanced to drop in to see if he was really there.

"He was - very much so. In fact, he gaped and said 'Talk of the devil! I was only wondering what your address is, but I've lost it and now here you drop in at a most opportune moment. Hurry down to the Leigh Studios in Fleet Street, and see Mr. Gran. He wanted me to do a couple of long school yarns for a publisher, but I can't spare the time - so I thought of you! It seemed right up your alley!

"It just was! I found the Leigh Studios, also the proprietor. The firm was a literary agency and the two yarns, about 14,000 words each, were needed by Shurey's Publications. They appeared in 'The Scorcher Novels' and I got, I think, twenty-eight guineas for them. The titles were 'The Secret of Black Abbey' and 'The Mystery of the Crescent.'

"And Alfred Edgar? As 'Barre Lyndon' he went to America and entered the film business, writing scripts for some well-known films. Often have I seen his name among the 'credits' and when I do so a reminiscent thrill of those old, old days runs through me. It's good to see the well-known and well-loved names in print again."

Edmund Burton tells me that if any form of writing is as close to his heart as writing stories for boys it is writing on travel in Beautiful Britain. When he lived in Portsmouth up to the outbreak of war, he and his wife used to love the Isle of Wight and he decided that he'd do a book on it - one far removed from the ordinary groove of the guide-book, indeed, more of the 'personal impression' type. The book - "England's Eden" was accepted before the War by a provincial publisher, but held up, then squashed till 1946, when another publisher brought it out in excellent style both cloth and paperback. The time of publication was a lucky hit - just when people had been saving five years for a holiday. The Island was packed and everybody was buying everything. For a while sufficient copies of "England's Eden" could not be obtained, owing mainly to severe paper shortage then existing. Nevertheless, a later edition came out and on the strength of the sales Burton was commissioned to do North and South Devon and the Cotswolds. These were also successful and popular but not on the scale of "England's Eden."

One of the people Burton most regrets not having met in the flesh was Charles Hamilton. "No, I never met him" he says, "but I still treasure the lovely letter I had from him when he lived at Golder's Green. To my mind, and also to others, Charles Hamilton represented all that goes to make the perfect magician among school story writers."

Some of my readers may remember Edmund Burton's series for 'The Gem' in the late twenties, featuring Anthony Sharpe, Special Investigator and his boy assistant Tim O'Carroll. These were so popular that some thirty stories were issued and some of them have been published in book form at least twice since.

To-day Edmund Burton Childs writes mainly for the Annuals and I know my readers will join me in wishing him many more years of success.

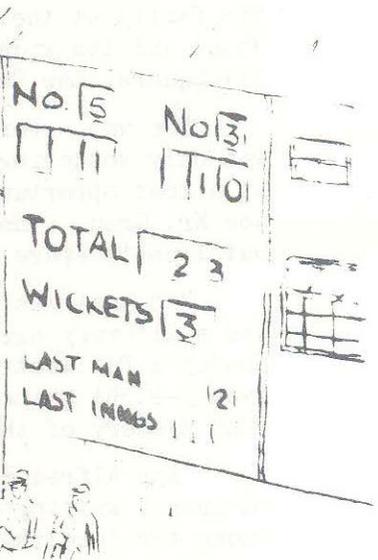
SALE / EXCHANGE: All Holiday Annuals; 10,000 Boys' and Girls' Periodicals. Many Rarities.

WANTED: Most 1915-30 items. Plucks; B.F.Ls; U.Js; N.L.Ls; Magnets; Champions; Boys - Favourites; etc. S.A.E. KINGSLEY, "ATLANTIS," LYDBROOK, GLOS.

The St. Frank's Cricket Festival

By Neil Beck

Illustrations by John Beck



THE idea originated with Edgar Fenton, the Captain of St. Frank's College. He put it to the Cricket Committee and they agreed wholeheartedly, but he asked them to say nothing until he had consulted the Head. Kindly old Dr. Stafford agreed and thought it was a splendid idea, and suggested to Fenton that he wrote to the officials of the bodies concerned and asked for their assistance and co-operation.

A few days later Fenton eagerly examined his letters, gave a whoop of joy and rushed off to see the Head at once. Hardly waiting to knock he burst into Dr.

Stafford's study and yelled out, 'They've agreed, sir. They're willing to come - all three of them.'

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That evening in Big Hall after call-over the school noticed that something unusual was afoot, for Dr. Stafford himself was on the platform, and he usually left call-over to his staff to handle.

'Something's up,' said Nipper, better known as Dick Hamilton, to Sir Montie Tregellis-West.

'Begad, dear boy, I believe you're right,' murmured the elegant junior, adjusting his pince-nez. 'I've thought that several members of the Sixth and Fifth were lookin' rather excited today; I wonder if it's anythin' to do with what they've been talkin' about amongst themselves.'

'Boys.'

At this moment Dr. Stafford's voice was heard from the platform and a



MORROW OUT FOR SIX.

respectful silence fell over the assembled school.

'Boys,' repeated the Head, 'a few days ago Fenton came to me with a remarkable suggestion, asking for my advice and consent.'

The school were all looking interested now. Fags in the Third Form had stopped shuffling their feet and even Edward Oswald Handforth had ceased to talk.

'He proposed that St. Frank's College should hold a Cricket Festival to begin the celebrations of our 50th anniversary year. As you know, already plans are made to celebrate that day back in 1916 when the late Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks first chronicled the life of this old school and its inhabitants. But to return to Fenton's plan, he suggested that if it were possible, St. Frank's should stage a short Cricket Festival. But, as the idea is his, I feel that I ought to allow Fenton himself to give you the details.'

'A Cricket Festival?'

'Good old Fenton!'

'Hurrah!'

'Thank you, sir,' said Fenton, as he came forward. 'As Dr. Stafford has told you, I proposed that we should stage this competition. He kindly agreed and suggested that I should write off immediately to the authorities concerned. Today I received their replies and all three have consented to send along a team to play in the competition.'

'Who are they, Fenton?' shouted out Handforth.

'I was coming to that,' smiled Fenton, as he held up his hand for silence. 'As well as our own First XI, three other sides will take part, and they will be representatives of the M.C.C., Sussex County Cricket Club, and the West Indian Touring Team.'

The school was stunned into silence by this remarkable news. The St. Frank's Cricket XI was actually going to play in first-class company with the possibility of playing the fabulous West Indians who had only a few days previously massacred the England team by an innings and 40 runs in the First Test Match at Old Trafford! The thought of it made the school feel dizzy, but Mr. Austin Sunncliffe was beaming and he clapped his hands furiously. Then, realising he was alone in this gesture, he ceased, blushed and cried out, 'Proceed, Fenton,' in an effort to cover his embarrassment.

'The idea is,' continued Fenton, 'that the three days will be occupied by three matches to be played on K.O. Cup lines - two semi-finals and a final. Dr. Stafford has agreed to provide a trophy for the winning side,' he added. 'And, for the present, that is all I can tell you as that is all that I know myself. Thank you, Dr. Stafford.'

'I am sure that you will all agree with me, boys, that Fenton's idea is an excellent one, and he is to be heartily congratulated and thanked by us all. You may dismiss.'

The draw for the semi-finals was made two weeks later in Big Hall, in the presence of representatives of all four sides.

'And now, boys,' said Dr. Stafford, 'we come to the draw for the Cricket Festival matches. I will ask Mr. Lee to draw the names from the hat I have here.'

There was a hush as the great detective put his hand into the hat, drew out a folded piece of paper and handed it to the Headmaster. Dr. Stafford took it and unfolded it.

'St. Frank's College will play....'

A pause as Mr. Lee drew out a second piece of paper and the Head unfolded it and read it.

'...Sussex.'

A loud buzz broke out in Hall at this point but was soon quietened by the Head raising his hand for silence.

Mr. Lee drew out another paper.

'M.C.C. will play....'

Another pause.

'The West Indian Touring Team.'

The draw was over and loud cheering broke out. It was to be noticed that the Sussex representative wore a broad smile on his face, but Fenton was heard to say, 'We'll give them a tough game, anyhow, and you never know; cricket's a funny game....'

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For the next few weeks there was no topic of conversation at St. Frank's which was discussed as much as the coming cricket festival. All candidates for the St. Frank's eleven were hard at practice in every spare moment. Never before had cricket fever taken such a grip on the old school.

The great day grew nearer and one day a notice appeared on the Head's notice board in his own elegant handwriting. It ran:-

'CRICKET FESTIVAL

Rules

1. Rules are as those for Gillette Cup matches except as noted below.
2. Each side will bat for a maximum of 55 overs.
3. No bowler will bowl for more than 10 overs.
4. Weather permitting, matches will commence at 10.30 a.m., lunch will be taken from 1.00 p.m. to 1.40 p.m. The tea interval will be from 3.45 p.m. to 4.05 p.m. Matches will be played to a conclusion on one day only.
5. All matches will be played on Big Side.

M. Stafford (Headmaster).

Wednesday June 22nd arrived at last; on this day the first match in the competition was to take place. The previous evening a notice had been pinned on the Notice Board; it ran:-

'CRICKET FESTIVAL

The following have been selected to represent the School against Sussex tomorrow, June 22nd:- E. Fenton (capt), A. Morrow, W. N. Browne, R. Hamilton, H. Stevens, R. Pitt, J. Dodd, E. O. Handforth, H. Gresham, H. R. L. Kahn, G. Wilson.

E. Fenton (Captain of Games).

This list of course made ten other people happy but some members of the school could think of perfectly good arguments for their own inclusion which Edgar Fenton seemed to have somehow overlooked. Many seniors frowned on the inclusion of so many Removites in the side, and even one or two of his form-fellows wondered over the wisdom of including Handforth, for he was a reckless batsman and as likely to score 100 as 0, as likely to go first ball as to last for an hour. Still he was the sort of batsman likely to swing a match of this sort, and Fenton could justify his inclusion on those grounds.

At a quarter past ten, Fenton and his opposite number, the Nawab of Pataudi walked out to the wicket on Big Side, studied it for a few moments, and then Fenton flipped a coin into the air. 'Heads!' called Pataudi. The coin came down tails. Fenton smiled and asked Sussex to bat first; he was pleased to win the toss for the wicket was rather green, a bit damp and the ball was likely to swing about in the heavy atmosphere early on and Fenton knew that if St. Frank's batted it was more than likely that Sussex would shoot them out for about 40 or 50.

So, at the appointed hour of 10.30, the St. Frank's team took the field and were closely followed by the Sussex opening pair Lenham and Suttle. The Sussex side was:- L. J. Lenham, K. G. Suttle, G. C. Cooper, J. M. Parks, Nawab of Pataudi, M. G. Griffith, A. S. M. Oakman, M. A. Buss, A. Buss, J. A. Snow, D. L. Bates. Unfortunately, although Fenton was heard to breathe a sigh of relief when told the news, Tex Dexter was unable to play at the last minute and Michael Buss had stepped in to fill his place.

Gresham, the son of England bowler "Hat-Trick" Gresham, bowled the first over to Lenham, who took a four and a two off it, and then Kahn, an Indian Prince like the Sussex skipper, bowled to Suttle, and the little left-hander took two off the third ball and a four off the fifth. In the fourth over, however, Suttle came forward to drive Kahn, played over the top of a well-pitched up delivery and was bowled, 18-1-10.

Cooper took a four off the last ball of the over, but then with the first ball of his third over, Gresham swung the ball through Lenham's guard and hit his leg stump, 22-2-8.

Next man in was the England wicket-keeper, Jim Parks, but he seemed strangely out-of-touch and did not strike the ball as crisply and cleanly as he always seems to. At 30 Cooper was bowled by Hussi Kahn for eight, and Pataudi joined Parks in a useful stand. Gradually the score mounted, but just as it seemed that Pataudi was set, he edged Gresham to first slip where Arthur Morrow took a comfortable catch, 57-4-16.

Griffith then joined Jim Parks in a breezy fifth-wicket stand of thirty-one before Parks, finally losing patience with himself, stepped out to drive Kahn, was beaten off the pitch and bowled, 88-5-28. Three runs later Griffith's brisk knock was ended when he too was bowled by Kahn for 20.

As has happened so often before, the Sussex tail now came to the rescue, and through a series of stubborn stands put quite a reasonable total on the board. First, Oakman and Michael Buss shared a solid stand of thirty-five; no chances were taken and runs came understandably slowly. After Gresham had bowled eight overs he gave way to Hamilton bowling off-breaks, and he started with a maiden. Kahn completed his ten overs, and eventually took his sweater to a prolonged round of applause with figures of 10 overs 1 maiden 62 runs 4 wickets (and those being the wickets of Suttle, Cooper, Parks and Griffith).

Jerry Dodd who replaced him met with instant success. Oakman went to drive his first ball, but only clipped it into his stumps, 126-7-21. Tony Buss joined his younger brother and they kept the new St. Frank's scoreboard moving with a series of dabs and pushes on the leg side. After three overs for 22 runs and Oakman's wicket, Dodd came off and Fenton himself went on to bowl leg-breaks. His second ball turned and kicked viciously and Tony Buss trying to change his shot at the last second succeeded in keeping the ball out of his wicket at the expense of edging it into the waiting gloves of wicket-keeper George Wilson, 154-8-20.

Brother Michael, having remained static on 23 for some twenty minutes, now took a single off Pitt and a four and a single from Fenton. In Pitt's next over he swept the first ball to the mid-wicket boundary, and attempting to repeat the stroke to the next ball, he got a top edge and skied the ball to Stevens at short mid-on, 164-9-33.

But the Sussex innings was not over yet; Snow and Bates played sensibly and added a further 21 runs before Pitt turned an off-break into Bates's stumps, and Sussex were all out for 185 on the stroke of one o'clock.

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At 1.40 Snow and Bates bowled to Fenton and Morrow; Snow to Fenton was a maiden, but then Morrow took a single from Bates, another from Snow, and a boundary from Bates's second over. The next two overs produced another Snow-Fenton maide and another Bates-Morrow single, and after six overs St. Frank's had made 7 for no wicket.

Then in his fourth over Snow pitched on the line of Morrow's off-stump, and Morrow playing for the straight ball was utterly deceived as it cut back into his stumps, 7-1-7. Browne survived the over and then Fenton both opened and closed his account with a single from Bates, for in his next over Snow knocked over Fenton's off-stump. Hamilton joined Browne and confidently turned Snow to mid-wicket for a single. After 9 overs the school's score stood at nine for two wickets, not a very encouraging start.

By a succession of pushes and glances Browne and Hamilton gradually advanced the score to 23 when first Snow deceived and bowled Browne for six and then Hamilton edged Bates to Suttle in the gully; 23 for 4 after 14 overs. The writing seemed to be on the wall for St. Frank's but Horace Stevens and Reggie Pitt joined in a useful stand of 28 and saw Bates off after eight overs. Oakman replaced him to bowl off-breaks; his first over yielded one run and his second brought him the wicket of Stevens, who, trying to turn with the spin to fine leg, succeeded only in playing the ball into his own stumps, 51 for 5 after 20 overs.

Reggie Pitt had been playing quietly and confidently all the while and continued to do so with Jerry Dodd at the crease with him. From the bowling of Oakman, Tony Buss (two overs for 16 runs) and Michael Buss, bowling slow left-arm, these two added 55 in 12 overs until tea, when with the score at 106 for 5 after 32 overs, St. Frank's wanted 80 runs to win off 23 overs.

When Pitt and Dodd resumed after the interval, the ground was strangely silent. The large crowd could sense an exciting finish building up. Two overs were bowled and then with the fourth ball of his last over Bates bowled Jerry Dodd, 110-6-28.

The burly Edward Oswald Handforth was next man in and it seemed that his naturally square jaw jutted even more than normal on this occasion. This was a

situation ready made for Handforth, for he loved anything with a challenge in it. He took a single from Bates and Pitt did the same from his last ball. Pitt had been playing with admirable coolness and concentration and just before tea had reached his half-century.

With both batsmen now attacking the bowling, the next seven overs brought forth 36 runs, including 13 off one rather erratic over from Tony Buss, during which Handforth square-drove to the fence, and then Pitt pulled and cover-drove fours. Just as it seemed that Pitt and Handforth would carry the day, and many people were thinking that Pitt might just score the century he so richly deserved, he flashed wildly outside his off-stump at Tony Buss and Suttle took another easy gully catch, if any catch is easy in that position, 148-7-72.

As Pitt came in, the entire Sussex team applauded his effort, and the crowd rose to him. If ever St. Frank's had needed a good steady innings, this had been such an occasion and Reggie Pitt's response was worthy of only the highest praise.

A Michael Buss over conceded three runs and brother Tony's next yielded six. Handforth was now fairly in his stride, hitting the ball cleanly to all parts of the field, but at 157 he lost Gresham bowled by Michael Buss for 1. Still Handforth slogged recklessly, hitting Tony Buss's first ball for four, his second out to long-on- for two but then hitting the third high back to the bowler, 163-9-31.

Hussi Kahn, with only last man George Wilson in with him, decided that boldness was the best policy, and launched a blitz on Michael Buss which took everyone by surprise; the first ball was despatched over long-on for six, the third to mid-wicket for four and the sixth to backward point for a single to enable him to keep the bowling. A four from Tony Buss's first ball and a single from the fifth left Wilson to face the last ball of the over. He edged it towards slips, but luckily just short and wide of their outstretched hands, and through to third-man for four. Hussi Kahn was going to take no more chances like that, and hit Michael Buss's fifth ball through extra cover to win the match by one wicket.

St. Frank's versus Sussex, June 22nd

St. Frank's won the toss and elected to field.

SUSSEX

L. J. Lenham	b Gresham	: 8
K. G. Suttle	b Kahn	10
G. C. Cooper	b Kahn	8
J. M. Parks	b Kahn	28
Nawab of Pataudi	c Morrow b Gresham	16
M. G. Griffith	b Kahn	20
A. S. M. Oakman	b Dodd	21
M. A. Buss	c Stevens b Pitt	33
A. Buss	c Wilson b Fenton	20
J. A. Snow	not out	11
D. L. Bates	b Pitt	10
TOTAL		185 (40.1 overs)

Fall of wickets:- 18, 22, 30, 57, 88, 91, 126, 154, 164, 185.

Gresham 8-1-43-2; Kahn 10-1-62-4; Hamilton 10-2-31-0;
Dodd 3-0-22-1; Fenton 5-1-16-1; Pitt 4.1-0-11-2.

ST. FRANK'S

E. Fenton	b	Snow	1
A. Morrow	b	Snow	7
W. N. Browne	b	Snow	6
R. Hamilton	c	Suttle b Bates	9
H. Stevens	b	Oakman	8
R. Pitt	c	Suttle b Buss A.	72
J. Dodd	b	Bates	28
E. O. Handforth	c & b	Buss A.	31
H. Gresham	b	Buss M. A.	1
H. R. L. Kahn		not out	20
G. Wilson		not out	4
TOTAL		(9 wkts)	187 (48.5 overs)

Fall of wickets:- 7, 8, 23, 23, 51, 110, 148, 157, 163.

Snow 10-4-32-3; Bates 10-0-33-2; Oakman 10-2-28-1;
Buss A. 10-0-64-2; Buss M. A. 8.5-1-31-1.

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June 23rd produced a most dramatic match between the M.C.C. side and the West Indian tourists. Garfield Sobers won the toss and elected to bat.

Hunte and Carew opened cautiously for the West Indians but steady bowling from Shackleton, Alley and Bailey pinned them down. By the ninth over the score stood at 15 for 0 wicket; suddenly, however, this was changed, and by the sixteenth over the score was 45 for 5, with Hunte, Carew, Kanhai, Nurse and Sobers back in the pavilion. Butcher and Holford steadied the innings but at 86 Basil d'Oliveira came on and in two overs he took three wickets for eleven runs and at 103 for 8 the West Indians were deep in trouble. Some sensible hitting by Hall aided by some sound defence from Gibbs added 40 valuable runs and the West Indian innings finally closed for 147.

M.C.C. made a brisk reply and after 7 overs from Hall and Cohen the score was 35 for the loss of Marshall. Sobers now made a double bowling change, bringing Gibbs and himself on. Within three balls Gibbs had bowled both Milburn and Mushtaq, then at 44 Sobers bowled d'Oliveira and at 51 he bowled Ibadulla after the Pakistani had scored a valuable 28. Inman and Alley added 24 before Sobers bowled Alley and then, two balls later, Bailey skied the ball back to him, the batsmen having time to cross before Sobers completed the dismissal. Gibbs came off, being replaced by Holford, and Titmus promptly hit him for six, but was out to a gully catch in the same over. Sobers quickly bowled Inman for a dogged 23 and then disposed of Shackleton to give the West Indians victory by 60 runs. Sobers finished with six wickets for sixteen runs.

M.C.C. v West Indians, June 23rd
West Indians won the toss and elected to bat

C. C. Hunte	b	Bailey	7
M. C. Carew	c	Murray b Shackleton	9
R. B. Kanhai	c	Murray b Shackleton	1
S. M. Nurse	b	Shackleton	8
B. F. Butcher	b	d'Oliveira	21
G. S. Sobers	c	Inman b Bailey	9
D. A. J. Holford	v	Murray b d'Oliveira	33

W. W. Hall	not out	45
J. L. Hendriks	c Murray b d'Oliveira	8
L. R. Gibbs	b Titmus	6
R. Cohen	c Titmus b Marshall	0
TOTAL		<u>147</u> (42 overs)

Fall of wickets:- 15, 17, 25, 34, 45, 86, 95, 103, 143, 147.

Shackleton 10-2-17-3; Alley 5-0-21-0; Bailey 7-0-45-2;
Titmus 10-2-23-1; Mushtaq 5-2-9-0; d'Oliveira 4-0-32-3;
Marshall 1-1-0-1.

M.C.C.

R. E. Marshall	c Hendriks b Hall	9
K. Ibadulla	b Sobers	28
C. Milburn	b Gibbs	7
Mushtaq Mohammed	b Gibbs	0
B. L. d'Oliveira	b Sobers	1
C. C. Inman	b Sobers	23
W. E. Alley	b Sobers	11
T. E. Bailey	c & b Sobers	0
F. J. Titmus	c Gibbs b Holford	6
D. L. Murray	not out	2
D. Shackleton	b Sobers	0
TOTAL		<u>87</u> (22.2 overs)

Fall of wickets:- 18, 35, 35, 44, 51, 75, 75, 81, 85, 87.

Hall 4-0-19-1; Cohen 3-1-16-0; Gibbs 5-1-28-2;
Sobers 7.2-2-16-6; Holford 3-1-8-1.

The stage was now set for the final of the competition between St. Frank's and the West Indians to be played on the morrow. Fenton announced that the same team which beat Sussex would play against the West Indians, but the tourists made one change, bringing in Brancker for Cohen who pulled a thigh muscle and left the field during the M.C.C. innings. This added to the injury to Charlie Griffith left the West Indians with only one fast bowler for the match, Hall, although Sobers can, of course, bowl both slow and fast.

At about a quarter to ten the next morning, the teams began to assemble on Big Side. As the players were enjoying a pre-match "net," William Napoleon Browne drew Edgar Fenton to one side.

'Pardon me, Brother Fenton,' said Browne, 'but I believe that you may be in some doubt as to whether we should bat or field if you win the toss. Am I correct?'

'That's true, Browne,' replied the skipper. 'I suppose we ought to field really, so that, whatever else happens, we don't get bowled out for a ridiculous score, and that the match is over by lunch.'

'Wise words, Brother Edgar. May I endorse your remarks, and set your mind at rest by saying that they have the approval of the pride of the Browne family? Furthermore, might I suggest that Brother Pitt is used as first change bowler today and not Brother Nipper, for, though it pains me deeply to say so, I fear that

Brother Pitt is the better bowler of the two and is more likely to be effective? Today, Brother, you will be relieved to know that my shoulder injury is fully-recovered and that I shall be able to proceed to do feats of derring-do on the greensward should you wish me to turn my arm over.'

'Thanks, old man,' smiled Fenton, 'I'll bear that in mind.'

It was not unusual for Browne to counsel Fenton in this fashion; Fenton knew from experience that Browne was not a braggart over his own abilities, and, indeed, he had come recently to lean heavily on Browne for advice.

'Ah, Brother Fenton, I perceive Brother Sobers in the middle distance. He is approaching steadily, and I believe it is his intention that you should proceed to the middle and toss for choice of innings. Remember, Brother, that if he should call wrongly, the cricket world is looking to you to ask our honoured guests to partake of first use of the wicket.'

And Browne strolled off, leaving Fenton and Sobers to walk to the centre and toss. Arriving there they took a long hard look at the wicket and Sobers prodded it with his thumb, and then looked round the outfield which was still damp from overnight rain.

'Ready?' asked Fenton. 'You call.'

'Heads.'

'Tails, I'm afraid,' smiled Fenton, 'will you bat, please.'

. . . .

As Conrad Hunte and Joey Carew walked out to open the West Indian innings, they could be seen to be smiling contentedly to themselves as though they anticipated an easy morning's batting, scoring 50 or 60 runs and then making way for someone else to have a knock.

The chatter round the ground ceased as Fenton placed a fairly defensive field, with third man and long leg out, but with slip, gully, forward and backward short leg, cover, mid on and mid off in closer to the bat and Gresham prepared to bowl the first over. All six deliveries were on a length and Hunte contented himself with playing them back defensively. At the end of the over Gresham received a warm round of applause, and it was to be noted that both Hunte and Carew had a good look at a spot around the good length area. Apparently the wicket was not quite to their satisfaction and ease of mind.

Hussi Kahn bowled a maiden to Carew, and then in Gresham's next over Hunte set the scoreboard moving by turning him to long leg for two. After six overs the West Indian score stood at six for no wicket and both batsmen appeared to be settling down, and both had scored three runs. Gresham's first ball to Hunte was played back down the wicket, but the second was a vicious off-cutter which pitched on the line of Hunte's off-stump and came back sharply to hit the top of the leg stump. The crowd erupted. Small boys cheered, caps were flung in the air, and the noise could hardly have been very gratifying to Hunte, as he walked slowly in with his head bowed. Six for one, last man three.

'A very good start, Mr. Lee,' remarked Dr. Stafford, standing in the pavilion doorway.

'Very good indeed, Doctor,' replied the Housemaster. 'Young Gresham seems to be bowling more like his father than ever.'

Loud applause greeted the new batsman, Rohan Kanhai, as he made his way to

the wicket. He played out the over, and then, as Gresham took his sleeveless sweater, he received another warm hand. As he passed Browne, the lanky Fifth-former murmured to him, 'Try to give Brother Kanhai a similar ball, for he was out in that way yesterday brother.'

The third ball of Kahn's next over was driven beautifully through the covers for the first boundary of the day by Carew. Kanhai respectfully played an over from Gresham, and then Kahn brought an off-cutter back to take the edge of Carew's bat and give George Wilson a simple catch at the wicket, which he gleefully accepted. Seymour Nurse came in and took two to long leg off the last ball of the over, and then Kanhai with delicate dabs took a two and a single to third man from Gresham. Nurse drove him into the covers for one, and then Gresham produced the ball Browne had asked him for, Kanhai obliged by touching it, Wilson accepted the catch, and the West Indians, in the eleventh over, were 16 for 3, last man three.

Garfield Sobers now came in with the air of a batsman in form, and he took two for a drive past the bowler, and then hit the last ball of the over to mid off where Morrow made a magnificent stop with his right hand. After returning the ball to the wicket-keeper, he took a look at his hand, bound his handkerchief round it and had a word with Fenton, and then left the field. Ralph Fullwood trotted out to take his place.

In the dressing-room, Mr. Lee took a look at Morrow's hand, and discovered that he had split a finger. He bound the finger up and sent Morrow off to have it stitched at the local hospital, but warned him that it would be foolish to use the hand for anything for a few days and that batting was quite out of the question.

Back on the field, Sobers and Nurse were beginning to fight back and in the nineteenth over, Gresham's tenth and last, Seymour Nurse sent a crashing drive past point for four to bring the fifty up. His joy was short-lived, however, as Gresham's next ball took his leg stump and the West Indians were fifty for four.

Basil Butcher joined Sobers, and they scored quite happily off Pitt, who had replaced Kahn, and Kahn, who came on for Gresham. However, in his eighth over, Reggie Pitt floated the ball away from Butcher's bat, the West Indian just tickled the ball and a tremendous roar announced that George Wilson had made his third catch; 75 for 5, last man 11.

And now the West Indians were in real trouble; five of their first six batsmen were back in the pavilion with only 75 runs on the board, and half of their allotted 55 overs gone. As if this was not bad enough, David Holford, who had scored all of the six runs he and his cousin (Sobers) had put on, tried to swing Pitt over mid-wicket, got a bottom edge and was magnificently caught by Wilson, diving forward and to his right; 81 for 6.

Brancker came in next, and Sobers took a single off the first ball of the next over, bowled by Browne. Brancker took a careful leg guard, surveyed the field, and, as Browne bowled, came forward to meet the ball defensively, missed and saw his leg stump cartwheeling back towards Wilson; 82 for 6, last man 0.

The new batsman was the wicket-keeper Jackie Hendriks, now recovered from the thumb injury which had kept him out of the first two Test Matches. By watchful defence he survived until lunch, but by now Sobers was beginning to dominate the innings. In one over he produced two searing cover-drives for four off Browne, hooked him for four more in his next over, and then produced the shot of the match by hitting him back over his head for six. By lunch, taken after 38 overs, the

West Indians had made 109 for seven, with Sobers on 51 and Rawle Brancker on 8.

By the lunch interval Arthur Morrow had returned from the hospital and he, Fenton and Browne held a serious consultation in the pavilion.

'I'm afraid I won't be able to open,' said Morrow rather sadly to his captain.

'That's bad luck, old man,' replied Fenton. 'It puts us in rather a spot, not that it's your fault, of course - it was a magnificent piece of fielding and saved four certain runs.'

'Thanks,' said Morrow, 'but who's going to open with you?'

'Well, I had thought of taking Nipper in with me but we really need him coming in a bit lower down. But, if he doesn't open, I don't know who will.'

'Pardon me, Brother Fenton,' interposed Browne. 'If I might be so bold as to make a suggestion, I would think that your best partner would be Brother Pitt, for his innings on Wednesday stamped him as a batsman of prodigious skills and unlimited courage.'

'That's a good idea, Browne, but I think I'd better ask him if he'll do it rather than detail him - I must admit that I don't exactly relish the prospect of facing Wesley Hall.'

The conversation went on to more general matters concerning the match, but Fenton was still looking serious and thoughtful as he led his team into the field once more.

Jerry Dodd's first over after lunch yielded twelve runs, with both batsmen looking keen to take the quick single as and when it was offered. A single from Hamilton's bowling, and another from Dodd, brought Hendriks to face Hamilton's bowling once again. Nipper flighted the ball into the batsman and Hendriks came studiously forward in defence, only to receive a vicious leg-break which whipped off the pitch, touched his bat and flew into Wilson's waiting gloves; 123 for 8, last man 12.

Surprisingly, it was Hall and not Sobers who dominated the ninth wicket partnership. By virtue of some wild hitting, a few edges and a considerable amount of luck, Hall hit three boundaries, and Sobers took five from Dodd to face Hamilton again and to play a good maiden from him.

The end came swiftly. Dodd's first ball to Hall was met with a confident-looking push to mid off, but his second was a swinging yorker which took Hall's leg stump out of the ground. The next ball bowled Gibbs, and so after 44 overs and three balls, the West Indians were all out for 140.

As the sides came in the crowd rose to Sobers, undefeated for a magnificent 67; including one six and nine fours. Fenton led the St. Frank's team in applause; even the ranks of Tuscany.....

Between innings Fenton duly asked Pitt to open the innings with him and Pitt accepted. The news was not known generally on the ground and many discussions were held among the spectators as to who would come in first with Fenton. In one corner of the ground, however, two juniors had made up their minds as to who was not going to. They, of course, were Church and McClure, who had insufficient faith in the abilities of their leader, Edward Oswald Handforth, to expect him to

be asked.

After ten minutes, however, discussion abated and a respectful applause announced that Gary Sobers was leading his team on to the field and an outburst of cheering greeted the arrival of Fenton and Pitt.

Hall bowled the first over to Fenton at quite a lively pace, although he was nowhere near his fastest, and off the last ball Fenton pushed a single to square leg to open the St. Frank's score. Sobers bowled from the other end, and immediately struck a length, and twice caused Fenton to play and miss at balls leaving him outside the off stump.

In his next over, after a single by Pitt, Hall pitched his second delivery well up and was driven majestically for four by Fenton and another single to Fenton took him to face Sobers again. Three runs from the over, and then Hall's next over conceded a further six runs and the tall Barbadian took his sweater.

Sobers' third over produced the first wicket when Pitt did well to get his bat anywhere near a beautiful leg-cutter but could only give Gibbs in the gully a simple catch; 18 for one, last man 8.

Gibbs replaced Hall and Fenton took a single from his last ball and then played another maiden from Sobers. Browne took guard, prepared to receive his first ball and came forward to it and was comprehensively bowled; 19 for 2, last man 0.

Hamilton came in, but, before he had scored, he could only watch as three times in one over Fenton nicked Sobers. The first edge was short and wide of Kanhai at slip and ran through to the third man boundary for four; the next was high over slip's head and went for four more. The third was finer, and it nestled snugly in Hendriks' gloves, and St. Frank's were 27 for 3, with Fenton having made 19.

Horace Stevens now joined Hamilton but looked in considerable trouble against the remainder of Sobers' over. A four through mid-wicket and a two to deep mid on came from Gibbs next over to Hamilton. And then Stevens facing Sobers again, sparred at another ball outside of his off stump, got a touch and Hendriks duly obliged, 33 for 4, last man 0.

Hamilton and Jerry Dodd, the new batsmen, did not seem to be over-awed either by the situation or by reputations, and they struck some handsome blows off both Gibbs and Sobers before Sobers again found the edge of Dick Hamilton's bat and Gibbs completed another catch; 56 for 5, last man 22.

By now it had been announced that Arthur Morrow would bat if necessary, and it looked as though it would be necessary. Sixteen overs only had been bowled, so St. Frank's had plenty of time left and it seemed that Dodd and Handforth realised this for they put their heads down and grafted for runs. Sobers was still finding the edge of the bat, but now fortune seemed to favour the school for snicks were going for runs and were not going to hand. When the score had reached 87, however, and with the danger of Sobers now removed (he had completed his allotted ten overs), Gibbs pushed one through a little quicker to Handforth and had him caught at the wicket; 87 for 6, last man 15, 24 overs bowled.

Gresham joined Dodd, and the cricket became quiet but not dull. At tea, after 26 overs had been bowled the score was 92 for 6, with Dodd on 25 and Gresham on 3. Eleven overs of spin plus two of pace from Hall conceded only nineteen runs before Holford caused a leg break to bite and turn viciously to take the edge of Dodd's bat and present Hendriks with catch number four. The scoreboard showed

106 for 7, last man 35, and the crowd gave Jerry Dodd a big hand as he came in for he had played sensibly when his side was in dire trouble. A few seconds later a further roar announced that Arthur Morrow was coming in. He played out the over safely enough, but it was noticeable that he withdrew his bottom (right) hand every time his bat met the ball. Apparently it was paining him to a considerable extent but his actual play did not seem to suffer.

If the previous stand was slow, this one was played at a positively funereal pace. Brancker came and went, Gibbs and Holford both bowled their ten overs and came off, and then, with three and a half overs left, Wesley Hall swung a yorker past Morrow's apprehensive bat and uprooted his leg stump; 125 for 8, last man 6. The crowd gave Arthur Morrow a very warm reception, for although he had made only six runs he had played courageously and had stayed with Gresham while 19 runs were added and had made even victory a possibility. (See illustration on page 18)

Now with Kahn as his partner, Gresham adopted different tactics and started to hit hard. As a result, when last over was called the score stood at 136 for 8, Gresham 27, Kahn 4, and Carew was to bowl to Kahn. Sobers set a field to save the single, Carew bowled and Kahn lofted him over point for one, and then Gresham, trying to hit Carew out of sight, skied the ball to the wicket-keeper, 137 for 9, last man 27. The spectators were hushed and tense as George Wilson, of whom it had been jokingly said he only batted at number 11 because there was no number 12, came in with four balls left and four runs wanted.

The third ball of the over somehow brought two of these runs from a forward defensive shot which ended up at long leg. The next ball was straight and was met with an equally straight bat. No run. Wilson edged a single off the fifth ball, and Sobers drew every fielder up into a close-catching position for the last ball. Carew bowled it, Kahn came forward and tapped the ball just wide of Holford at short mid on and the batsmen galloped through for the winning run.

Then, and only then, did the crowd cheer, and how they cheered. Edgar Fenton, who a few minutes earlier had been pacing restlessly up and down behind the pavilion unable to bear the tension and afraid to watch, came bounding on to the pitch. Sobers, smiling broadly, came up to him and shook his hand, murmuring "Well done" to the elated St. Frank's skipper.

FINAL : St. Frank's v West Indians, June 24th
St. Frank's won the toss and elected to field.

WEST INDIANS

C. C. Hunte	b Gresham	3
M. C. Carew	c Wilson b Kahn	7
R. B. Kanhai	c Wilson b Gresham	3
S. M. Nurse	b Gresham	19
G. S. Sobers	not out	67
B. F. Butcher	c Wilson b Pitt	11
D. A. J. Holford	c Wilson b Pitt	6
R. Brancker	b Browne	0
J. L. Hendriks	c Wilson b Hamilton	12
W. W. Hall	b Dodd	12
L. R. Gibbs	b Dodd	0
TOTAL		140 (44.3 overs)

Fall of wickets:- 6, 10, 14, 50, 75, 81, 82, 123, 140, 140.

Gresham 10-3-30-3; Kahn 10-2-38-1; Pitt 10-2-13-2;
Browne 5-1-19-1; Hamilton 6-1-18-1; Dodd 3.3-0-22-2.

ST. FRANK'S

E. Fenton	c Hendriks b Sobers	19	
R. Pitt	c Gibbs b Sobers	8	
W. N. Browne	b Gibbs	0	
R. Hamilton	c Gibbs b Sobers	22	
H. Stevens	c Hendriks b Sobers	0	
J. Dodd	c Hendriks b Holford	35	
E. O. Handforth	c Hendriks b Gibbs	15	
H. Gresham	c Hendriks b Carew	27	
A. Morrow	b Hall	6	
H. R. L. Kahn	not out	6	
G. Wilson	not out	3	
TOTAL	(9 wkts)	141	(55 overs)

Fall of wickets:- 18, 19, 27, 33, 56, 87, 106, 125, 137.

Hall 8-1-26-1; Sobers 10-2-53-4; Gibbs 10-1-19-2;
Brancker 10-0-20-0; Holford 10-3-12-1; Carew 7-3-11-1.

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After the match, both teams were entertained to dinner by the Headmaster, and then in Big Hall Dr. Stafford proudly presented the trophy to Edgar Fenton, amid wild cheering from the school. Sobers made a very nice speech, thanking the school for their hospitality and congratulating them again on a wonderful performance. Fenton thanked him for his words, Dr. Stafford for the trophy and the school for their encouragement, and then called for three cheers for their distinguished visitors. These were duly given and it seemed as though the roof of Big Hall would be raised from its ancient beams so loud was the cheering.

Eventually, however, the time came for the guests to leave and amid further enthusiastic cheering they drove out of the ancient gateway en route for their next fixture.

* * * * *
HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO AN INCREASING CIRCLE OF FRIENDS
IN THE HOBBY. MAY YOU HAVE TIME TO WRITE AND OFFER ME SPARE "S.O.Ls."
OR 2nd SERIES "BLAKES." CAN ANYONE ADD TO THE PLEASURES OF 1967 BY
OFFERING ME THE FIRST ISSUE OF SEXTON BLAKE ANNUAL OR ANY PRE-WAR
"ADVENTURE ANNUAL." ALL LETTERS ANSWERED.

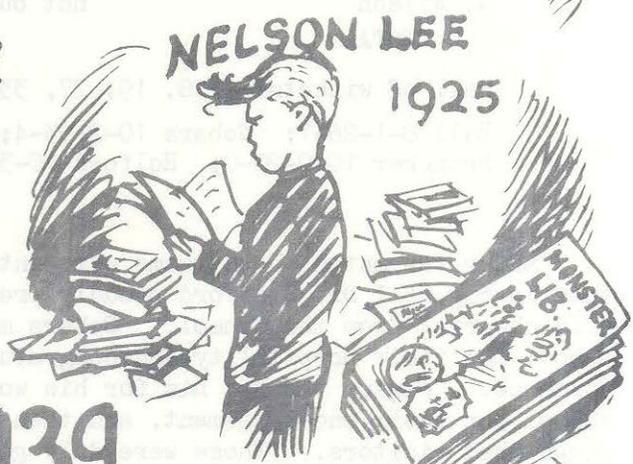
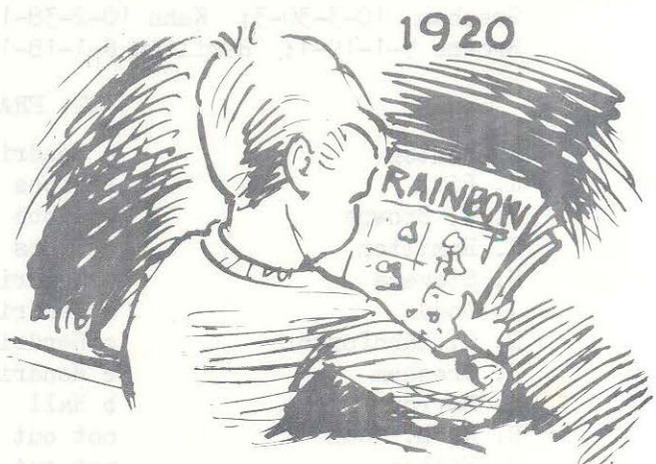
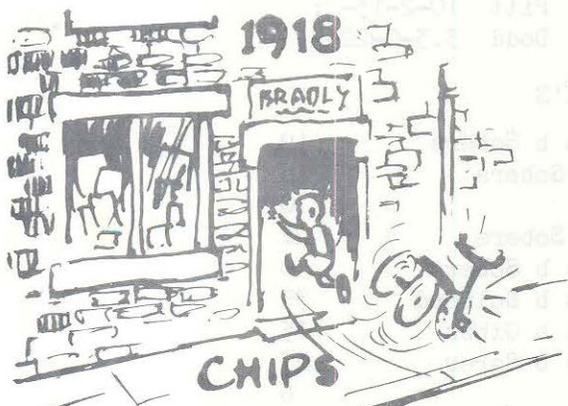
DENNIS HILLIARD, 45 Moorbridge Lane, Stapleford, Nottingham.

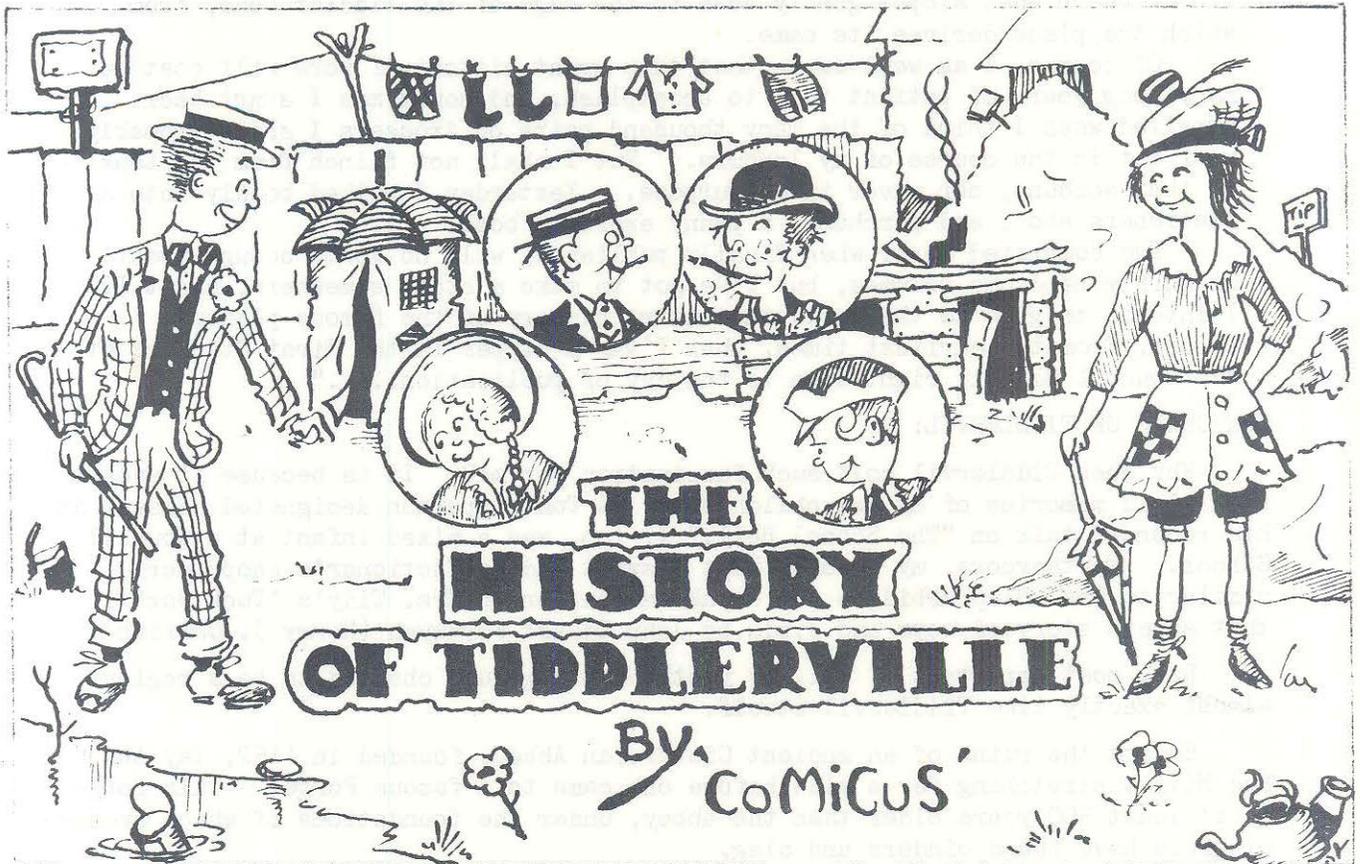
EXCHANGE FOR MAGNETS: First Post War Merry Annual; Schoolgirls' Own Annual
(1930); "Outlaws of St. Martins;" "Sheepy Wilson;" (Gunby Hadath originals).

PARSONS, 4, Park Road, Tranmere, Birkenhead.

GREETINGS and BEST WISHES to ALL C. D. READERS

SATCHELL, 63 CANTWELL ROAD, LONDON, S. E. 18.





A MISSING MASTERPIECE:

Classical scholars mourn for the lost plays of Euripedes; Magnetites would give half their collection to possess "The History of Greyfriars" by Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A.; and students of Mythology search in vain for the great authoritative book on their subject which Miss Penelope Primrose, Headmistress of Cliff House School was writing in her spare time.

But I, like Galileo of old, care for none of these things. The reason I wear the willow, and waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole is because I shall never possess the many noble volumes containing "The History of Tiddlervil" by Philpott Bottles, O.B.

About a year ago that doyen of old boys's book collectors, Granville T. Waine, lent me his cherished bound volume of Comic Papers. Amongst the fifty or sixty copies therein, was CHIPS No. 1383, dated 3rd March 1917 in which I first read of the History to which I refer. Let me quote Mr. Bottles - but as I have returned the book to Granville the spelling (alas) is my own:-

Dear Readers,

I have just took upon myself a most stupendous task; a literary task which ain't never been attempted before by any living writer. I am going to write the history of Tiddlervil - that spacious domain what stretches far, far away beyond the brickfields in my neighbourhood. That rugged mountainous region, famous for its lofty rubbish heaps and frowning clinker banks, and the broad

similar to Mrs. Slapcabbidges 'ot drink saloon, or to Mrs. Tidy's "Tuck Box" in that superb story of boys and girls by John Edward Fordwych (Henry J. Garrish).

But, most important of all, my youthful playground chanced to be a region almost exactly like Tiddlervil itself.

Beyond the ruins of an ancient Cistercian Abbey, founded in 1152, lay the Red Hills, stretching for a mile before one came to a famous Forge. This forge is at least 500 years older than the abbey, under the foundations of which archaeologists have found cinders and slag.

The Red Hills formed over the centuries from the iron slag heaps; overgrown with weeds, brambles and shallows, were our happy hunting grounds. Small ponds were to be found in the innermost recesses, whilst discarded engine-boilers and huge tanks, all red with rust, made ideal 'robber dens.' A wonderful playground for exploring, climbing, blackberrying, and mischief generally. In other words, our private Tiddlervil!

THE OFFICE BOYS AND THEIR 'KOLLUMS'

As all quiz solvers know, the principal Comic Papers contained each week a column, supposedly written by the office boy. In CHIPS, Philpott Bottles contributed 'Mi Kollum;' the COMIC CUTS office boy, Sebastian Ginger wrote 'Mi Wurd,' whilst Horatio Pimple in FUNNY WONDER gave us 'Ho, I Say!' These articles were obviously the work of the same writer, and I wish I knew his name. He was a great humorist.

Philpott Bottles was office boy to CHIPS for well over fifty years. My earliest copy of the famous pink comic paper is No. 421 dated 24th September 1898, and in that issue Bottles is starred as president of the Cheery Chortlers Club and contributes a 'complete, thrilling and face-contorting narrative' to a meeting at the Joyful Pelican.

But in CHIPS No. 512, for 23rd June 1900 appears the very first 'Orfis Boys Column, headed 'One littel wurd wif yu.' In that issue, Cornelius Chips, the editor says - "You will notice that Bottles, our Office Boy, has laid claim to a column in CHIPS." And very well he maintained and worked that claim, for, when we said 'Goodbye, Mr. Chips' on September 12th, 1953, in the last number of CHIPS

- the 2997th issue, Philpot still had his column, and ended his final paragraph thus - "Goodbye, Chipmates, and the best of luck to you all. Yore pal, Philpott Bottles."

THAT SPELLING:

Writing in STORY PAPER COLLECTOR No. 92, Maurice Kutner, in a most perceptive and informative article 'The Comic World,' mentions - "office boys employed on the editorial staff, to plague the reader with a weekly column of mis-spelling. These office boys were really fifty years ahead of their time with their 'new spelling,' which is at long last being seriously accepted by our modern educationists."

Most true, Maurice, but to me the spelling was no plague, but a delight. For it was perfectly consistent, and one soon became used to the employment of figures and capitals for words. (B4 = before; 2 = to; U = you, etc.)

On the other hand, the bad spelling of Bunter was very unconvincing. 'Phool' for fool; 'bocks for box,' etc. Dicky Nugent in his St. Sam's stories and Danny in his Diary, are also erratic in their orthography, and will spell long, difficult words correctly.

Also, compare the spelling of Bartholomew Bluenose, the CHUCKLES office boy, in his weekly column 'Mi Sanktum.' This was an imitation of the spelling of Sebastian and Philpott, but as near the original as a sub-story in the Magnet to the writing of Charles Hamilton. When 'Mi Sanktum' disappeared I never missed it, but CHIPS without Mi Kollum would have been like the GREYFRIARS HERALD without Herlock Sholmes.

To read them aloud is delightful - even if you cannot speak like a Cockney. Here is a short example from CHIPS No. 1320, 18-12-16.

I told U larst weak about the weigh Ginger has bean chuckin his wait about laitly, kawlin hisself "a norther," & addressin me & Oratio Pimple, ov the "Funny Wonder" as "yu jernalists."

That woz B-4 his Krismus yarn had apeered in "Comic Cuts"; but now that it has kum out in awl the glorie ov print his orty manners hav be-kum kwite unbairabel.

Larst Saterdag, wen i took a strole akross the brickfields as far as his bungerlo, witch stands on the banks ov the Tiddler Pond, i found the werd "Sanktum" chroked up on the dor ov it.

Inside, Sebastian woz sittin in frunt ov his ome-maid tabel in a thortfull attitewd, wiv a lot ov old books awl round im, and his portrit on the wawl.

"Wot cher, Philpott!" e sed, wen i put mi ed round the dor. "Welkum 2 the Sanktum!"

"Welkum 2 the wot?" I sez.

"Welkum 2 the orther's sanktum," e sez.

"U meen SWANKTUM, doan't U?" i sez, in a toan ov kwiert railway.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Every 'kollum' had its appropriate illustration. The artist was originally 'Mr. Ebonystain,' but later on, Mr. Benjamin Blackitt took his place. The scenery of Tiddlervil, the offices in Fleetway House, the architecture of Biffins Kort and Rackhams Rents, and the popular 'Ot Drink Serloon' of Mrs. Slapcabbidge with its lovely 'T-Garding' soon became as familiar to me as the topography of the Red Hills themselves.

The illustration was often referred to in the 'kollum.' In CHIPS 1285,

Philpott begins:- "Deer reeders, enybody wood fink, 2 look at the pickcher wot the artist has bean & gorn & drord for Mi Kollum this weak that I woz taikin orf mi koat 2 hav a fite wiv a spider."

However, when the artist was on holiday, the office boy had to draw his own illustration. In Comic Cuts No. 1528, 23rd August 1919, Sebastian Ginger writes:-

"Deer Peroozers, - Doan't yu fink i hav improved in mi drorin? The fackt is, i have bean taikin lessens since I rote 2 yu larst - taikin them wen nobody wozn't lookin, so 2 speak.

Mister Benjamin Blackit, the offis-boys' speshel artist, is away on is ollerdays; so each day, arter a kwick lunch, i nip in-2 the Art Room, & over-all his desk 4 ruf studdies ov rubbish-eaps, dug-outs, bunglerlows, Swissel's milk tins, kloes-props, dustbins, tadpoles, & skraps of Tiddler Pond scenery."

Also the many characters introduced into this saga were portrayed week by week for many years, and Bottles straw hat, Pimple's monocle, and Ginger's cap with the centre star were well-known to every comic-paper reader. To say nothing of the rival charms of the office-boys' 'fiaskos' - Sharlott Skroggins, Tilda Tabs, and Sally Slapcabbidge.

THE CORRESPONDENTS:

Philpott Bottles received as many letters as does the editor of COLLECTORS' DIGEST, and his "Arnsers to Korespondents" were as enjoyable reading as "The Postman Called" in the 'C.D.' Here are just a few examples - out of hundreds.

Miss Joyce M Quaile (Glasgow) Fanks for yor nice letter. Wun ov the 6 pins wot U sent me for the "Biffin's Kort Opskotch Gazet" stuck in mi finger wen i woz opening yor letter, & it didn't ark make me jump! I am sorry i karn't sent U the "Opskotch Gazet", becoz it is only a lokal paper, & doan't serkulate out ov mi naiberood. Wy doan't U kum & liv in Biffins Kort? Then U kood pay yor 6 pins 2 Martha Miggs, & sea the "Opskotch Gazet" every weak?

W. Wardell (Skinnin-grove), A.T.B. (Brockley), and uthers. Pleeze 4-giv me for not havin arnsered yor letters B-4. But wot wiv our Krismus Number, & the Winter Kampain against Nibsy Nobbler & his gang, witch i am konductin in mi spare time round bi the Tiddler Pond, i hav bean kept so bizzy laitley that i hav ardly had a minnit 2 kawl mi own.

"Edwin" (Haslemere) asks - "How does Joe Peters, the hero of "The School Bell" wag his ears?" Edwin mite jest as well arsk me ow a dawg can wag his tale. The fackt is, the dawg hissself doan't know.

"A Little Bit of Fluff" (Trowbridge) writes - "I am greatly interested in that well-known watering place and pleasure resort Tiddlervil, and would like to see a complete picture of it in 'Mi Kollum'. (She sines erself - 'Wiv best luv' & sum crosses at the end, witch i hav had 2 tare orf in kase they shood fawl in-2 Sharlot's ands.)

Many other requests for a full map of Tiddlervil appeared from time to time. As a matter of fact, a 'Magnifisent Spectackuler Reproduckshun' of Tiddlervil was constructed by Philpott for the Moggses Mews Industrial Exhibition, and was illus-trated in CHIPS No. 1343. This showed the Tiddler Pond in all its beauty, also Sebastian Ginger's bungalow, Philpott's dugout, etc, whilst in the foreground, Mount Tiddlervil - the loftiest rubbish heap in the district reared its stately crest.

Perhaps in a later article I may be able to give the complete map of Tiddlervil and the surrounding region, but in the meantime, here is the -

W H O ' S W H O O F T I D D L E R V I L

ANTONIO, Signor. The ice-cream merchant of Tiddlervil.

ANTONIO, Junior. Son of the above. Keeps the baked-potato can at the corner of Biffens Court. Has an advertisement on the safety-curtain of the 'Royal Raspberry Theatre.' "Arter the theayter, try a baked pertater!" KAFFY ANTONIO - NOW OPEN.

BLACKIT, Benjamin. Professional artist at Fleeway House. See above.

BLAKEY, Bill. The great friend of Sebastian Ginger, to whom he lives next door in Rackhams Rents. Is an amateur photographer, and many of his pictures appear in the 'Biffens Court 'Opskotch Gazet.' Bill is engaged to Martha Miggs, who edits the 'Gazet.' He is also an interior decorator. On one occasion he re-decorated Ginger's bungalow with "sum sarpels ov wawl-paper, wot e fownd in a empty owse." The bill for the job was 25 cigarette cards.

BOTTIN, Mrs. The Biffens Court Laundress. "Mrs. Bottin, the wel-noan larndriss, karries on er varst enterprize rite oppersite mi owse, & mi bed-room winder afords a magnifisent vew ov er bewtiful grounds, witch R taistfully laid out wiv every variety ov woshin." CHIPS 1351.

BOTTIN, Bells. Daughter of the above. Is engaged to Alf Wilks, cousin of Philpott Bottles. Once fought a duel with Martha Miggs (q.v.) for the hand of Philpott, when a rumour got about that his engagement to Sharlot Skroggins had been broken off. A full account of the fray appeared in the 'Opskotch Gazet.' Bella has a young brother, aged 9.

BOTTLES, Mr. Father of Philpott. A fine elocutionist. His rendering of 'Krismus Day in the Work-owse' gave great pleasure. See COMIC CUTS, No. 1522.

BOTTLES, Philpott. Office boy to CHIPS for over fifty years. Lives in Biffens Court, and is engaged to Miss Sharlott Skroggins (q.v.). Philpott's journalistic talent developed very early. When he was only 3 he edited a home-made paper "The Tiddler Pond News & Tadpole Times & Advertizer." His famous dugout, near to Mount Tiddlervil, is well known. Cosiness itself inside, with coke stove. Note the old oak stair-case, the furniture - simple but neat, the 'famby portrait' etc, in the beautiful engraving by Mr. Benjamin Blackit - in CHIPS No. 1475.

Many and varied are the talents of Philpott Bottles. One can but mention a few. His violin recital of the 'intermetzo from Kavvi-O'Leary Rusty Karno' received with 'rapcherus aplorse'; the piano which he made for his dugout, and at which Miss Skroggins played 'Beetroot's Moonlite Tomarter'; his invention of a joint mouth-organ for three performers; his quotation from 'Ujeen Airem' and other poems; his study of cat language; etc. etc. etc.

Other relations of Philpot who come into the saga of Tiddlervil include his Cousin Pertinax of Market Dewsberry; his Uncle Philpot - the well-known coal and potato merchant of Fulham, and his Aunt Jemima.

DORBER, Dicky. The famous boy pavement artist, who lives at No. 13 Biffens Court. Tried for a job in CHIPS when their artists were called up. His skill as a sculptor (in snow) was well exemplified in CHIPS 1372. See article "Dicky Durdles P.A. - the Man and his Work" in COMIC CUTS for October 14th, 1916.

DORBER, Mrs. Mother of the above. Little was known about this lady until she had a fight with Mrs. Miggs who lived at No. 11 Biffens Court - the house next door. Then all her family history came out! See the report in FUNNY WONDER.

DURDLES, Mr. Police Constable. Lives next door to the Bottles family in Biffens Court. Spends much of his time chasing Nibsy Nobbler (q.v.) Patronises the Magpie and Stump, and often 'tickles his throttel wiv arf a pint of legs & wings.' A full-length and life size portrait of P.C. Durdles was painted by Dicky Dorber - see CHIPS 1363.

DURDLES, Jimmy. Son of the above who follows his father's footsteps. Wears a cast-off policeman's helmet which comes well down over his eyes. Jimmy is the Chief Inspector of the Biffens Court Boy Specials, and is very officious in pursuit of his duty. However he was not above taking a bribe of a small raspberry and a rice cake from Mrs. Slapcabbidge for not reporting a light shining through her window blind.

GINGER, Sebastian. Office boy to COMIC CUTS. Lives at No. 15a Rackhams Rents, and is usually in friendly rivalry with Philpot Bottles. Is engaged to Tilda Tabs (q.v.)

As author of "The Ornted Bungerlo" (See COMIC CUTS Xmas Double Number for 1915), and other famous stories, Sebastian Ginger regards himself as a cut above a 'meer jernalist.' His own bungalow is a well-known feature of the Tiddlervil scene. His great pal is Bil Blakey. Owns a motor-car propelled by young Roderick Rimo; also state barge - The Giddy Wilk. Has considerable talents as an artist, and often illustrates his weekly column 'Mi Wurd.' As a poet, Sebastian is of the Ogden Nash school. Here are his verses about Nibsy Nobbler - the 'Terror of the Tiddler Pond' --

"I eggspeckt every wun wil B glad
Wen yung Nibsey is took in-2 kusterdy.
E is reely a very bad lad,
And i sore P.C. Durdles chasin im akross
the brick-feelds,
Only the day be-4 yusterdy.

GINGER, Mrs. Mother of the above. Described on one occasion as "a stately daim in a bekummin golf cap & bloo over-awl."

JINKS, Jerry. The 'printer's imp,' and a very versatile character indeed. Is engaged to Lil Lobjot (q.v.) Performs as a nigger minstrel on the cinder-beach by the Tiddler Pond. Also as a one-man jazz band at the well-known 'T-Garding' at Maizon Slapcabbidge. At a jolly little bachelor party, Jerry 'kame wiv wun ov them ventrilerkwists dubbel throtes, wiv witch e erstonished and mistified us awl bi wining like a puppy, singing like a kanairy, and immitaitin berds & beests till sumwun chucked a pomgrannit at im.'

LOBJOT, Larry. Lift boy at Fleetway House until he 'went on munitions.' His girl is Priscilla Pankake. On one never-to-be-forgotten occasion he exchanged hats with PhilpottBottles' cousin Alf - who was then page-boy at the local cinema. "Larry sertingly looked funny werkin the lift wiv the werd "CINEMA" on is at. Several kids wawked in-2 the stately bilding (Fleetway House), & started lookin 4 the pay-box."

LOBJOT, Lil. Sister of above. Engaged to Jerry Jinks - the printer's imp. After her brother went on munitions, Lil took his job as lift-attendant at Fleetway House. Philpott Bottles gave her the 'glad,' the first time she took him up to the CHIPS office on the 5th floor, and sang the following love song to her:-

"Wen Lift Gal's ies R smilin,
Shore, it's like a morn in spring;

In the lilt ov Lift Gal's larfture,
 U kan ear the aingels sing.
 Wen Lift Gal's arts R appy
 Awl the werld seams brite & gay
 And wen Lift Gal's ies R smilin,
 Shore, they steel yor art away! "

Lil had to cool his ardour with a playful tap on the ear with the steel hook she used for shutting the gate. Later she landed him with the bill for her lunch at the sausage shop. ("2 zepperlins on a kloud - in uvver werds, a kuppel ov fried sossidges wiv mashed pertaters. Also 2 elplings ov treekel pudden, & a large kup of korfee.) Philpott had to lunch on bananas for the rest of the week. As he said, rather bitterly - "Lift gals is awl very well; but i sharn't B sorry wen the war is over & Larry is back wunce mor on his old job, i give U mi erly berd!"

MIGGS, Martha. Editress of the 'Biffens Court 'Opskotch Gazet' (for a copy of which CoMiCuS offers ten Red Magnets.)

This famous paper was 'printed entirely by hand' on exercise book paper, and its circulation was one copy per week. The current issue could be found lying on the counter of Mrs. Slapcabbidges 'Ot Drink Shop every Saturday. In addition to dealing with hopskotch, the journal gave all the latest news of Tiddlervil and its inhabitants, with two pages of real photographs, taken by Bil Blakey, and pasted on to the paper.

Martha Miggs lives in Biffens Court, near to the famous 'Opskotch Linx.' She was once engaged to Timothy Tabs, and also once fought a duel with Bella Bottin for the hand of Philpott Bottles. However, she is now the 'fiasko' of Bil Blakey, and is going steady. Besides her literary talent, Miss Miggs is a composer, and her revue 'As U Wozn't," produced at the Roil Rarsberry Theayter was a great success. The opening chorus began:-

"Thay used 2 kawl us 'flappers'
 in CHIPS & COMIC CUTS;
 But now we'r known as 'spanners'
 'Kos we tern the eds ov the 'nuts.'"

MIGGS, Mrs. The warlike mother of the above. Lives at No. 11 Biffens Court. Her fight with Mrs. Dorber (q.v.) was accredited to Mrs. Skroggins, owing to careless reporting by Oratio Pimple. The matter however was corrected in CHIPS No. 1351. "Now, i fink I ort 2 menchun, in fareness 2 mi gal, Sharlot, that the so-kawled laidy necks-dor referd 2 bi Oratio, woz not Mrs. Skroggins, oo livs at Number 15, & is reely a puffick laidy in every sense ov the werd, but a person naimed Miggs, oo rezides at Number 11."

NOBBLER, Nibsy. The notorious Boy Outlaw, known as 'The Terror of the Tiddler Pond.' Like Dick Turpin, Nibsy also has a horse called Bonny Black Bess, which consists of two members of his gang disguised in old coal sacks. His most deadly weapon is a water pistol loaded with ebony stain. See the vivid description of the battle between Nibsy Nobbler on Black Bess, and two tanks! CHIPS, Number 1365, 28-10-16.

NUTT, Billy. Office boy to JESTER. Conductor of the Jester Jazz Band engaged to play at the grand opening day of Mrs. Slapcabbidge's famous Tea Garden. (The band played "K, -k, -k, -Katie so often, that everybody got the stutters.) Report in Biffens Court Opskotch Gazet.

PANKAKE, Priscilla. The child suffragette. Girl friend of Larry Lobjot

PIMPLE, Oratio. Office boy to FUNNY WONDER. His weekly column "HO, I SAY!" only ran for a short time. Lives at The Filberts, Woodbine Grove, and is a rather superior youth. Wears a monocle. Engaged to Sally Slapcabbage.

Here is a description of Oratio as a child --- "Even in those days Oratio woz a bit ov a nut. His muvver used 2 dress im up 2 the 9's, in a littel wite soot, wiv a red sash, & a pritty lace koller, paitent lether shoos, & a black velvit jocky kap. I am not sure wether or no e wore an iglarse then, but e didn't arf look a nib!" It was once supposed that Oratio was trying to grow a Charlie Chaplin moustache, but it turned out to be a splash of ebony stain - from the water pistol of Nibsy Nobbler, of course.

PIMPLE, Mrs. Mother of Oratio. Rather a snob, and doesn't approve of her son's acquaintance with Sebastian Ginger. When Philpott Bottles called at "The Filberts" one day, this is what happened -

Oratio Pimple's muvver kame 2 the dor in arnser 2 my nock.

"Good arfternoon, Mrs. Pimple!" i sez, raizin mi at wiv eezy grace. "Is Oratio in?"

"Yus, e's in" she sez, in a toan wich i thort woz sunwot terse. "Wot doo yer want im 4? 2 taik im round 2 that thare Tiddler Pond, amungst awl them messy rubbish eaps 2 git his nice noo spring soot awl mucked up, i serpage, & his stor hat roined! E didn't arf look a sketch larst Saturday wen e kum ome arter spendin the arfternoon along ov that thare Sebastian Ginger round at Tiddlervil, as U kawls it!"

RIMO, Rudolf. The Spring poet. A very dignified person, who charges full union rates for his poetry - i.e. 3d per spasm. Encourages the Arts, and once dropped a piece of spearmint - second-hand - into the hat of Dicky Dorber, pavement artist.

Rudolf Rimo once made a striking appearance at a Summer Jazz Dance, at the famous Slapcabbage Tea garden. The proprietress thought he was selling fly-papers, and told him to be off ---

"Nay, nay, fare laidy," sed Roodolf wiv a kortly bow. "i bring not 2 this bower ov bliss the vulger fli-paper ov kommerse, but the frantick out-porins ov a poits sole, wiv witch i wood fain incharnt thine ear-ole on this barmy nite in Joon. I ave been a-courtin the muse!"

Mrs. Slapcabbage softened, and allowed Rudolf to read out his remarkable poem entitled "Lines 2 The Summer Jaz."

This is the first spasm - in the same metre as "So be kind to your web-footed friends" - and no other verse which I know!

"Now, orltho i'm a poit of Spring,
Ov theez Summer Jaz darnsez i sing.
O, it's nice 2 go Jazzin in Joon,
Neeth the lite ov the silvery moon!
And it's jolly 2 Jaz in Joolie
Wen the stars twinkel brite in the skie ---

See COMIC CUTS for the rest of this fine ballad.

RIMO, Roderick. Son of the above, and in the same line of business, but at a cheaper rate. His rhying Valentine cost Sebastian Ginger a small raspberry and a packet of woodbines. Expert in rhying slang. Young Master Rimo once rented Ginger's bungalow for a week, when he was engaged on an especially important poem.

SKROGGINS, Sharlot - the Belle of Biffens Court - she lives at No. 15. Engaged to Philpott Bottles, although their love affair has not run smoothly. The many letters received by Philpott from his lady readers have often aroused Sharlot's jealousy. But she too is not entirely blameless. When Sebastian discovered that she had posed for her portrait to Dicky Dorber, in his series 'Types of English Bewty' there was trouble.

During the 1st World War, Sharlot was the leader of the Biffens Court Bantamazon Corps, and later was recruiting agent in the war against Nibsy Nobbler. There is, however, a softer side to Miss Skroggins, and those who heard her piano recital in Philpott's dugout will always think well of her execution. Her delightful rendering of the song she learnt 'at er muvver's elbo' - Wite Wings - gave Philpott the idea of calling his yacht by that name. Very appropriate, too, as the sails were made from flour-sacks. Methinks I can hear Sharlot now -

"Wite wings, thay never gro wiskers;
 Thay karry me cheerily over the see.
 Nite kums, i long 4 mi deerie --
 I'll spred out mi wite wings, & sale ome to thee!"

SLAPCABBIDGE, Mrs. The owner and proprietress of the famous 'Ot Drink Saloon, and Tea Garden. One of the most famous Tiddlervilians - what would it be without her. How many thousand 'small rarsberrys' have been imbibed in that shop, whilst the fame of the lovely 'T-Gardin' with its summer house and klinker rockery has spread far and wide.

One anecdote - out of hundreds - will have to suffice about Mrs. Slapcabbidge. During World War One, horse-chestnuts were needed for munitions. Both Sebastian Ginger and Philpott Bottles handed in their collections - following the example set by her Majesty. It therefore became necessary to find a substitute 'conker.'

After 'much paishment reserch, and eggperiments wiv putty bawls, toffy appells, pertaters, & lumps of baked klay, the very thing woz found bi the meerest acksident.' It was after Sebastian had broken a tooth on one of Mrs. Slapcabbidge's famous dough-nuts! I can only refer my reader to page 7 of CHIPS No. 1420, for November 17th, 1917, where a full account will be found. Also a fine portrait of Mrs. S. herself, watching a 'conker' match - with 'doe-nut' konkers!

SLAPCABBIDGE, Sally. The charming daughter of the above - in my opinion the prettiest girl in Tiddlervil. Oratio Pimple is indeed a lucky man to have such a charmer as his 'fiasko.' It is true of course, that she cannot be placated with ice-cream, but insists on expensive jewellery from the Penny Bazaar. Sally often visits her aunt's cafe "River View" at Duckweed on Tems. For her opinion of Hamlet, see COMIC CUTS 1499.

TABS, Tilda. The acknowledged leader of fashion in Tiddlervil, and the sweet-heart of Sebastian Ginger. It is true that she reads CHIPS - a rival comic - but that is because the pink paper matches her complexion.

Tilda wears her long hair in a plait - which is why she was chosen for the role of Principal Boy in the pantomime Aladdin - she had a ready-made pigtail! She is a keen advocate of Brighter 'Opsskotch.

TABS, Timothy. Brother of above. Was once engaged to Martha Miggs - see Christmas Double Number of COMIC CUTS for 1912. Why this betrothal was broken off, and why Martha Miggs is now the 'fiasko' of Bil Blakey has not been discovered. Investigations are proceeding.

TOMLINSON, Tubby, the inevitable fat boy of Tiddlervil. Lives in Biffens Court. One of the keenest business men in the region. Amongst his many successes are - the cornering of the ice-cream market in a heatwave. His sale of a motor-car for

200 cigarette cards. Making a fortune in the capture of cabbage-whites - from which he bought his house-boat.

Has also acted as waiter at the 'T-Gardin' of Mrs. Slapcabbage; the manager of the 'Roil Rarsberry Theayter' - see below; and as part of Jimmy Durdles horse. A great future is in store for Tubby.

TOMLINSON, Mrs. Mother of the above. She made a dramatic appearance on the opening night of the Revue "O, SWISH!" on January 25th 1919. Tubby had been fattened up for the post of theatre manager - at Philpotts expense - and "looked every inch a manidger as e stood on the landin. I woz jest admirin the diermund stud in his shert-frunt wen Mrs. Tomlinson dashed up the stares.

"Is mi boy ear?" she shouted, "Ar! Thare e is! And thare's the stopper ov the viniger-bottel wot i'v bean untin 4 awl over the plaice!"

And be-4 Tubby kood hide hissself, his muvver pinched his diermund stud, & fetched in a klip over the krumpet. (Mi Wurd - COMIC CUTS 1-2-19).

WILKS, Alfred. Cousin of Philpott Bottles. Employed at the local 'pickcher pallis.' Engaged to Bella Bottin (q.v.). His brilliant victory over Nibsy Nobbler is described in CHIPS No. 1286 for April 24th 1915. Philpott Bottles reports:-

Larst saterdag mi kuzzen Alf (who had got a day orf from the pickcher pallis ware e is imploid as cheef electrick torch-bairer and shower-in-2 seats, orlso assistent chucker-out) put Mister Nibsey 2 the test.

Alf borrherd from his fiasko (Beller Bottin, the larndresses dorter) a kid's pinny-4 & a lace koller wot had bean sent 2 the wosh, & a sailer at wot belonged 2 er littel bruvver.

Then we maid a kuppel of forlse arms out ov a pare ov ole gluks & sum bits ov rags wot we pinned on 2 the sides of the pinny-4.

Alf then put the sailer at on his ed & the lace koller & pinny-4 over his sholders, & wiv a pare ov boots on his ands 2 maik them look like feat, Alf took up his posishun in wun ov the unfinished dugouts neer the Tiddler Pond.

The efect was most realiistick.

Presently Nibsy Nobbler kame along, & marked out Alf at wunce for a likely vicktin.

"'Ullo, fat-ed!" sed Nibsy, as e swaggerd up. "Yor a strainjer round theez parts, ain't yer?"

"Yus, pleez, fank U ser! sed Alf meekly.

"Then that ackounts for it," sed the terror. "I wundered wy U didn't bunk like billy-o wen U sore me jummin.

Then e tucked up his sleev & put his leg ov mutton fist klose 2 Alf's face.

"Doo yer sea that?" e sez.

"Yus, fank U kindly! skwealed Alf.

Then Alf handed out Nibsy a good 'un in the bred barskit wiv is left, & follerd it up wiv a very pritty rite ook on the jor.

I ain't got kwite enuf spase 2 diskribe the rest ov the kontest; but U kan taik it from me that the kids woan't bunk the neckst time thay sea Nibsy, 4 the simpel reazon that they woan't B abel 2 reckernize im!

The above Hooz Hoo - sorry! I mean Who's Who of Tiddlervil is by no means complete. Other characters, whom I have not mentioned include Alf Miggs, Bert Bottin, Spenser Spearmint, Reggie Rags - son of Mrs. Rags the old-clothes lady; also Fred Fudge, Kuthbert Keatins, Sammy Slabs, Juliet the Jester Office Girl,

and Miss Tappington the lady typist for COMIC CUTS, and many, many others.

Perhaps, however, this article will recall many names from the oblivion of Time, and remind my readers of the happy days of yore when there were no teenagers, but only boys and girls.



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Edwin Russell & Herbert Bulstrode

A COMPARISON OF TRAGEDIES

By Philip Tierney

I think it can be generally agreed that most stories written for boys and girls during the Victorian era were too sad. There was too much tragedy in juvenile fiction at that time and very little brightness.

Dean Farrar's "Eric, or Little By Little," first published in 1859, is probably the most famous of these stories, but similar themes were common until after the turn of the century. In the 1890's Talbot Baines Reed was striking lighter notes in the "Boys' Own Paper," but the "Girls' Own Paper" remained as gloomy as ever.

I have a bound volume of "Girls' Own Papers" printed in 1901. Many of the stories are beautifully written and I can enjoy reading them - one at a time and at infrequent intervals. But they are far more suitable for sentimental adults than for girls of the twelve to sixteen age group for whom they were intended.

The Hamiltonian world undoubtedly provided for children the happy medium between the gloomy stories of the last century and the comic strip nonsense of today.

But tragedy was not unknown at the Hamiltonian schools although it was rare.* "Barred By His People," (Schoolboys' Own Library, No. 57, a reprint of two early Magnets) is a striking example. The fate of Bulstrode Minor in this story makes an interesting comparison with that of Edwin Russell in "Eric" - an episode over which many thousands of readers have wept during the last hundred years.

And "Eric" is basically an excellent story, although partially spoiled for the modern reader by its atmosphere of cloying sentiment.

Eric Williams himself was never the angelic character which people who have not read the story imagine him to be. The "Little By Little" sub-title refers to the gradual abandonment, throughout the book, of the good qualities he possessed in its early chapters. "From Bad to Worse" might have been an equally appropriate sub-title.

Dean Farrar himself describes his story as "...the history of a boy who, in spite of the inherent nobleness of his disposition, falls into all folly and wickedness."

However, it is Eric's friend, Edwin Russell, with whom I am mainly concerned so let us compare his character with that of Herbert Bulstrode in the Greyfriars story. The only thing these two boys have in common is that they are both destined for an untimely end.

Throughout the first half of "Eric," Edwin Russell strives, with only partial success, to restrain Eric's wayward tendencies - tendencies which are due to a desire for popularity rather than to personal liking for blackguardly pursuits.

Edwin's virtues are made abundantly clear from the beginning:

* The most famous (or infamous) sad Greyfriars story is, of course, Pentelow's "Very Gallant Gentleman" which I have never read.

"Eric could not have had a better friend; not so clever as himself, not so diligent as Owen, not so athletic as Duncan, or so fascinating as Montague, Russell combined the best qualities of them all. And, above all, he acted invariably from the highest principles; he presented that noblest of all noble spectacles - one so rare that many may think it impossible - the spectacle of an honourable, pure-hearted, happy boy who, as his early years speed by, is ever growing in wisdom and stature...."

This is very different from our first introduction to Herbert Bulstrode on his arrival at Friardale station:

"He was sturdy enough so far as build went, but it was clear from his looks that his way of life had not been a healthy one.

His complexion was pale and sickly, and he walked with a stoop of the shoulders, and there was a general air of fatigue about him at the slightest exertion, which told he was hopelessly out of condition.

Brown stains on his finger nails told of the use of tobacco, and that gave away the secret of his short wind, his palpitating breath, and his sickly complexion.

Bulstrode Minor was what he himself termed a "goer." His "going" seemed to consist of making a fool of himself in as many ways as possible - any way being good enough so long as it was reckless and unsportsmanlike."

Strangely enough, the average standards of behaviour at Roslyn school are far worse than those of the Hamiltonian schools.

Even in the lower forms, cheating in examinations, smoking, drinking parties on the school premises, and even worse things, flourish on a scale which would never have been tolerated at Greyfriars, St. Jim's or Rookwood.

These three schools have their share of unpleasant characters but they are always in a minority. But at Roslyn blackguardly pursuits seem to be a part of the normal routine.

On the other hand, Edwin Russell himself is possessed of higher principles than any of Charles Hamilton's characters - with the possible exception of Alonzo Todd. But of course Alonzo is funny and Edwin is not.

Against the unsavoury Roslyn school background and in the ever-present sentimental atmosphere it is evident that Edwin is too good to live. And, of course, he does not live.

It might be expected that, to a modern reader, Edwin would appear to be insufferably priggish but he never does. He holds our sympathy all the time, despite such passages as the following one:

"What a surly devil that is," * said Eric when he had passed. "Did you see how he purposely cut me?"

"A surly - ? Oh, Eric, that's the first time I ever heard you swear."

Eric blushed. He hadn't meant the word to slip out in Russell's hearing, though similar and worse expressions were common enough in his talk with other boys. But he didn't like to be reproved, and in the ready spirit of self-defence, he answered:

"Pooh, Edwin, you don't call that swearing do you? You're so strict, so religious you know. I love you for it, but then, there are none like you. Nobody thinks anything of swearing here, - even of real swearing you know."

Russell was silent.

* Mr. Gordon, an unpleasant master.

"Besides, what can be the harm of it? It means nothing. I was thinking the other night, and I made out that you and Owen are the only two fellows here who don't swear."

Still Russell said nothing.

"And, after all, I didn't swear. I only called that fellow a surly devil."

"Oh, hush! Eric, hush!" said Russell sadly. "You wouldn't have said so half a year ago."

The adventure which has such tragic consequences is a realistic and exciting sequence which would have been equally effective in a lighter story with a happier ending. *

During a school holiday, Eric and Russell with another friend, Montagu, go out for a stroll by the sea. Eric makes himself look ridiculous by lighting a cigar, and this calls forth another of Edwin's lectures.

"It isn't that I don't like smoking only, Eric, but I think it wrong - for us I mean."

"Oh, my dear fellow! Surely there can't be any harm in it. Why, everybody smokes."

"It may be all very well for men, although I'm not so sure of that. But, at any rate, it does nothing but harm to growing boys. You know yourself the harm it does in every way."

Eventually the three boys walk along the coast and climb to the summit of the "Stack."

"The Stack formed one of the extremities of Ellan Bay and was a huge mass of isolated schist, accessible at low water, but entirely surrounded at high tide."

Whilst climbing the three boys forget the danger from the incoming tide and when they try to return they find they are already cut off by a widening gulf of water.

Eric and Montagu successfully leap to safety but Edwin, attempting to follow them, falls and badly injures himself on the rocks.

He is then in imminent danger of being swept away by the tide and Eric risks his own life in a courageous effort to save him.

"Monty," said Eric, "just watch for a minute or two. When I have got across, run to Ellan as hard as you can tear, and tell them we are cut off by the tide on the Stack. They'll bring the lifeboat. It's the only chance."

"What are you going to do?" asked Montagu, terrified. "Why, Eric, it's death to attempt to swim that. Good heavens!"

And he drew Eric back hastily as another vast swell of water came rolling along, shaking its white curled mane, like a sea-monster bent on destruction.

"Monty, it's no use," said Eric hastily tearing off his jacket and waistcoat; "I'm not going to let Russell die on that ledge of rock. I shall try to reach him, whatever happens to me. Here; I want you to keep these things dry. Be on the look-out; if I get across, fling them over to me if you can, and then do as I told you."

He turned round. The wave had just spent its fury, and knowing that his only chance was to swim before another came, he plunged in and struck out like a man. He was a strong and expert swimmer, and as yet the channel was not more than a dozen yards across. He dashed over with the speed and strength of despair, and had just time to clutch the rocks on the other side before the next mighty swirl of the tide swept up in its white and tormented course. In another minute he was on the ledge by Russell's side."

Eric then succeeds in carrying Russell back to the highest point of the rocks where they are compelled to remain, beyond reach of help, until the tide recedes

* There is a certain resemblance to Wharton's rescuing of Mr. Quelch in the concluding chapters of the second "rebel" serial.

several hours later. By that time Russell is critically ill.

The contrast between Russell's fate and that of Bulstrode Minor lies not so much between the very different characters of the two boys as between the earlier development of the two themes.

The heavy atmosphere of "Eric" warns the reader that tragedy is liable to strike. The lighter atmosphere of "Barred By His People" does not.

The Greyfriars story is told in the familiar lighthearted style and it is not until the concluding chapters that there is the slightest hint of impending sadness.

George Bulstrode had been rather a "bad hat" in earlier days but eventually, like so many other Hamiltonian characters, he reformed. The story deals with his efforts to reform his brother but it is obvious from the beginning that he has undertaken an extremely difficult task.

Herbert Bulstrode arrives determined to "jolly well have his fling" as he expresses it. Bulstrode Major, after meeting him at the station, tries to give him an enjoyable afternoon, but the brothers' ideas of enjoyment do not coincide.

Their first call is at Uncle Clegg's tuck shop where Herbert rejects an invitation to refreshments with scorn.

"I didn't come to Greyfriars to eat cream puffs," said Herbert sulkily. "For goodness' sake let's get out of this stuffy shop."

"All right."

They walked up the High Street. Bulstrode stopped at the outfitters' and pointed out where the boys of Greyfriars bought their cricket bats and fishing tackle. Herbert grunted.

Then they strolled round the Church, and Bulstrode explained to his minor that part of it dated from the time of William Rufus - a piece of information which his minor received with a discourteous snort.

"For goodness' sake come on!" Herbert exclaimed.

"Right-ho!"

They walked on.

"What are we supposed to be doing now?" Herbert demanded.

"I'm showing you round the town," said Bulstrode, innocently.

"Round the town!" almost shrieked Herbert. "Do you call this showing a chap round the town - taking him into pastry cook's shops and round churches and graveyards?"

"I'm showing you the sights - "

"Hang the sights!"

"Well if you don't want to see the sights, what's the point in going round the town?"

Herbert snorted.

"I want to see something lively," he said. "Where's the Cross Keys?"

"It's on the border of the village by Friardale Lane."

"Let's go there!"

"We can't."

"Why not?"

"It's out of bounds."

"You've been there before, haven't you? You told me so, at any rate."

"Ye-es."

"Wasn't it out of bounds?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Well, if you've been there when it's out of bounds, you can go there again when it's out of bounds," said Herbert. "Let's go."

Bulstrode did not move.

"Are you coming?"

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I can't Bertie. Even if I went myself I couldn't take a kid of your age. It would be too rotten. Besides what is there to see there? Only a set of fellows drinking and playing cards. It's rotten."

Herbert's eyes glistened.

"Just what I want to see," he said.

George Bulstrode's refusal to comply with Herbert's wishes causes a rift between the two brothers. Herbert eventually arrives at Greyfriars in an extremely disgruntled mood.

Harry Wharton & Co have been told by Bulstrode of his problem and they are anxious to help him. They greet Herbert with a cordiality which is not reciprocated.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Herbert looked at them.

"Hallo!" he said. "Can you tell me where the Second Form room is?"

"Yes, rather!" Come this way," said Harry Wharton. "You're Bulstrode Minor, I suppose."

"I suppose I am," grunted Herbert.

"We're form-fellows of Bulstrode's. All in the Remove - the Lower Fourth, you know," Harry Wharton explained. "We're glad to see you."

"Are you?" said Herbert, looking at them suspiciously. "Are you old friends of my major's?"

"Well, yes, in a way."

"I mean are you friends he's made since he started this good-goody bizney?" said Bulstrode Minor.

"Nice boy!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Bulstrode Minor snorted.

"I came here expecting to have a good time," he said. "I seem to be going to have nothing but preaching. I suppose they serve out tracts before brekker every morning."

Herbert's further adventures at Greyfriars make him thoroughly unpopular. He is defeated in a fight with Dicky Nugent, given a well-deserved form ragging, arrested by P.C. Tozer, flogged by Dr. Locke, but he is still determined to "have his fling."

Eventually Herbert arranges a night out at the Cross Keys with Vernon-Smith (who, in those days was a much worse character than he later became). George Bulstrode learns of this and forcibly prevents Vernon-Smith from leaving the Remove dormitory. He then intercepts Herbert at the arranged meeting point, drags him back to the Second Form dormitory, and locks him in.

But Herbert is passionately determined to have his night out, regardless of the consequences. So he makes a rope from the sheets of his bed and escapes by the dormitory window. Rain is pouring the whole of the time and when he arrives, drenched and dripping, at the Cross Keys he has already caught a chill. But he does not notice this in his excitement at the imaginary prospect of winning large sums of money from the experienced Cross Keys card-sharpers.

Those two well-known rascals, Ben Cobb and Joe Banks, make him very welcome

when he shows them the seven pounds he has brought for gambling purposes. And they soon relieve him of it.

"An hour clicked away on the metal clock on Mr. Cobb's mantelpiece. The whole building was silent save for the movements and occasional muttered remarks of the gamblers in the inn parlour. All the time the pile of silver before Herbert diminished more and more. At the end of an hour he was down to his last coin, and he lost again and had to owe a balance to the others.

Then he paused, white and haggard.

Luck, as he fancied it, had been against him and he had lost; he was cleaned out. He had not a coin left in his pockets.

..... Herbert rose heavily to his feet.

"I suppose I'd better go," he said dully.

"Yes. Good night."

Herbert did not reply.

He crossed to the door, put on his cap and strode out into the darkness.

The rain was descending in blinding torrents and the Greyfriars lad went out into the heart of it without even an umbrella, without even an overcoat."

On his way back to Greyfriars Herbert is frantically worried by the likely consequences of his folly. He has to account for the loss of the seven pounds - sent to him by his father for the purchase of a bicycle - and he realizes that an enquiry into the cause of its loss will probably result in his expulsion from Greyfriars.

The fact that a far worse shadow than that of expulsion is looming over him does not enter his head - or the reader's head.

"How was he to account for the loss of the money? His brother might help him. He thought of that with a sudden sense of relief.

His brother, whom he had insulted and injured - would he help him? Could he help him to that extent?

But even that was not all. Even if the money were replaced, what then? The foolish lad was already thinking of further attempts to win back what he had lost. To win back one's losses - the mirage which has led so many gamblers to their doom. That was the wild vision which Herbert could not drive from his mind.

He ran on through the rain. The water was soaking through his clothes. He was drenched to the skin; even his boots were soaked. But he did not notice it. Rapid motion kept him warm, and he did not care for the rain.

The school wall loomed up in the gloom and wet. He clambered over the wall. He was feeling sick and faint.

He rolled over the wall, missed his hold, and fell inside. He had not the strength to rise for the moment.

When he staggered to his feet at last he groped his way across the Close, the rain beating on him hard and fiercely. He paused by the house wall, where the rope of sheets fluttered from the window of the Second Form dormitory.

He supported himself with his hand upon the stone wall, while he groped for the window-sill above him.

The unfortunate lad was almost in a fever by this time although he did not realise it.

He climbed upon the window-sill and groped and groped for the fluttering rope, which the wind carried out of his reach.

He grasped it at last and began to climb. His head was swimming.

"I must get in!" he muttered fiercely. "I must get in."

He clung desperately to the rope. But he could not climb. Again and again he tried but his strength was spent; his brain was reeling.

He made an effort to get upon the lower sill again and missed it. The rope slid through his hands and he fell.

Crash!

He hardly felt the shock as he fell - only a dull pain, and then oblivion.

He made one feeble movement and lay still - silent - his white set face upturned to the pouring rain.

Heavier and heavier the rain beat down upon him. It ran over him in little streamlets. It covered him and soaked him. He did not move."

The whole atmosphere of the story is drastically changing, but even now the real seriousness of the situation is not yet apparent. The reader assumes that Herbert, after losing all his money, is going to have a further lesson by being ill. But surely nothing worse can happen. Not at Greyfriars.

Herbert's absence is discovered when Mr. Quelch is awakened by the rope of sheets blowing against his window. He immediately visits the Second Form dormitory and, finding that Bulstrode Minor is absent, he arouses Mr. Twigg.

The two masters descended the stairs. They put on mackintoshes and went out into the Close. The wind and rain drove forcefully into their faces and they gasped for breath.

"Bless my soul! What a night for a lad to be out!" Mr. Twigg gasped.

"I imagine he went out before the storm came on," Mr. Quelch said.

"Yes, I suppose so."

Keeping close to the wall, to avoid, as far as possible, the force of the wind, the two masters made their way to the spot directly beneath the window of the Second Form dormitory.

Mr. Twigg flashed the light through the rain.

A sudden cry broke from him.

"Good heavens!"

"What is it?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, look!"

Then the Remove master echoed the other's exclamation.

The light of the lantern gleamed upon a face in the rain - a white, set face, that already seemed to have the seal of death set upon it.

"Bulstrode Minor!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch in horror. "Then he had fallen!"

Mr. Twigg looked at the white face in fascinated horror. For the moment he could not find his voice. He trembled in every limb as he looked upon the ghastly countenance of Bulstrode Minor."

Even in the throes of critical illness there is a marked difference between the saintly Edwin and the unsaintly Herbert.

Let us return to Roslyn School where hopes of Edwin's recovery are rapidly fading.

Often did Eric, and Upton, and Montagu talk of their loved friend. Eric's life seemed absorbed in the thought of him, and in passionate, unspeakable longings for his recovery. Now he valued more than ever the happy hours he had spent with him; their games, and communings, and walks, and Russell's gentle influence, and brave kindly rebukes. Yet he must not even see him, must not smooth his pillow, must not whisper one word of soothing to him in his anguish; he could only pray for him, and that he did with a depth of hope.

At last Upton, in virtue of his relationship, was allowed to visit him. His delirium had become more infrequent, but he could not yet even recognize his cousin, and the visits to the sick-room were so sad and useless, that Upton forebore.

"And yet you should hear him talk in his delirium," he said to Eric; "not one evil word, or bad thought, or wicked thing, ever escapes him. I'm afraid, Eric, it would hardly be so with you or me."

"No," said Eric, in a low and humble tone; and guilty conscience brought the deep colour, wave after wave of crimson, into his cheeks.

And this is the vividly contrasting Greyfriars scene:

"Herbert lay in bed, and the pillow under his head was hardly whiter than the face which lay upon it.

His eyes were wide open, staring blankly at the ceiling overhead, and his white lips were never still for a moment.

From his moving lips poured an incessant babble of words, as the fever moved him - words that had a strange sound on the lips of one so young - half-told, broken stories of reckless doings and wild experiences.

"Bertie," murmured his mother, - "Bertie! Don't you know me?"

"He is delirious," said Dr. Pilbury softly; and he drew the weeping mother aside and she sank into a chair by the window.

Mr. Bulstrode stood looking down upon the delirious junior. He heard from his son's lips words which he had never dreamed of hearing from them.

Mutterings of gambling, of night excursions, of smoking and even of drinking - wild mutterings that were half-true and half imaginary - the fevered images of a maddened distorted brain.

"Good heavens!" muttered the unhappy father. "Good heavens."

Bulstrode stood with frozen lips. He had expected all this. He had known more than his father what his younger brother was like.

But there was no condemnation now in Bulstrode's face. What Herbert was saying was what he himself might have said a few months before. Herbert was no worse than he had been; but he had changed and Herbert had not.

And the downward path had led the unhappy lad to this. Truly it was said, from of old, that the way of the transgressor is hard.

.....the juniors went into lessons with grim and gloomy faces. Work was a mere hollow pretence that afternoon. No one in the school could put his mind to it, for it was now known that Bulstrode Minor would probably not live through the night.

.....without anything being actually stated, the juniors came to understand gradually that there was little or no hope.

It had a stunning effect on them. Fellows moved about the school as if in a waking dream, and only spoke in whispers, or did not speak at all.

Bulstrode Minor was dying.

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Which of these two episodes makes the greater impact is a matter of opinion. And it depends to a great extent on whether the reader is already acquainted with Greyfriars and its personnel.

Those who are, will probably be more affected by the Greyfriars story. When the familiar atmosphere becomes so suddenly unfamiliar and tragedy clouds the scenes better known for the clowning of Billy Bunter and Horace Coker there is a sense of absolute shock.

But, in some respects, "Eric" is more effective. The Edwin Russell tragedy produces a far greater feeling of grief. Edwin undoubtedly inspires far more sympathy than Herbert does.

So I personally consider that the "Eric" episode is the more sad and touching. And that the Greyfriars story is the more realistic and horrifying.

* * * * *
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The Great Scout

By Alex Parsons

I've been a reader of the C.D. for the past six years with the result that my education in our hobby has improved enormously. But during that time, I'm very sorry to say, I don't think I've ever read an article on that charming little book, the Aldine 2d Buffalo Bill Library, and its main character and hero, William F. Cody, better known as Buffalo Bill. In fact I don't think it has even been mentioned in despatches. I can only presume that it wasn't very widely read in the early years, or, if otherwise, that its readers have lost their boyish enthusiasm for blood-and-thunder, which I think is a great pity as a little blood-and-thunder is good for the soul - even the mature one. I dare say that most of us graduated on it. I certainly did.

I thought the format was a very attractive one and, with its superb cover illustrations by Prowse - a good twopennyworth in itself - surely must have had an appeal to lots of our readers. I still find it attractive, and its appeal still holds, though its dialogue is rather quaint and melodramatic and can be amusing when read in these later years. But it has its nostalgia also, and I'm a little sad when I realise that had Buffalo Bill really killed off all those baddies, both Indian and white, the corpses would have been so thickly strewn over the Great Plains that there wouldn't have been enough room to have pushed a pram, let alone drive a covered waggon. I also realise that he wouldn't have had the time had he lived for two hundred years. But, considering that he left the plains when he was a comparatively young man, he didn't do too badly according to the lurid accounts of Ned Buntline (Z. C. Judson) who is reputed to have created the Western blood-and-thunder in the form of the dime novel, and was the writer of most Buffalo Bill stories. Ned certainly piled on the agony, with Bill performing the most hair-raising feats; rescuing beautiful maidens from bad Reds and white renegades, and sometimes facing odds which would have made even Batman quake in his ultra-scientific and unromantic shoes. I must confess that I revelled in them and, even now, never fail to be gently thrilled when The Great Scout arrives in the nick of time with Colts blazing and men falling to every shot.

There was a variance in style which suggested that several writers tried their hand. Some of them were apparently English, as the term 'you chaps,' and 'you fellows' were used occasionally - unless these were incorporated specially for the English reader. But they jarred on the nerves as one could hardly imagine a tough Western character shouting, "Look out, you chaps; the Indians are coming!" I, for one, wouldn't have believed him, with, perhaps, dire consequences to my hair.

For all their quaint dialogue, impossible situations, and for what they were intended, lots of them were extremely well written, and displayed a fairly wide knowledge of the topography, animal life, military history and tribal complications of the North American continent. Some descriptive passages were near-literature and created for the reader the atmosphere of brooding silence and loneliness of the plains and forests. To the best of my knowledge religion never appeared, and sex only in sublimated form. The violence in them was acceptable as it was always the triumph of good over bad, with Buffalo Bill portrayed as the righter of wrongs and defender of the weak - a kind of knight errant of the plains. While most of us

are steeped in a knight-errantry of shining armour and fluttering pennons, and might find it difficult to accept a knight in buckskin with a Winchester slung over his shoulder and a pair of Colts at his hips, I find it deliciously refreshing. I never really cared much for Arthur's crowd whom I thought a rather supercilious lot with a closed-shop order of chivalry. "Buffalo Bill" was nothing if not democratic, and gave aid to all irrespective of creed, colour or social standing. He wasn't too fussy about knocking them off, either, if they were baddies.

The writer - or writers - laid on the melodrama thick and heavy at times, but mostly in dialogue. The action of the story was quick-moving adventure with very little plot, but with some attention to detail of terrain and locality; and jumping from incident to incident with a rapidity which was very stimulating and left one mentally breathless, so to speak. Some of them fizzled out into anti-climax, but most ended with the usual show-down of which one never tired - the triumph of justice over tyranny! There were hordes of bad men but never bad women. The fair sex was very often presented as the fort commandant's daughter - a beautiful maiden who was invariably in dire need of rescue at some time or other, and was saved in the nick of time by a "dashing, handsome, six foot figure of a man." None other than Buffalo Bill, of course. Sometimes it would be a mysterious, heavily-veiled lady from the East in search of a lost relative who very often turned out to be the leader of a band of outlaws who either reformed and returned to the East with his beautiful sister, or died with his boots on. The following is a quote from B.B.L. 536, The Mystery Bandit. "Bah! I am a fool to feel a presentiment of evil now, just as I have a fortune in my grasp, have purchased back the old homestead, and can give my child an inheritance of which she may be proud. But why can I not drive the phantom of evil to come from before my eyes, and keep the chill of almost despair out of my heart? No, no, I cannot, for the old feeling comes back to me, and I tremble with dread just as I am about to step across the threshold of a new life." Sheer melodrama, of course, and not without its charm; but, having regard to some of the authentic, fabulous characters which the West produced - men who lived, dressed, fought and died dramatically - perhaps not as far-fetched as it seems.

The writers could take their trade very seriously at times, and the readers who were humble enough to learn from any source could widen their knowledge from the simple pages of this little book. I quote now from B.B.L. 538. Custer's Last Charge. "In the year 1868 the snowbirds which were driven before the blizzard, or north-eastern whirlwind, to the south of the Canadian River, might have seen a rather startling sight on the Washita River above, on a mountainous ridge, a long troop of regular cavalry, their horses snow-balled in the hoofs, and the men frozen and dull blundering in the fresh snow a foot deep..... Little did the scrubby pines and creaking cottonwood-trees avail to shelter them as they streamed along, stumbling where a second mishap would have sent them to the bottom of a deep ravine choking with the drift, and holding their horses close to the nose so as to prevent them from neighing. If Custer led valiantly, his celebrated Seventh Cavalry followed steadfastly and hardily. Before their ceaseless advance the crust cracked and was scrunched up with sound enough to make the paw-sucking bears shudder in their coverts, and the birds, speared by the freezing wind, cower down in the leafless brush." No melodrama here but a fine word-painting so rich in stark reality that one almost shivers with the cold. Unimaginative, indeed, must be the reader who failed to be moved or impressed by its grim foreboding of tragedy. Little gems like this are dotted here and there throughout the stories and, among the din of six-guns and war-whoops, give one much food for thought.

If you weren't fussy about dog-ears the B.B.L. was a handy size for the jacket pocket, and easy to smuggle into class. It measured roughly seven by five inches and contained thirty-six pages, including covers, with two columns per page in very small print. Thirty-two pages was a lot of reading, but it was the full-colour illustrations on the front cover which first attracted me, and which, in my opinion, were the best of their kind both from an artistic and printing point of view. In all the years I've had my B.B.Ls. there isn't the least sign of colour-fading. To the best of my knowledge little is known about the artist, Richard Prowse, but he must have been a top man in his job. Contemplation of his work always gives me the greatest of pleasure.

There are those outside our hobby who are inclined to smile at our "comic papers" and "blood-and-thunders." To these unfortunate people I would recommend the reading of G. K. Chesterton's book, The Defendant, in which the author puts up the most admirable and calculated defence of the "Penny Dreadful." Someone else also wrote, "Those of us who are inclined to look down on the literature known as blood-and-thunder, and in which we have never indulged, cannot consider ourselves truly literate." Could this have been Chesterton, too?

I firmly believe that sometime in the future the Buffalo Bill stories will take their place in North American foke-lore and mythology. In that far off time the Winchester and the Colt will be as ancient and obsolete as the sword and the lance - and just as romantic.

* * * * *
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Covington Clarke also wrote many stories of wartime flying. But the greatest names that one associates with flying stories are Captain William Earl Johns, and his famous flying hero James Bigglesworth.

Johns was born in Hertford in 1893, and was educated at the Hertford Grammar School. In 1913 he joined the Army, and from 1916 - 1930 he served in the R.F.C. and later the R.A.F.

In 1930 he left the R.A.F. to take up writing, and was the founder, and editor of two magazines - "Popular Flying" (1932) and "Flying" (1935). He gave up both of these in 1939 to lecture to air cadets. (He also worked for the M.O.I. from 1939 until 1945.)

Captain Johns has written over 200 fictional novels, and also several reference books on aviation, eg "Fighting Planes and Aces," (1932) "The Air V.C's." (1934) and "Milestones of Aviation" (1935).

He now lives in retirement near Hampton Court where his favourite recreations are travelling, salmon fishing, and shooting. In his own field Captain Johns is as phenomenal as the late Charles Hamilton, and for the past decade he has been the most prolific boys' author. His 80 odd Biggles novels have been published in 17 different languages. Johns has also painted many pictures of aircraft, some of which appeared in the Greyfriars Holiday Annuals.

Chronologically the first wartime adventures of Biggles were recorded in "Biggles Learns to Fly" (1935) but the earliest tales had appeared years before in Johns' own monthly paper "Popular Flying." These particular tales were later published by John Hamilton under the title "The Camels are Coming."

It was in the early thirties that the first Biggles stories began to appear in "Modern Boy" (1928-1939) and the stories set against a background of war torn France lasted for several years. Apart from Biggles himself there were many other characters who were to feature in the stories for the next thirty years. Next to Biggles himself, the honourable Algernon Lacey, known to his friends as "Algy" is easily the most popular character in the stories. Algy was a cousin of Biggles and he caused a minor sensation on his arrival in France by shooting down a "Hun" on his very first trip across the lines. Colonel Raymond of 51st Wing H.Q. was another character who was to feature in many stories. After the

first World War Raymond was Assistant Commissioner of Police, and after the second War he became the head of the Special Air Police, an organisation set up in an attempt to clear the sky of crooks.

Wilkinson, a flight commander of number 287 squadraon, and Smythe of Biggles' own Squadron were both featured regularly, and at one time just after the end of the First War, Biggles, Algy and Ginger gave Wilks a much needed helping hand in Canada. This adventure was recorded in the novel titled "Biggles Flies North" (1939).

Many of the short stories from "Modern Boy" were later published in hard back form, the publisher John Hamilton. (Some of these stories were re-written, and some of them had their titles changes.) These volumes were titled "Biggles of 266," "Biggles of the Camel Squadron," and "Biggles Pioneer Air Fighter." Their popularity can be assessed by the fact that they have never been out of print.

Apart from the short stories in "Modern Boy" there were also two long novels set in this period, - "Biggles Flies East" (1935, B.F.L. 62). (The B.F.L. edition was considerably different from the hard backed edition, the former being set in Russia, the latter being set in Germany.) "The Rescue Flight" is probably the best Biggles tale dealing with the Great War. It was based on an earlier "Modern Boy" tale titled "The Professor Returns," and it contains suspense and cliff-hanging episodes that cannot be successfully attained in short stories.

The themes of the stories were many and varied, some humorous like "The Battle of Flowers," some concerning new air craft like "The Flying Arsenal" and even a few that verged on the tragic, as did the two tales that chronologically end the war-time adventures of Biggles. These two stories, titled "Affairs de Coeur," and "The Last Show" recorded Biggles' ill-fated love affair with Marie Janis, who turned out to be a German spy. (This adventure was mentioned over thirty years later in the novel titled "Biggles Looks Back" (1965) in which Marie plays a prominent part.)

The Armistice was signed in 1918 and peace reigned. Peace to Biggles and Algy meant routine, and routine was not easily accepted by those used to a life of adventure.

I had intended to end this survey of the early Biggles stories here, but there are a few early post 1918 adventures that are, for various reasons, worthy of note. They are "The Black Peril," "The Cruise of The Condor" (both of these tales were later reprinted with the word Biggles inserted before then, a typical title alteration demonstrating the fact that Biggles was the selling power behind the stories) and "Biggles Hits the Trail" (1935). The first is of interest because it introduces Ginger Hepplewhite, a character who was, with the passing of time to become as popular as Biggles and Algy. The latter two tales both feature a character called Dickpa, Biggles' uncle. Both of these stories border on the fantastic and for this reason alone they are well worth reading.

"Modern Boy" came to an end in 1939 due to paper shortage, after a run of eleven years. It would be true to say that it owed a major part of its success to Biggles. But Biggles did not die with the "Modern Boy." Far from it. He carried on to the present day with over eighty full length adventures to his credit, he has also appeared on T.V. in a series featuring Peter Bromilow. Johns himself has admitted that when he first began writing stories of his famous character over thirty years ago, he little realised that he was creating a legend that was to prevail until the present day. But though Biggles has grown from strength to strength with the passing of time, in my opinion none of his modern adventures can compare with the fresh, lively tales that were written in the early thirties when

(continued on p. 60)..

HORACE HACKER

A Study in Acid

By Leslie Rowley

If it were within your power to invite a Greyfriars character into your homes this Christmastide it is extremely doubtful that you would invite a master and it is absolutely certain that your chosen guest would NOT be Horace Hacker. So, unwanted, uninvited, unsought for and undesired, I am bringing to your festive firesides the master of the Shell. I make no apologies although Hacker is hardly the person anyone would want around the house at such a merry season, and I offer no regrets. Hacker, in his indirect way, has brought much in the way of smiles and laughter and this is the time of year for remembering the joy that others have brought to us.

Hacker is sharp in feature, word, and thought; he thinks well only of himself. He is not above eavesdropping or seeking information by other despicable means. He walks softly, head slightly bent, ears over keen to gather in an indiscreet utterance from any long suffering member of his form. An absence of a sense of humour gives room for a bitter, caustic, sarcasm. His suspicious mind blinds him to the good in others. His is a Scrooge-like disposition; unlike Scrooge, however, Hacker has not experienced redemption. So Hacker goes his miserable way his only satisfaction in life being a sardonic regard for the failing of his fellow creatures. His is a character etched in acid.

My first acquaintance with Hacker was in December, 1928, and is chronicled in "The Form-masters' Feud" - a little gem of Hamiltoniana well worth the reading. W. G. Bunter, chased by an irate Hacker, seeks refuge in the Remove-master's study and, from behind the safety of a locked door, insults Hacker in the voice of Quelch finally telling him to "Cheese it." Later, an innocent Quelch is cut by an offended Hacker and thus begins a history of strained relations between the two, developing into warfare between the Shell and Remove and giving Masters' Common-room a little welcome excitement and entertainment (the chapter dealing with the latter is alone worth the price of the whole story). Frank Richards portrays with a knowing pen the reaction of both masters and boys to this "un" happy state of affairs and the fun is fast and furious until at last the unlucky Bunter gets his just deserts. True it is that, once the facts come to light, Hacker is the first to apologise. He was to be less gracious in future years, and though the story did not portray Hacker at his most acid, the whole adventure would not have come to pass if Hacker had abstained from intervening in the affairs of a form other than his own.

In the "Tuckshop" rebellion series with Hacker as temporary Headmaster we came to know the Acid Drop at his very worst. Totally unfit for the appointment; resolutely determined to maintain discipline at all costs, Hacker threw discretion to the winds.* Floggings and expulsions, heavy impositions and severe canings are the order of the day. One scene, where Mauleverer is thrashed mercilessly by Hacker (reminiscent of Brander at his worst) is indicative of the depths to which such a temporary Headmaster could sink if goaded beyond the limit of an uncertain

* The series, criticised in the past by Messrs. Fayne and Jenkins as being "slapstick" and defended (rather ably I think) by Mr. Kirby in the 1961 issue of this Annual, contains much that makes Hacker a true-to-life character. The dish-washing sequence, however, goes too far!

temper. The pen-portrait becomes more convincing as it portrays Hacker's relation with "his" prefects and Staff. (Prout, too, had this failing in his time but there is a difference between fatuous pomposity and vicious spite.)

Discipline, harsh and severe, is the Acid Drop's remedy for the young rascals of the Remove. Unable to make his authority good by the direst possible methods and driven by sheer desperation to acts of tyranny, the temporary beak develops from a mere unpleasant martinet to a dread creature with almost sadistic tendencies, forced in the end to introduce into the School a gang of thugs and tramps - gathered from the fields and hedgerows - in a final attempt to put down the rebellion. Neither he nor his 'army' meet with any great success!

Misfortune seems to dog his footsteps whenever he confiscates tuck. Hacker is a great one at confiscating cakes - ask Hobby! But there is one other member of the School who is even greater in skill at confiscating grub; as fast as the Shell master takes command of those large, luscious, iced mountains of joy, Bunter is not too far away to be unable to re-confiscate them as it were. One such cake was the subject of the "Warren" series. Originating in Hobby's study (at a party to which Coker was invited), removed by Hacker who has been summoned by the ensuing row, snaffled by W.G.B. it finds its way to the study of Warren of the Fifth. Put on the track by Loder, Hacker hastens, with Prout in tow, to recover the goods. Having accused Warren in his usual bitter, acid way, the true culprit is produced. As a deflated Hacker turns to leave the study, the voice of an indignant Prout recalls him

"One moment, sir!" boomed Prout.

"I have nothing more to say, sir!" almost hissed Hacker

"The cake, sir!" boomed Prout, "I cannot allow your comestibles to be left in this study, sir. Kindly take your cake away with you, sir."

Another cake meets with a similar fate in "The Hoaxing of Hacker - again with Bunter acting the part of a redeemer of tuck". This time the Famous Five are blamed and an irritable exchange takes place between Hacker and Quelch. This story, in which Hacker takes the title lead, contains much to illustrate the meanness of the man and his suspicious nature. Suspecting that the Famous Five have gone to "disreputable resort" the "Cross Keys," Hacker pays a visit to the inn and enjoys a disagreeable encounter with Mr. Bill Lodgey. Still certain that the Remove boys are indulging in smoking and gambling, Hacker snoops into their studies during class. Bunter, also out of form, with a view to purloining bullseyes from Study No. 1, gives Hacker a scare and the Famous Five a tip that they are being spied upon. Thereafter, Hacker is made to look a fool not only to an exasperated Quelch but to the Headmaster as well.

The cover of "Magnet" No. 1623 bears what I consider to be the best artist's impression of the Shell form-master. He is shown at his desk, surprised in counting a little hoard of sovereigns. His head is turned, suspicion reflected in his eyes, the sharp crease of a sneer reaching from his bony nose to his thin lips, his grasping hands outstretched to protect the gold before him. Under a table is crouched the dismayed figure of Robert Cherry of the Remove. Bob has had his ears boxed (a method of correction much favoured by the Acid Drop) and, armed with a pot of red paint, has paid a visit to the master's study on a mission of sweet revenge. The unexpected return of Hacker having caused Bob to seek refuge beneath the table, the unfortunate Removite is the unwilling witness to the miserly habits of the Shell form-master.

Quite a lot happens to Hacker's little hoard, which is not surprising with a

hard pressed Gerald Loder driven to find the wherewithal to pay a gambling debt. Bob is accused of theft and remains under a cloud for the rest of the story until, with the connivance of Jack Drake, the sovereigns are eventually discovered in Hacker's own top hat which reposes on the head of the statue to the founder of Greyfriars.

'Mr. Quelch gave the master of the Shell a grim look.

"These are the missing sovereigns, Mr. Hacker?," he snapped.

The Acid Drop gasped.

"Yes, it would appear so-----" Hacker stuttered.

"And what becomes now, sir, of your accusation against a boy of my form, sir, of pilfering them?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Ah! I certainly supposed -----Ah!

....."There is a note!" Prout pointed a fat finger and boomed, "You are overlooking the note, Mr. Hacker!" A folded paper lay among the sovereigns, Hacker gave it no heed but Mr. Quelch picked it up and unfolded it. His eyes - and many other eyes - fixed on it.....

"ADVICE TO ACID DROPS! DON'T HOARD OR YOU MAY GET ANOTHER FRIGHT!"

One would imagine that the embarrassment that is Hacker's every time he bags a cake, makes an erroneous accusation, or even sticks his ferret-like beak into the Remove passage would cause the Shell form-master to step more warily in future. Not at all! A suspicious mind and a narrow nature can ever find an excuse in the name of Justice. Perhaps Hacker means well - but to whom? To Mr. Quelch by intervening in matters affecting that master's Form? To the Remove itself, who show their appreciation in no uncertain manner?

In early 1936 the boys learned, with no little surprise, that Hacker, just like an ordinary human being - had relatives! One of them, a boy of their own age, was Eric Wilmot. Eric was a nephew of Hacker's who had to leave his previous school rather hurriedly under suspicion of theft. It is only fair to record to Hacker's credit that the uncle stood by the nephew in the hour of need and persuaded Dr. Locke to give the lad another chance at Greyfriars. Having done a magnanimous thing, it was just like Hacker to go and spoil it, for the boy had barely arrived at the School and taken his place in the Remove when doubt disturbed his faith and suspicion marred his trust.

Let it be said that Wilmot was not an easy person to help. He was sulky, ill mannered and quick to take offence - cast rather in the mould of the early Harry Wharton. Differences and quarrels quickly arose between himself and his form-mates. Hacker accorded his nephew a form of "protection" unasked for and unwanted by the boy. It is not surprising that the lad had a difficult time of it in the Remove where it was wrongly assumed that he made use of his uncle. Hacker bitterly resented any action taken against his protegee; acid complaints were made to Quelch and demands made for punishment against the offenders. "Oh! no sir," coolly exclaimed the Bounder on one such occasion, "I will remember not to touch Wilmot now that I know that Mr. Hacker does not like it!"

Mr. Quelch resented, as always, this intrusion into the affairs of his form. There were many acrimonious exchanges between the Remove and Shell form-masters until, at last, Wilmot publicly declined his uncle's protecting influence. This renunciation improved the boy's standing with the Remove and certainly enhanced Mr. Quelch's opinion of his colleague's nephew. Hacker's faith, on the other hand, was very much on the wane and he accuses Wilmot of the theft of a £10 note that is missing from Prout's study. All comes right in the end, of course, and Wilmot is invited to return to his old school. But an unpleasant appreciation of Hacker is

left with the reader. Hacker is Hacker, after all! A leopard cannot change its spots nor an Ethiopian his skin!

But if Hacker is an altogether unpleasant person ("a microbe," "a blot" or "a meddling cad" in the words of the Remove), the circumstances that surround the master of the Shell can always be guaranteed to be entertaining. So it promised in those last days of the "Magnet" in 1940. In the final story "The Shadow of the Sack!" Hacker is still his interfering self and much of promise seemed in store. Alas! "The Battle of The Beaks" never saw the light of day and we are left to mourn the unpublished history of what might have been an hilarious account of a typical Quelch/Hacker confrontation.

I make no apologies, as I have said, for introducing Hacker into your home this Christmas. Be hospitable to him whilst he is here, for, though he may not have so intended, he has given you much happiness in the past. Let us, then, recognise his presence and toast his future.

In Bitter Lemon?

KING OF THE SKY (continued from page 56)...

the Sopwith Camels were pulled on to the tarmac and the cheery young pilots lifted their voices and shouted that inevitable phrase to their ack-amas- "Chocks Away!"

Captain Johns also wrote another story of wartime flying that did not feature Biggles. It was the "Spy Fliers" that was serialised in the "Gem" in 1933, later published in No. 625 of the B.F.L. and was eventually issued in hard backed form by John Hamilton.

The short Biggles stories mentioned here, together with "The Black Peril," and the "Cruise of the Condor" are available in cheap editions published by Dean and Son. The rest of the stories mentioned in this article, with the exception of the last mentioned, are available in "Armada" paperbacks.

SEASON'S GREETINGS fellow members, especially James "the Butler" Swan, Jim Belton, G. Harrison, V. Lay, A. Paynter, W. O. G., "Packo" including other writers who have given us so much enjoyment so long. Sorry, nearly forgot our esteemed editor "E.F."

A. G. DAVIDSON, 193 RAE ST., FITZROY NORTH, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS and ALL GOOD WISHES for 1967 to all our members everywhere.

IVAN WEBSTER, MIDLAND O.B.B.C. CHAIRMAN

Dear Old Rotters! I need MAGNETS 1511, 1512, 1558.

SAYER, 23, St. PETER'S ROAD, MARGATE, KENT.

TOP PRICE PAID or EXCHANGE for following in binding condition: RANGER 100-105; GEMS 145, 334, 336, 337, 423, 461, 564, 600, 816; MAGNETS 664, 848, 862, 876, 942, 1117, 1125, 1126, 1174, 1191-1194; POPULAR 493.

SYD SMYTH, 1 BRANDON ST., CLOVELLY, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

HOW'S THAT?

By
Don
Webster

Cricket was in the air!

These were the opening words of a Red Magnet (or was it a Blue Gem) prior to the first World War. I have never seen a copy since to recapture the spirit of the fine cricket yarn within.

In July of this year, the Editor of "The Collectors' Digest" dealt with the subject of the late Charles Hamilton writing on cricket. In his opinion, as far as Summer Series were concerned, here was Frank Richards at his best! I partly agree with him.

Now, opinions differ very much on a Series which includes cricket as one of the main themes, for one must take into account

- (a) Whether you are a cricket enthusiast or not.
- (b) Whether (as one of our leading critics says) "it should be a background for the tense drama - in pleasant surroundings."
- (c) Whether you couldn't care less as to the sporting details of the story as long as the plot is sustained.
- (d) Whether you have no interest in cricket.
- (e) Whether you are a stickler for the correct descriptions, phrases and detail.

Being in category (a) and having played and watched a lot of the grand old Summer game, I found all cricket tales absorbing, whether by Charles Hamilton or those authors who wrote in the hard-cover books. Of all the illustrators, I preferred Macdonald in The Gem.

I have read many descriptions of cricket matches, but I think for tense atmosphere this extract from the Stacey Series (Magnet 1426) will take some beating. Here it is:

"Harry Wharton's face was quietly determined as he went in. He hated partnering Stacey at the wickets, but it was unavoidable as he was third on the list to bat, and had he been fifth or six it would have come to the same thing, for the new man was obviously set. He was not free from a suspicion that his rival and enemy might play him some rotten trick, though he tried not to think of that. Stacey looked a cricketer born and bred, but good as his cricket was, Wharton had only too much reason to know that in other respects he did not play the game. ...

Stewart of the Shell sent the ball down. Stewart put all he knew into bowling to Stacey knowing what to expect from that particular batsman. Stacey, with his usual manner of indolent carelessness, snicked it away and ran. Wharton seemed glued to his wicket. There was simply no chance of a run - whether that fact was visible to the pavilion crowd or not, it was plainly visible to Wharton. He would not have expected Billy Bunter or Coker of the Fifth to attempt to bag a single off that hit. No fellow who could play cricket would have taken the chance of running his partner out, - no fellow - unless he had other than cricket

purposes to serve.

Wharton, in fact, knowing there was no run, was not ready to make the attempt, and Stacey was halfway along the pitch before he realised that the fellow was running at all.

Then he made a desperate spurt.

"Move, for goodness sake." Stacey jerked out in passing, near Wharton's wicket, far from the one he had so recklessly abandoned.

Wharton covered the ground as he had never covered ground before.

He was almost mad with rage, but he was not going to let the scheming rascal run him out if he could help it.

But it was, of course, futile. His bat was yards from the crease when the ball came in, smashing the wicket.

"How's that?" chirruped Hobson of the Shell.

Wharton stood burning with fury. It was no error of an inexperienced batsman - Stacey was anything but that.

Stacey had deliberately run him out; caring absolutely nothing for the loss of a wicket to his side, so long as he scored over an enemy.

That was the man the Remove were so eager to play in matches - for whose sake they had discarded their skipper - a fellow who was not decent enough to play in a Borstal side.

Wharton stood crimson. He turned to look at the other batsman and caught the mocking glimmer in his eyes - and made one stride back along the pitch. What he intended to do he hardly knew - but fortunately he controlled himself, and walked off and went unsteadily to the pavilion.

"Hard luck, old man." said Bob Cherry.

Wharton looked at him, without speaking. Had these fellows missed what was plain enough for a blind man to see?

"Stacey's a bit reckless," said Frank Nugent, "I shouldn't have thought there was a run there."

"Stacey got it" remarked Mark Linley.

"Dash it all, Wharton, have you been sticking gum on your shoes, or what?" exclaimed the Bounder irritably.

Wharton choked.

No man likes being run out at the very best of times. It is the sort of mischance that the victim thinks ought not to happen. But a mistake, a blunder, even an idiotic bungle, can be more or less forgiven. But this was no mistake, no blunder, no bungle. It was deliberate treachery. And these fellows could not see it.

Frank touched his chum lightly on the arm. He could understand Harry's feelings, but he was alarmed at the expression on his face.

"Rotten luck, old chap," murmured Frank.

Wharton found his voice.

"It was not rotten luck," he said, and his voice was loud and clear, heard by everybody. "Stacey ran me out intentionally!"

"Harry, old chap ..."

"Don't talk rot," snapped the Bounder, - "bad enough to throw away your wicket without whining like a fag in the Second."

Wharton's eyes flamed.

"That treacherous cur ran me out on purpose. That's the sort of rascal you're playing for the Remove."

"For goodness sake, chuck it," said Bob Cherry. Bob's honest mind could not grasp such trickery.

Harry Wharton flung down his bat.

"I'm finished here" he exclaimed. "You'll bat without me. I won't play again with that cur. What's the good? Do you want to see me run out in the second innings, too."

And leaving his bat where it fell, Harry Wharton walked off the cricket field. "

But Harry did play again with Ralph Stacey, but under entirely different circumstances.

To avoid batting with Stacey in the match against St. Judes, Harry Wharton is down to bat at No. 10 with Stacey opening the innings, but due to his own misdemeanours Stacey is decidedly "off colour" and has to go in last. Let me recount the scene as they next meet on the cricket pitch:

"Harry looked very curiously at Stacey as he came from the pavilion. Stacey had to bat now, if at all. He had pulled himself together to some extent, but it was clear he was not his usual self.

He had the bowling, and it was in Wharton's mind that he might try to bring off a run-out, as he had done before.

But Stacey was not thinking of that - or indeed of anything but the black trouble that lay like lead on his mind.

Lunn put on his best bowler to deal with this wonderful man, and the field watched keenly and eagerly.

There was a general gasp as Stacey's wicket went down first ball!

"Stacey's out."

"For a duck."

"My only hat."

Stacey's face was red as he went back to the pavilion. Harry Wharton with feelings too deep for words, carried out his bat - not out for nil! "

In the second innings the batting order was more or less reversed with Harry Wharton opening the innings and Stacey down at No. 11.

Let us join the players with Greyfriars wanting 88 to tie, 89 to win:

Nine down for 85! Last man in!

Wharton had the bowling. Stacey came out to the wickets; and there was a deep breath among the Greyfriars men.

"If that cur lets him down -" muttered the Bounder.

Three wanted to tie - four to win! Wharton was glad he had the bowling, as he saw the black and bitter face at the other end of the pitch.

Stacey knew he couldn't keep his wicket up - neither did he want to do so: he would gladly have thrown the game away to prevent his rival from scoring the winning hit. If the bowling came to him ---

It looked as if it might. Once, twice, thrice, the ball came down and nothing happened. Again it came, and again. Wharton stopped it dead.

The Greyfriars men watching from the pavilion were on tenterhooks. Every man knew that the game depended on the next hit. If the bowling came to Stacey - only a few hours ago the star of the team - the game was up. The Bounder knew that whatever the hit was like, Stacey would fail to make the running good.

The bowler seemed incredibly slow in getting going with the last ball of his over.

But it came down at last!

If Wharton failed ---

He did not fail! He stepped out to the ball and it went.

Wharton did not run - Stacey had no chance of letting the game down - he

knew it was a boundary. And it was! Greyfriars had won! "

Well, there you are. Of course we could improve on the words here and there I daresay, but does it matter if Greyfriars are "down for 89" or "all out for 89." We could also say that Wharton played the first five balls and sent the sixth to the boundary, but we shouldn't have built up that last ball tension.

Of course if we want to criticise we have only to turn to the Bertie Vernon Series. Here we have Smithy's "double" who was a first-class bowler, performing an almost impossible feat in Magnet 1639. Posing as Smithy in the match against Rookwood he fails to score in either innings, but then proceeds to dispose of nine men, taking 6 successive wickets (a double hat-trick) and the last 3 wickets (just a hat-trick). Really Mr. Richards!

I haven't the Lancaster Series by me at the moment to quote from, and in any case you have read quite enough about Greyfriars in this article, but I believe The Head (who was quite a cricketer in his younger days) and Mr. Quelch sauntered down to Big Side to see this popular senior (Lancaster) in action on the cricket field.

My biggest disappointment was reading the abridged edition of "King Cricket" by Charles Hamilton in the Boys' Friend 3d Library. The original serial which ran in "The Boys' Realm" was extremely popular because it brought in the famous players of the day, such as Hobbs, Woolley, Hirst, Rhodes, etc., whereas the B.F. 3d Library only described one or two County matches which Leamshire played.

Even the substitute writers are not above criticism. Take for example the Inter-Form Contests in the Gem, written by Pentelow. Here is a typical (and impossible) score:

SHELL

Merry	c. D'Arcy.	b. Wynn	127
Talbot		b. Blake	103
Lowther	c. & b. Cardew		62
Noble	not out		51
Manners	not out		25
	Extras	...	12
Total (for 3 wkts)			<u>380</u>

to which the Fourth replied with an almost similar score.

Now, my experience of schoolboy cricket is that even 50 runs want a lot of getting, so that some of our fictional prodigies would walk into the school First Eleven, particularly a bowler of Vernon's class.

Further "faux pas" by our Sub-writers include this "gem" from The Gem. "Talbot cut the ball to leg." This could mean a hit to square leg or a leg glance. Another sub-writer described a run out as follows: "He was stumped by a good throw-in from the long field." I could quote many more, but I was surprised recently when reading "Teddy Lester - Captain of Cricket" (John Finnemore) to see batsmen described as "batters" and bails spelt "bales."

I think it only fair to include in this article some reference to the hard cover cricket stories, most of which I read as a boy. To-day picking up one or two to re-read I find they do not give me as much pleasure as reading one of the Magnet cricket series.

The wonderful catch in "The Substitutes" (Major Charles Gilson) in which the

"substitute" dismisses one of his own colleagues, the final great innings by the skipper in "The Willoughby Captains" (T. Baines Reed), the wonderful partnership in the House Final in "The Head of Kays" (P. G. Wodehouse), the exciting finish to the Eton v Harrow match (H. A. Vachell) in "The Hill" and the fine stories about "Mike" which appeared in "The Captain" are all for the connoisseur, who really understands and loves his cricket. Perhaps someday someone better informed than I will write an article on these yarns, coupled with some of the cream of cricket stories and serials from "Chums," "B.O.P.," "The Captain," etc.

Of course The Gem had its cricket stories, Tom Merry or Talbot featuring in many of them. Occasionally we had a Cricket Week at Eastwood House and there was usually a "Raffles" about. It was always a matter of great regret to me that we did not have a long Cricket Series in The Gem, such as the 3 Magnet series (and add the Da Costa Series also) I quoted earlier in this article.

Even the Nelson Lee had its Cricket Series, such as Jerry Dodd - Test Match Cricketer, the Harry Gresham Series, etc.

To conclude, let me take you back to the year 1915, when on a lovely sunny Monday morning I purchased a Red Magnet (price 1d) entitled "The Slacker's Eleven" in which the Greyfriars Remove play their first match with Rookwood. I need not go into details of the story, but I think an excerpt from the last chapter makes interesting reading. Here it is:

"Rookwood faces were confident now. Jimmy Silver would do it. Only one run wanted to tie - two to win, and Jimmy not showing any sign of fatigue.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sent the ball down - his very best ball - and there was a smack of the willow and the leather. The batsman ran. But Wharton's eye was on the ball. He took a run, then he backed away, his eye on the ball as it floated down to his waiting hands. Smack! Every eye was on Wharton, and there was a roar. "How's that?" "

I think this is where we came in.

W A N T E D : MAGNETS 1521, 1543, 1544, 1547, 1549, 1551, 1573, 1576, 1579, 1581, 1582, 1605, 1627, 1628, 1656, 1658, 1659, a n d POPULARS dated 1917/18 Nos. 268, 265, 264, 262, 258, 257, 256, 252, 244, 241.

Christmas greetings to club members all over the world and especially to Laurie Sutton.

R. F. ACRAMAN, 24 SPINNELLS RD., HARROW, MIDDLESEX.

W A N T E D : Biggles material especially THE CAMELS ARE COMING and stories in POPULAR FLYING, MODERN BOY, and BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY (1930's).

375 STATION ROAD, WALLSEND, NORTHUMBERLAND.

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SLADE D'ARCY MAXIMUS
BY
ERIC FAYNE

"The Sladeian," the school magazine of Slade, had semi-official status, and it was well known that Mr. Scarlet, the Headmaster, looked upon it with approval. Financed by the school authorities, it was edited by a member of the Sixth Form, and the boys of Slade, chiefly the seniors, contributed all the contents. Mr. Scarlet, with due modesty, would point to "The Sladeian" as proof of the sense of responsibility which senior boys acquired as the result of a Slade education.

Whether "The Sladeian" paid its way financially was beside the point. It was sold for 5/- a copy, and every boy in the school was expected to buy at least two copies of each issue. There was no question about this, for the charge was entered on each boy's bill. Complimentary copies of "The Sladeian" were sent to various prominent people, with resultant good will, and copies often also went to the editors of the "Plymouth Bugle" and the "Everslade Record," who duly had something nice to say about it in their newspapers, all reflecting happily upon Slade College. So whether "The Sladeian" paid its way was not important. The school authorities regarded it as a good investment.

"The Sladeian" had been founded

early in the century, but it was generally agreed that the current editor, Peter-Roy Shannon of the Sixth, who managed somehow to produce a new issue twice every term, had never been surpassed in the editorial chair.

When Corker, the previous editor, had left Slade for pastures new some twelve months ago, it was mainly due to Mr. Buddle, who taught English at Slade, that Corker was succeeded as editor by Peter-Roy Shannon. Not that Shannon was a particular star of the Sixth Form English class. On the contrary, he was frequently guilty of pleonasm, tautology, and circumlocution, to which Mr. Buddle drew attention in red ink. Split infinitives and mixed metaphors were by no means unknown in a Shannon essay.

But Shannon had a lively imagination and a gift for shameless journalese. He liked writing. He had a fair amount of patience, and a store of tact which he would use if the necessity arose. Mr. Buddle thought that he would make a good editor for "The Sladeian" - and so he did. He was no sportsman, as Mr. Buddle knew. He would enjoy an afternoon's writing and editing, as any other fellow might enjoy an afternoon at cricket or soccer.

Apart from his editorial labours, Peter-Roy Shannon had one other hobby - amateur photography. He had that knack of getting good pictures which is the gift of the born photographer. Always he would use his own pictures in making up the current covers of the school magazine. On one occasion he printed a remarkably fine shot of Antrobus, the school captain, opening his shoulders and hitting a six. It was a posed picture which did not look like a posed picture. On another cover there was the school First Rowing Eight on the river at Everslade. With a good editor's - and photographer's - flair for variety, Shannon adorned yet another cover with a striking study of the Tango Tea Rose which bloomed in the Headmaster's garden. Mr. Scarlet was delighted, and commended Shannon. The youthful photographic expert

always placed his own name at the base of his pictures. His reproduction of the bust of Sir Douglas Buchanan, founder of Slade, with the name Peter-Roy Shannon scrawled across the lower half of the picture, caused glee in Lower School, and for some time afterwards Shannon found himself addressed as Sir Douglas. He took it all in good part.

So Shannon's covers were justly famous.

Shannon had a sense of humour, which is an advantage in any editor if he is to remain sane. It would seem that he inherited his sense of humour from his mother who, long ago, had played the supreme joke of insisting that a double-barrelled Christian name should be bestowed upon her son. Plenty of people are blessed with double-barrelled surnames, but few have Christian names with two prongs. Peter-Roy Shannon was one of the few.

Shannon's sense of humour often shone through the pages of "The Sladeian." It is possible that some Slade fellows found Shannon's editorials even funnier than he intended them to be. However, in the matter of the Headmaster's photograph, it was generally agreed that Shannon surpassed himself.

One afternoon, early in the summer term, Shannon set out on a long country hike, accompanied only by his beloved camera. In a pleasant Devonshire meadow he came across a donkey. It was a lovely donkey. It had a shaggy coat, and furry, droopy ears. It had a charming expression on its intelligent face. Peter-Roy Shannon soon made friends with it. It allowed him to rub its ears, to pat its back, and to feed it with milk chocolate. Occasionally it would wink one of its soulful green eyes at Shannon. From time to time it would butt him lightly to show its appreciation of the attention he was giving it. It was a gentle, sweet-natured donkey.

Time passed, and eventually Shannon went to the gate. The donkey followed him. Shannon closed the gate carefully, as all good hikers should, and the donkey put its head over the top. Shannon stroked its neck, and it brayed with pleasure. Shannon poised his camera, and took a picture.

Something told him that it would be a fine picture - and it was. When, a day or two later, Shannon picked up his prints from the chemist's shop in Ever-slade, he was delighted. Never had Shannon seen such a fine picture of a donkey. It was a magnificent study. Clear as a bell, it showed the donkey gazing joyously into the camera, a gentle, enigmatic smile on its face. It was a nature picture to end nature pictures.

Shannon had an enlargement made. This was even more successful than the original print. Shannon felt instinctively that he had never done anything better. He sent it off at once to the printer's office for a block to be made. There was only one place for such a work of art - the cover of the mid-term issue of "The Sladeian." Somehow Shannon sensed that it would cause a sensation.

One half-holiday, towards the middle of the term Carslake of the Fifth dropped into Peter-Roy Shannon's study on the Sixth Form Corridor. Carslake, who kept wicket for the Slade First Eleven, contributed sports reports to "The Sladeian."

He found the editor seated before a Remington Portable, with sheets of paper surrounding him, and an overflowing waste-paper basket at his side. Shannon was clicking away at the machine, and he did not look up as Carslake came in.

"Busy! Buzz off!" snapped Shannon.

"When's the mag coming out?"

"Tomorrow! The notice is on the board in Hall. Can't you read? Scoot!"

"Are my sports reports in?"

"They are! Depart!"

"Uncut?"

Shannon looked up wearily at last, and ceased typing.

"Almost uncut, my friend. A little

bit off here and there, perhaps."

Carslake grunted.

"You spoil all my reports by pruning them."

Shannon shook his head.

"It's an editor's job to prune," he said. "You'd like to hog the whole mag. Can't give too much space to sport! Besides, the kids have to have a show. Young Pilgrim sent in a nice little item on Lower School boxing."

"Are you suggesting that young Pilgrim writes as well as I do?" demanded Carslake.

Shannon spoke soothingly.

"Nobody writes as well as you do. You have a neat turn of phrase, as the Gump says. All the same, we have to share out the space. Mell has written a humorous short story."

"Only Mell will read it - and I hope he laughs himself to death," said Carslake.

"Good-bye!" said Shannon politely.

"Oh, well --" Carslake turned away. He looked back. "Is it a good issue?"

"Of course it's a good issue. Best mag in the kingdom."

"What's on the cover?"

"The cover?" Shannon sighed ecstatically. "The cover is a dream. I've never done anything better."

"What is it?"

Shannon shook his head.

"Wait and see! It's a secret. I never tell anyone what's on the cover before the mag comes out. You know that."

"I bet it's a blodge!" said Carslake.

"You wait till you see it. It's a sensation."

"What is it? Go on, tell us!" urged Carslake persuasively. "I won't mention it to a soul. You know you can trust me."

Peter-Roy Shannon chuckled. It was then that his sense of humour took over.

"You won't tell anyone if I let you in on it?"

"Of course not!" promised Carslake.

"Well, I suppose there's no harm in telling just one person. A pleasure

shared is a pleasure doubled. It's a study of Old Pinky."

"Pinky-Mi?"

"Not Pinky-Mi! Old Pink!"

"Old Pink?" Carslake opened his eyes wide. He looked quite startled, and Shannon chuckled again. "You've got a picture of the Big Beak on the mag cover? Doesn't he mind?"

Shannon was grinning widely.

"He doesn't know."

"But he'll skin you alive," gasped Carslake. "Where did you get the picture?"

"I took it with my little camera. He winked at me as I clicked."

Carslake drew a deep breath.

"The Headmaster on the cover of the school rag. That's a bit startling." He stared at the smiling editor. "Aren't you windy that he'll go off the deep end when he sees it?"

"Maybe he won't recognize himself," suggested Shannon blandly.

"You said it was a good picture."

"It is a good picture. It's a stunner. Best thing I've ever done. Nature in the raw."

"Well, you've got a nerve!" said Carslake, with obvious admiration.

"The one thing I don't lack is nerve," admitted Shannon. "Not a word to anyone, mind!"

"Not a word!" breathed Carslake.

He left the study. Peter-Roy Shannon, with no realisation of the harm he had done, returned to his typing.

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Carslake had tea in his study that afternoon. He had two guests - Gillespie of the Sixth and Lorch of the Fifth. Meredith of the Lower Fourth, who had accepted a shilling in return for making toast and brewing tea, was also present. It was rather undignified for a Lower Fourth man to undertake so menial a task for seniors, as Meredith admitted - but a shilling was a shilling. Meredith's face was red with the heat from the electric fire.

While Meredith made slice after slice of toast, the seniors ate it with marmalade, and chatted.

The meal was nearly over when Carslake came to the subject of the school magazine.

"New issue of the school rag out to-morrow," he said. "Quite a startling cover this time. Fit for the Chamber of Horrors at Tussaud's."

"Uh-huh?" commented Gillespie through a mouthful of toast.

"A picture of you behind the stumps?" queried Lorch brightly.

Carslake sniffed.

"He might do worse than that. In fact he has done. Shannon's got a picture of the Great Beak on the next cover," he announced.

He was delighted with the result of the disclosure. The two seniors stared at him in amazement.

Both echoed, in disbelief: "The Great Beak?"

"Old Pink!" agreed Carslake.

Lorch said: "I wonder the Old Man allowed it."

"Schoolmasters are vain," remarked Carslake, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"What kind of a picture is it?" queried Lorch.

"I dunno!" Carslake poured himself another cup of tea. "It must be a good one or Shannon would never have used it. He says it shows nature in the raw."

"Old Pink, stripped to the waist, taking the sun on the end of Brighton pier," suggested Gillespie.

The three seniors roared with laughter, and Meredith, also chewing toast and marmalade, joined in from the window-seat.

"That little squirt's been listening to everything," commented Lorch.

Carslake swung round on his chair, and glared at Meredith.

"Have you been listening to our talk?" he demanded.

"I never listen to my elders and betters," assured Meredith. "My mummy taught me that. Didn't yours?"

"If you repeat a word of what you've heard in this study," said Carslake darkly, "you'll need a new pair of bags after I've finished with

you with my walking-cane."

"Not a word!" said Meredith virtuously. "It's not my business."

"Now clear out," snapped Carslake.

"A shilling, please!" said Meredith.

"Labourer is worthy of his hire."

"You young villain," gasped Carslake.

"I paid you before you started."

"So you did!" agreed Meredith. "I forgot! Sorry!"

And Meredith took his departure.

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It was about fifteen minutes later that Meredith entered his own study on the Lower-Fourth corridor. His study mates, Pilgrim and Garmansway, were already at work, scorching through their evening "prep." In the long summer evenings, prep was always a nuisance. Something to be completed as quickly as possible in order to give a fellow the chance to get out into the open air.

Meredith kicked the door shut, and drew a chair up to the table. As he sorted out his books, he broke the news.

"School mag's out to-morrow. And who do you think is on the cover?"

"Don't know and don't care!" said Garmansway. "The school mag, full of senior school bilge, is beneath my notice."

"It won't be this time," said Meredith, with a grin. "Shannon's got a picture of Old Pink on the cover."

"Piffle!" snapped Pilgrim.

"It's a fact! A picture of Old Pink in a swim-suit."

Pilgrim and Garmansway jumped.

"Rot!" said Pilgrim. "The Head's never worn a swim suit in his life. I bet he never takes a swim."

"I bet he never even takes a bath," added Garmansway.

"You'll see!" remarked Meredith happily.

Shortly afterwards, Pilgrim and Garmansway closed their books and quitted the study, leaving Meredith to finish his work.

Pilgrim hurried away to the junior

cricket pavilion, but Garmansway stopped to chat briefly with Shovel and Brazenbean who were lounging on the steps outside the main door.

"Don't tell anyone, but there's a picture of Old Pink on the new issue of the school mag coming out to-morrow."

"Old Pink? What's he think we want his picture for?" grunted Shovel. "I don't believe it."

"Oh, it's a sure thing," said Garmansway confidently. "Shannon got a snap of Old Pink sun-bathing on the beach at Bournemouth, bandy legs and all."

Meredith, hurrying down to the junior cricket practice, met his form-master, Mr. Buddle, in the quadrangle. He fell into step beside the master, who was enjoying an early evening stroll.

"There'll be a big demand for the new school mag when it comes out to-morrow morning, sir," he volunteered.

"Indeed, Meredith?" Mr. Buddle gave a kindly smile. "Is there something extra-special about it this time, then? I should be very happy to know that you have written an article, and that Shannon of the Sixth has accepted it."

"Oh, nothing like that, sir. There's a picture of the Headmaster on the cover, sir."

"What!" The kindly expression disappeared from Mr. Buddle's face. "Nonsense!"

"It's true, sir. I think Shannon took the photograph, sir. A photograph of the Head just preparing for a swim."

"Nonsense!" yapped Mr. Buddle. "How dare you jest about your Headmaster, Meredith! Take yourself off, at once."

Mr. Buddle waved a hand in the air to shoo away Meredith, and a moment later he had dismissed the matter from his mind. He was to recall it later.

Meanwhile, the story was sweeping through junior school. It was also causing a sensation among the seniors. It lost nothing in the telling.

Palmer of the Sixth mentioned the matter to Irony.

"Heard the latest, Irony? Shannon has got the Chief Beak on the cover of

the latest school mag. Practically a nude study of him. I suppose the Old Man thinks its Grecian, but I don't like the idea. All right for Eton, I suppose ---"

Irony was startled. He broached the subject to Vanderlyn.

"Heard the news, Van? Shannon has a picture of Old Pink on the cover of the rag due to-morrow. I know it for certain. Straight from the horse's mouth!"

Everybody who heard about it was sceptical at first, but the story was told with fuller detail as time passed, and doubts faded away. Some fellows sought Shannon for confirmation, but the worthy editor was not to be found.

At the nets it reached Mr. Crayford, the games master, who was in charge and doing a spot of cricket coaching. He spoke to Irony.

"What's this I hear, Irony? Something about Old Pink's mug being on the cover of the rag which comes out to-morrow?"

Irony nodded.

"It seems to be true, sir. Apparently it came from Shannon himself. It seems that Old Pink posed for the picture in his garden, and it's so good that they decided to use it on the cover of the school mag. Bit infra dig, I think! It smacks of advertising."

Every now and again Mr. Crayford paused to have a little chat with various seniors, and the subject of the "Sladeian" cover came up frequently. He heard different versions of the story, but it all summed up to the same conclusion. Shannon had a photograph of the Headmaster on the coming issue of the magazine.

One of the last to hear the story was Antrobus, captain of Slade. He had noticed fellows forming into little groups, and guessed that some mild piece of school scandal was in the air. Several times he called sharply to various Sixth and Fifth Form men to pack up the chin-wag and attend to net practice, but he wondered, all the same, what could be causing a minor sensation.

Alan Antrobus, like most good school

captains, led a rather lonely life. All through his school career he had been popular and the centre of school politics. But now, as captain of Slade, he had considerable authority and heavy responsibilities. Those who had once invariably called him Alan or "Omnibus," now always addressed him as Antrobus or "skipper," as befitted his lofty rank. Little tit-bits of gossip no longer came his way. Authority always brings a certain amount of loneliness to the man who holds it, and most of all, perhaps, in the world of the public school.

Fortunately for him, Antrobus was a "blood," a star at cricket and football, or he might have found himself left even more high and dry. The non-sporting school captain has a more lonely furrow to plough than the sportsman who attains the captaincy.

The closest friend of Antrobus at Slade was Michael Scarlet, the Headmaster's son, known to all and sundry as Pinky-Mi. But Pinky-Mi's father expected his son to give more attention to study than did the average senior, and this was one of the evenings when Pinky-Mi was hard at work in his room instead of enjoying practice at the nets. Had Pinky-Mi been with the other cricketers, there is no doubt that Antrobus would have heard earlier of the little bit of sensation concerning the school magazine.

However, as time passed, with his own knock at the nets ended, Antrobus found his curiosity getting the better of him. He drew Restarick of the Sixth on one side.

"What are all the fellows quacking about?" he demanded.

Restarick chuckled self-consciously.

"It's Shannon and the school mag," he explained.

"What about the school mag?"

"Well --" Restarick shrugged his shoulders. "It seems that Shannon has got a picture of Scarlet Major on the cover of the mag - new issue out tomorrow."

Antrobus looked incredulous.

"Scarlet Major? The Head do you mean?"

"The Number One Beak!" agreed Restarick. "Can't quite understand his wanting his picture on the cover of the mag. I mean, that sort of thing isn't done! It's undignified!"

Antrobus spoke impatiently.

"Don't be an utter fool, Restarick! The Head would never permit such a thing, and Shannon wouldn't have the nerve to do anything of the sort without permission. I think somebody has been pulling your leg."

Once again Restarick shrugged his shoulders.

"Could be! But it seems to have come from Shannon himself. I suppose he knows what he's got on the cover."

"Where is Shannon?"

"Goodness knows! Out, I think!"

I haven't seen him since tiffin. Most of the men have got the idea from somewhere that Old Pink is on the cover of the mag. That's all I know."

Antrobus nodded, and Restarick returned to the net practice.

For a few minutes the School Captain stood in thought. Then he sought out a prefect.

He said: "I'm going into the House, Irony. Mr. Crayford seems to have gone, too. Keep the nets going for another half-hour, will you? Don't let any man slack!"

"Right, skipper!" said Irony.

The shadows from the trees were at their longest in the crimson glow from the setting sun as Antrobus crossed the quadrangle and went into the main School House. He made his way to the Sixth Form corridor, and entered the study of Michael Scarlet.

Pinky-Mi was seated at the table, a heap of ruled paper before him, a text book on his left, and a glass of lime juice with the remnants of a sausage roll on his right.

As Antrobus entered, Pinky-Mi stretched himself, and pushed his pencil behind his ear.

"Finished nets?" he asked.

"I've left Irony in charge for the last half-hour. I must follow in your wake and do some digging." Antrobus sat on the edge of the table. Thoughtfully he picked up a fragment of sausage roll and popped it into his mouth.

He munched for a moment or two. Then he said:

"There's rather an odd yarn going the rounds this evening. The chaps at the practice seemed to be getting a cackle out of it."

"Oh?" Pinky-Mi raised his eyebrows in interest.

Antrobus went on a trifle awkwardly.

"They seem to have the idea that Shannon has your father's photograph on the cover of the next school mag. Had you heard anything about it?"

Pinky-Mi stared at the captain of Slade.

"What utter rot!" he said brusquely.

"There's no truth in it, then?"

"Of course there isn't!" Pinky-Mi spoke sourly. Sensible though he was, he was always a little sensitive that his father was the Headmaster of Slade. Pinky-Mi, in fact, might have been happier at some other school with a non-related Head, though Mr. Scarlet could not be expected to subscribe to that view.

Pinky-Mi went on: "My father is the last man in the world to allow a photograph of himself to be used in that way. Your common sense should tell you that."

Antrobus smiled faintly.

"No need to take the needle, Pinky. I only mentioned the matter because the fellows are gossiping about it."

"I hope you shut them up, then. He may be only the Head of Slade - but he's still my father. A man doesn't like to know that his Old Man's a subject for larking about."

"Forget it!" said Antrobus. "Well, I must away to a spot of digging --"

He rose to his feet and turned to the door.

"My father hasn't had a photograph taken for years," said Pinky-Mi.

Antrobus turned in the doorway.

"Shannon's a photographer himself. Very Kodak-conscious! I suppose he couldn't have got a snap of the Head, and been ass enough to use it?"

Pinky-Mi chuckled involuntarily.

He said: "He might be ass enough, but I doubt whether he ever had the opportunity, and even if he did, he wouldn't have the nerve. It's just a yarn. Maybe Irony started it. He's spiteful enough sometimes."

Antrobus nodded.

"I expect you're right. Is it any good having a word with Shannon about it?"

"No point in it! Any fool knows it's a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing."

"Thanks!" snapped Antrobus. "Then you'd rather I didn't speak to Shannon."

"Well, you can't at the moment," said Pinky-Mi. "He's gone into Everslade. There's a photographic exhibition at the village library. I gave him a late pass, and lent him my key to the prefects' gate."

"That's that, then!" remarked Antrobus. He spoke carelessly. "See you later for a brew before bed. You can give me your advice on the eleven for Saturday's game."

"Right!" said Pinky-Mi.

Antrobus left the study, and Pinky-Mi returned to his interrupted work.

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At about the time that Antrobus was settling himself down to an hour of study, Mr. Crayford, the Slade games master, was tapping on the door of Mr. Buddle's room on Masters' Corridor.

Mr. Buddle was preparing an English paper for one of the senior forms to work the next day, and he did not seem especially glad to welcome the games master.

There was, in fact, no love lost between Mr. Buddle and Mr. Crayford. They had clashed on more than one occasion.

Mr. Buddle said, coldly: "What is it, Crayford?"

He frowned as the games master

closed the study door.

"I've dropped in for a chat," said Mr. Crayford.

Mr. Buddle cast a glance in the direction of the clock on the mantelpiece.

"Another time, perhaps, Crayford. I'm busy at present. As you know, the staff meeting starts at nine, and I have work to do before that."

There was a glimmer in Mr. Crayford's eyes.

"I won't keep you a minute or two, Mr. Buddle. The work will last longer than we shall." He perched himself on the arm-rest of Mr. Buddle's easy chair. At the table, Mr. Buddle grunted impatiently, and put down his pen.

Mr. Crayford went on.

"A rather odd matter has come to my notice in connection with the school magazine. You, I think, were responsible for Shannon being appointed editor?"

"Well?"

"It seems," said Mr. Crayford smoothly, "that Shannon has a photograph of the highly-respected Old Pink on the cover of the new issue which is due out to-morrow."

Mr. Buddle gave a start. Immediately there came back to his mind the little piece of gossip which Meredith had imparted to him a couple of hours ago, and which he had dismissed so summarily.

He said tartly: "If you are referring to the Headmaster of Slade, please do not use Lower School slang when speaking of him in my presence."

Mr. Crayford grinned.

"I beg your presence's pardon. Yes, I am referring to our highly-esteemed Headmaster."

"I also suggest," went on Mr. Buddle, "that you take no notice of stupid Lower School gossip which has no foundation in fact."

Mr. Crayford was still grinning. He said pleasantly:

"It's not Lower School gossip, my dear Buddle. It comes from the Sixth Form, in fact. Several of the prefects are astonished that Shannon should have used such a picture in this way."

"Such a picture? What sort of a

picture?" demanded Mr. Buddle.

"A photograph of the Headmaster," explained Mr. Crayford patiently.

Mr. Buddle frowned.

After a pause, he said: "It is incredible that Shannon would place a photograph of the Headmaster on the cover of the magazine. Have you seen the picture?"

"I haven't seen it. Shannon takes a childish delight in keeping his covers secret until the magazine is on sale."

"Did Shannon himself tell you that the Headmaster was the subject of his next cover?" asked Mr. Buddle. There was a troubled expression on his face.

"He didn't tell me. Naturally he wouldn't. He seems to have told every man in the Sixth."

"Have you questioned Shannon?"

"Your editorial choice is conspicuous by his absence," said Crayford.

"In any case, there's no need to question him. It's pretty clear what he's done. He's overstepped himself this time."

Mr. Buddle shook his head.

"I don't believe for one moment that Shannon would place a photograph of the Headmaster on the cover of the magazine without asking Mr. Scarlet's permission," he said obstinately.

"Do you believe that Old Pink would give his permission if he were asked?" enquired Mr. Crayford.

"I'm quite sure that he would not."

"So am I! It will be good sport to find out for certain at the staff meeting to-night," said Mr. Crayford smiling.

Mr. Buddle stared at the games master.

"How can you find out anything at the staff meeting, Crayford? The magazine is not published till to-morrow morning. I believe that the printers usually make delivery to Shannon during the morning break."

"That's right!" agreed Crayford.

"Then how can you discover anything at the staff meeting?"

"I can congratulate our respected Headmaster on having his picture on the cover of the rag," explained Crayford.

Mr. Buddle gazed at the games

master with mounting anger.

"I hope you won't do anything of the sort, Crayford. If Shannon has actually used a photograph of Mr. Scarlet as a cover for the magazine -- and I don't believe for one moment that he has done anything of the sort ----"

Mr. Crayford stood up. He thrust his hands into his trousers pockets.

"You know quite well, Mr. Buddle, that Shannon is capable of any imbecility under the sun. The only thing he can do well is photography. He's probably got a hot shot of Old Pink, and can't resist using it. The Old Man will be hopping mad, and Shannon, as an editor, will be an also ran. I'm going to enjoy myself at the staff meeting. In my kindness of heart, I've told you, so that you can have joyful anticipation of what's going to happen."

Smiling, he left the study.

Mr. Buddle rose to his feet, moved across to his window, and stared thoughtfully out of the window.

Crayford had been pleasant enough in his own way, but Mr. Buddle had no illusions about his motives. Crayford disliked the Headmaster. If Mr. Scarlet could be made to look a fool, then Crayford would be happy. In addition, Crayford disliked Mr. Buddle. It had been due to Mr. Buddle that Peter-Roy Shannon had been appointed editor of "The Sladeian." If that appointment could be proved a mistake, and Shannon shown to be irresponsible, that mistake would reflect on Mr. Buddle's judgment.

Finally, Mr. Crayford disliked Shannon, who took no interest in games. Non-games men were anathema to Mr. Crayford. So, if the games master felt so inclined, he could amuse himself considerably at the staff meeting which was due to start in Masters' Common Room shortly.

After standing in thought for a while, Mr. Buddle quitted his study, and made his way to the Sixth Form Corridor. He looked first into Study No. 10, which belonged to Shannon of the Sixth. The room was still and silent in the half-light. The youthful editor was absent.

With a grunt of annoyance, Mr. Buddle passed on to the door of study No. 2, the bed sitting-room which belonged to Michael Scarlet of the Sixth.

On the door was hanging a piece of red-painted wood, on which was inscribed, in white lettering, the warning:

DANGER! MEN AT WORK!

Mr. Buddle murmured something under his breath, tapped on the door, and entered.

Pinky-Mi was still seated at the table, but he was not working now. His feet were on the table, and the chair on which he was sitting was tilted back on two legs. He was eating a banana.

At the sight of Mr. Buddle, he swallowed a mouthful of banana, threw down the skin, and scrambled to his feet with a clatter.

"I hope," said Mr. Buddle, "that the sign on your door was not removed from some road-works where a number of men were leaning on their spades."

Pinky-Mi grinned a little sheepishly.

"I found it abandoned in a ditch, sir. It comes in useful to keep fellows away when I'm digging."

"Quite!" Mr. Buddle nodded, and came to the point of his visit. "Is there any truth, Scarlet, in the rumour that a picture of the Headmaster is to appear on the cover of the school magazine, the next edition of which is due out to-morrow?"

Pinky-Mi jumped. He said mechanically:

"So you've heard about it, too, sir."

It was Mr. Buddle's turn to look startled.

"Then it's true, Scarlet? I can't credit it."

Pinky-Mi gnawed his lower lip for a moment.

"I shouldn't have thought it could be true, sir -- but I don't know much about it. It's just that Antrobus asked me the same question a little while ago. He had heard some fellows talking at the nets."

Mr. Buddle compressed his lips. He said, slowly:

"I suppose, Scarlet, that you have not supplied Shannon with any old photograph of your father."

Pinky-Mi looked indignant.

"Certainly not, sir. If Shannon has any picture of the Head, it must be one that Shannon has snapped himself."

"Do you think that possible?"

Pinky-Mi wrinkled his brows.

"I shouldn't have thought it likely, sir -- but I suppose it's not impossible."

"Would Shannon be stupid enough to use such a picture, Scarlet, even if he obtained it? It seems to me that the Headmaster would be very annoyed."

"I know he'd be furious, sir."

Mr. Buddle clicked his tongue.

"I feel certain that there is no truth in the rumour," he said, but without conviction. "I just can't imagine how anything of the sort came up in the first place. Unfortunately, there is a staff meeting to-night, starting shortly, and Mr. Crayford intends to raise the matter. It will be embarrassing for me, as I was the one who strongly recommended Shannon for the editorship."

Pinky-Mi's eyes glinted with anger. He said impetuously:

"Why can't Mr. Crayford mind his own business? He never loses a chance to stir up trouble."

"Mr. Crayford acts according to his lights. It is not for us to criticise him, Scarlet. I have tried to have a word with Shannon, but he is not in his study."

"He's gone to Everslade, sir. I gave him a pass. He should be back at school any time now, sir."

Mr. Buddle regarded the prefect thoughtfully for a moment or two. Then he glanced at his watch.

He said: "Perhaps you will see Shannon as soon as he returns. The staff meeting begins in about fifteen minutes, though the Headmaster is not always punctual. If, before then, you can let me know Shannon's explanation, so much the better. I might then stop Mr. Crayford from broaching the subject. I will not go into the staff meeting

until the last minute - about nine o'clock."

"I'll do that, sir. I'll go down to the gate, and catch him as he comes in." Pinky-Mi snatched a mauve and white scarf from the peg on the door, and flung it round his neck. "If I don't see you before your meeting begins, I'll wait for you in your study afterwards."

Mr. Buddle opened the door.

"Thank you, Scarlet," he said. "That will be admirable."

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Pinky-Mi stood in the lane, just beyond the small gate in the south side of the school wall. All Slade prefects had a key to this gate. It was one of their privileges, though they were expected to use common-sense in the use of this particular privilege. Pinky-Mi rather regretted that he had entrusted his key into the keeping of Shannon of the Sixth.

It was approaching half-past nine, and completely dark by this time. Pinky-Mi knew that the staff meeting must have been in progress for some while now. The evening was cool, and the prefect was fuming with impatience. He had already wasted forty minutes of his precious time in his vigil of awaiting the return of Peter-Roy Shannon.

It is said that everything comes to those who wait, and eventually Pinky-Mi saw a beam of light come into view round the distant bend in the leafy lane. Within a minute there was the whirr of a bicycle, and Shannon dismounted at the prefects' gate.

"Thank goodness you're here at last," snapped Pinky-Mi.

Shannon stared at him through the gloom.

"What's up?" he demanded. "Has war been declared?"

"Bring that bike in and lock the gate," said Pinky-Mi impatiently. "You're darned late."

Shannon wheeled in his machine, closed and locked the prefects' gate in the wall, and handed the key to Pinky-Mi.

"Now you can explain the royal

welcome," said Shannon. "It's only half-past nine. I've been later than this before and you've never bothered."

Pinky-Mi spoke in lowered tones.

"It's about the new issue of 'The Sladeian' that's coming out to-morrow. What have you got on the cover?"

Shannon laughed softly in the darkness.

"Is that all? I'm ashamed of you, Pinky. You know the cover's always a secret till the rag comes out."

Pinky-Mi smothered an ejaculation of annoyance. Involuntarily he raised his voice a shade.

"Stop fooling, Shannon! This may be serious. Have you got a picture of the Headmaster on the mag's cover?"

"The Head? On the cover? Good lord, no!" Shannon sounded astonished. "Wherever did you get that idea?"

Pinky-Mi gave a sigh of relief. He gave a light chuckle.

"Thank goodness for that! Have you relieved my mind? Some dumbclucks put the yarn round that you had a snap of the Head on the cover. Crayford heard the yarn and went to Buddle. I'll let Buddle know that it's all a mistake. Stick that bike in the racks and get into the House."

Pinky-Mi was turning away when Shannon caught him by the arm.

"Pinky, who said that I'd got the Big Beak on the cover?"

"The whole school seemed to be seething with it. Goodness knows how it started." Pinky-Mi paused for a moment, and then said, with a slight change of tone: "I suppose you didn't pull anybody's leg over it? It's odd how it got around. Antrobus spoke to me about it first - and then Buddle. Apparently the Slug is going to mention it at the staff's monthly jabber which is now in progress."

Mr. Crayford had earned the nickname of "Slug" among certain elements at Slade. Prefects were not expected to use nicknames for masters, but were not always immaculate in the matter. Pinky-Mi, in fact, had but little respect to waste on the games master.

"So long as there's nothing in it, it doesn't matter," he added. "Let the Slug rush in where angels fear to tread."

"Ye gods!" breathed Shannon.

He reached out a hand and switched off the electric light on the front of his bicycle.

"Oh, mother!" he said in a moaning voice.

Pinky-Mi stared at him in astonishment through the starry darkness.

"What's biting you now?"

"Do you know what I've got on the mag cover?" asked Shannon in hollow tones.

"Of course I don't know. You never tell anyone. What have you got on the cover, Shannon?"

"A moke!"

"A what?"

"A moke! A Neddy! A harmless ass! Unmistakably and irrevocably a donkey - long ears and all. It's on the cover of the mag. I took the picture. It's a masterpiece!"

"A donkey? You've got a donkey on the mag cover." Pinky-Mi stood aghast. He went on in a sharp staccato: "And you've told the fellows you've got a picture of the Head. You utter fool!"

Shannon stood in silence, at a loss for words.

"You utter fool!" repeated Pinky-Mi. "Are you mad to insult my father like this? He'll be the laughing stock of the whole of Slade - and you'll be responsible."

"I know he's your father to you, Pinky," murmured Shannon deprecatingly. "It was only a lark. He's your father to you, but to everyone else at Slade he's just the Big Beak. Besides, I never spread it through the school. The very thought scares my pants off. I only mentioned it to one chap - you know how they pester me over the mag. I can't really remember who it was I said it to. I think it was that jerk Carslake. He must have gossiped like a washerwoman. It was only a passing twit on my part. Said - and then forgotten."

"I suppose," said Pinky-Mi viciously, "that it's not necessary to be insane to be the editor of a magazine, but it helps.

You know what'll happen in the morning. You'll be given the order of the long jump. You'd better pack your things to-night."

"Oh, lor'!" muttered Shannon.

Pinky-Mi stood in thought, trying to muster his ideas. He found himself at a loss. He had no idea what to do for the best.

Shannon waited.

At last, Pinky-Mi spoke in a low voice.

"There's only one thing to do, Shannon. You must scrap the issue. Ring the printers in the morning not to deliver. Put a notice on the board in hall that there's a delay in publication."

Shannon shook his head dolefully.

"It wouldn't be any good, Pinky. The Head pays the bill for the printing. Look at the cost of scrapping a whole issue. The chief beak would want to know the reason why. He'd be bound to get hold of a copy from the printers'."

"Scrap the cover, then!" snapped Pinky-Mi.

"Old Pink would still make enquiries," mumbled Shannon. "If I held up the issue, and had the covers changed, it would bump up the price, and Old Pink would hold an inquest over it. The whole thing would look worse than ever. It would look as though I had something to hide."

"Something to hide --" Pinky-Mi almost shouted in his exasperation. He calmed himself with an effort. "You'll find out whether you've got anything to hide, Shannon. What an unholy mess! I can't see how you're going to get out of this one."

He looked at the luminous dial of his watch, and then continued sulphurously:

"Get your bike put away, and get to bed. If you dream about to-morrow, I hope it will be a nightmare. I'd better see the Gump about it, though I don't suppose he can suggest anything."

Pinky-Mi strode away across the dark quadrangle towards the School House which had lights showing at many of the windows. Shannon, full of misgiving,

pushed his bicycle towards the racks.

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In Masters' Corridor, Pinky-Mi tapped at the door of Mr. Buddle's study and looked in. The room was in darkness. Evidently the staff meeting was not yet over.

Pinky-Mi stood in uncertainty, unable to decide at once whether to await the return of the English master or to take his departure and return later.

At the end of Masters' Corridor was a green baize door. It led to the Headmaster's house which was an adjunct of the main buildings of Slade. As Pinky-Mi stood outside Mr. Buddle's study, wondering what to do for the best, the baize door at the end of the corridor was opened. There was a slight rattle of china, and a middle-aged woman came through, pushing before her a rubber-wheeled tea-trolley, laden with crockery.

Pinky-Mi recognised his mother, and he guessed immediately that she was on her way to Staff Common-room with refreshments for the masters who were present at the staff meeting.

As Mrs. Scarlet saw her son she smiled. An idea shot into Pinky-Mi's mind. He hurried to meet his mother as she pushed the trolley in his direction.

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About sixteen gentlemen were present at the staff meeting. These gatherings were held once a month, and though attendance was not compulsory, every member of the Slade teaching staff was expected to be present. To-night, all the members of the resident staff were in attendance, and most of the visiting masters.

School matters had been discussed, suggestions had been made concerning amendments to the curriculum and the timetables, and certain social functions had been planned. Proposals were made, to be accepted or cast out, according to the whim of the Headmaster. It was all most businesslike.

Those who liked to hear their own voices had the opportunity to air their

views. When Mr. Scarlet, the Headmaster, felt that somebody had talked long enough, he would cough, and usually succeeded in cutting short the speaker. Mr. Scarlet himself, however, usually talked more than anyone, and there was no contrivance at all which would end his flow of eloquence once he got going.

Mr. Buddle seldom had much to say at staff meetings. He was seated in an armchair, the spot he invariably occupied, placed in an alcove at the back of the room. Mr. Scarlet sat at a table in the front of the room, with Mr. Fromo, the Housemaster, on his right. The remainder of the staff occupied rows of chairs in front of the table. Mr. Crayford, the games master, sat at an extreme end of the second row. Occasionally he glanced round, and looked towards Mr. Buddle in his alcove at the rear. Once or twice, when he caught the English master's eye, Mr. Crayford gave the slightest wink.

But Mr. Buddle made no sign. He hoped that the games master might think better of his stated intention of referring to the school magazine, but, knowing Crayford, he was not confident.

Many matters had been discussed during the past fifty minutes. Mr. Buddle had contributed nothing to those discussions. The Headmaster had just enquired whether anyone else had any matter to put forward when the door opened, and Mrs. Scarlet appeared, pushing her trolley.

"Ah, coffee!" said Mr. Scarlet. "We shall find it welcome after so much talking."

There was a murmur of approval from the meeting, and signs of general relaxation.

Smiling, and exchanging a word or two with some of the masters who spoke to her, Mrs. Scarlet pushed her trolley to the back of the room where Mr. Buddle was seated. This was not unusual. Mr. Scarlet, with dignified courtesy, always insisted that he himself should be served last.

Cups and saucers were laid out on the top of the trolley, and two large plates, heaped with meat sandwiches, occupied a shelf beneath. Mrs. Scarlet poured out coffee for Mr. Buddle. He accepted it with a word of thanks, and selected a couple of sandwiches. Mrs. Scarlet passed on to Mr. Drayne, who was seated in front of Mr. Buddle. There was an animated buzz of conversation in the room, now augmented by the clinking of cups and saucers.

Mr. Buddle nibbled at a sandwich, took a bite, and munched. He stirred his coffee. He lifted his cup from the saucer which was resting on his knee. He sipped the coffee. It was very hot, and he withdrew his lips quickly from the liquid. As he was about to replace the cup in the saucer, he noticed that the saucer contained something in addition to a spoon. In the centre of the saucer was a little square of paper - a small piece of paper which had been folded twice, and pressed flat.

Mr. Buddle's eyebrows lifted in mild surprise. He covered the square of paper with his cup, and glanced around him. Mrs. Scarlet was nearing the front of the room now. She was serving Mr. Crathie with coffee and sandwiches, but she glanced in Mr. Buddle's direction. As she caught Mr. Buddle's eyes, she looked away at once.

Mr. Buddle felt intrigued. He lifted his cup and slipped the folded fragment of paper from beneath it. Bending forward, he placed cup and saucer on the carpet beside him.

Feeling almost guilty, he assured himself that nobody was watching him. Then, keeping his hands low, behind the shelter of Mr. Drayne's back, Mr. Buddle unfolded the paper. It bore a number of words, in printed characters, in pencil. Mr. Buddle took another hasty look around, and then adjusted his glasses, bent forward, and read the words.

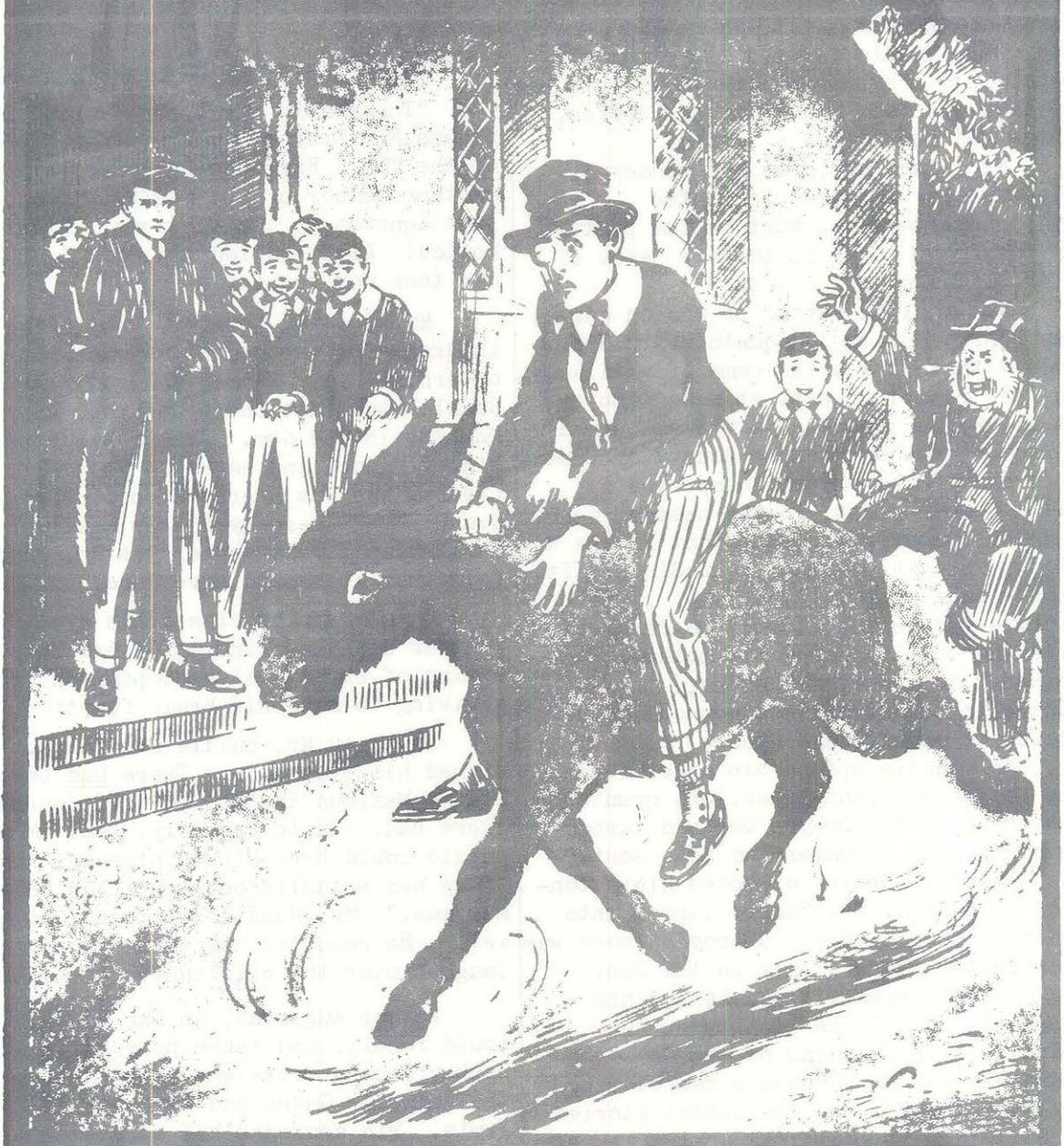
To say that he was astonished is to put it mildly.

He read: "IT'S A PICTURE OF D'ARCY MAXIMUS."

The GEM 2^D

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

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D'ARCY MAXIMUS ARRIVES!

(A startling incident from the Amusing Grand Long Complete School Story of the Famous Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, contained in this issue.)

Mr. Buddle sat, quite puzzled, staring at the strange sentence.

"IT'S A PICTURE OF D'ARCY MAXIMUS."

Why on earth had anyone conveyed to him so strange a message, and in so surreptitious a manner?

Only a moment's thought was necessary for Mr. Buddle to feel assured that the note came from Scarlet of the Sixth - and clearly Mrs. Scarlet had been a party to the plan. It was really most odd. Mr. Buddle screwed the piece of paper into a ball, and thrust it into his pocket. He took a gulp of his coffee, which had now cooled a little.

He closed his eyes and pondered. The picture, referred to in the mysterious message, must be the picture on the front cover of the new issue of "The Sladeian."

But what on earth, or who on earth, was D'Arcy Maximus? Something told Mr. Buddle that it was the name of a village. He felt positive that, at some time or other, he had heard of a village named D'Arcy, somewhere in the county of Essex.

But if the picture comprised a village scene, how, in the name of wonder, had the rumour got around that it was a picture of the Headmaster of Slade? It didn't make sense. Also, why, if the picture was so innocuous, had Pinky-Mi, with the connivance of his mother, bothered to convey the message to Mr. Buddle in so secretive a manner. Once again, it didn't make sense.

Mr. Buddle opened his eyes, finished his coffee and sandwiches, and grunted something at Mr. Drayne who had turned round to make a comment of some sort.

When Mr. Drayne directed his attention elsewhere, Mr. Buddle lapsed into meditation once more. D'Arcy! There was a character named D'Arcy in the Gem. Mr. Buddle's eyes gleamed behind his glasses. He felt he was nearer the solution. The reading of the Gem each Wednesday was Mr. Buddle's secret vice. He loved the Gem and the school stories of St. Jim's it contained - and Pinky-Mi was one of the very few people who knew of Mr. Buddle's weakness in that direction.

Mr. Buddle clicked his tongue softly. He decided that the D'Arcy of the strange message must be the D'Arcy of the St. Jim's stories. Pinky-Mi's plan was not without its aspect of cleverness. He must have felt sure that the hidden meaning of the message would be clear to Mr. Buddle, but if, by some mishap, the note had fallen into the hands of anyone else, it would have no meaning at all for that person.

"IT'S A PICTURE OF D'ARCY MAXIMUS."

"Invariably I get mine hard-boiled." It was Mr. Drayne's voice. The Master of the Third Form was in conversation with another member of the staff. "The cook just ignores my instructions. Light-boiled! Light-boiled indeed! I could use them for rockery stones."

Mr. Buddle, however, was taking no interest for the moment in what was going on around him. D'Arcy Maximus! Mr. Buddle knew that there was no D'Arcy Maximus in the Gem. Arthur Augustus was D'Arcy Major, and he had a younger brother who was D'Arcy Minor. Then whom did Pinky-Mi mean by D'Arcy Maximus? It still didn't make sense, yet Mr. Buddle felt that it should have done.

Once again he closed his eyes. The chatter and the clinking of crockery made a kind of orchestral accompaniment to his striving to make his brain function.

Suddenly Mr. Buddle stiffened. He opened his eyes wide. There had been a D'Arcy Maximus in the Gem. Of course there had. Quite recently, too. Mr. Buddle could have kicked himself. The story had actually been entitled "D'Arcy Maximus." Mr. Buddle remembered it quite well. He recalled how he had laughed and laughed over the brilliant little tale.

Arthur Augustus, so far as Mr. Buddle could recall, had taken possession of a donkey from a brute who was ill-treating the animal. Gussy had taken it to St. Jim's. His comrades had chipped him over the affair, and the donkey had been nicknamed "D'Arcy Maximus."

"D'Arcy Maximus" was a donkey.

Pinky-Mi had managed to convey the message, and the penny had dropped at last. It could only mean one thing. It was a picture of the humble, harmless, and necessary donkey which was to adorn the cover of the new issue of the school magazine, out to-morrow. Just why and how Shannon, the enterprising editor, had acquired a picture of a donkey, Mr. Buddle did not know or care. He was certain now that, however inappropriate it might be, a picture of a donkey was the subject for that new magazine cover. And somehow Mr. Crayford had obtained the idea that it was to be a picture of Mr. Scarlet, Headmaster of Slade, on that cover. The whole thing was utterly ludicrous.

Involuntarily, Mr. Buddle gave a little gurgle of amusement. Mr. Drayne turned round in surprise, and Mr. Buddle turned the gurgle into a cough.

As the full enormity of the thing came home to him, Mr. Buddle flushed. Somebody, obviously, knew that a donkey was the subject of the magazine's cover picture, and, with a shocking lack of respect for authority, had spread the story that a picture of the Headmaster was on the cover. Mr. Buddle's scanty hair almost stood on end at the thought of what Mr. Scarlet's reactions would be if he learned the truth. Surely Shannon, the editor of the magazine, so strongly recommended for the position by Mr. Buddle himself, could not have been irresponsible enough to disseminate such a tale through the school - a tale which would make a laughing stock of the Headmaster. With characteristic obstinacy, Mr. Buddle refused to admit to himself that Shannon could have been at the root of the dissemination.

Mr. Buddle almost shuddered. One thing was certain. If Shannon were guilty, and the Headmaster learned the facts, it would be the end of Shannon's editorship of "The Sladeian." More than likely, it would be the end also, of Shannon's career at Slade. There would be no place in the school for any fellow who made a fool of the Headmaster.

Mrs. Scarlet had long left the Common Room. Crockery had been collected and stacked on the trolley, now pushed to the side of the room. Refreshment time was over. It only remained for Mr. Scarlet to close the meeting, and it was clear that he was about to do just that.

So far Mr. Crayford had said nothing about the magazine, and Mr. Buddle prayed inwardly that he would not. But looking across the room at Crayford, Mr. Buddle noted an impish expression on the games master's face - and Mr. Buddle feared the worst.

For a moment he had the instinct to approach Crayford, whisper the truth to him, and urge silence, but he hesitated. If Crayford knew what Mr. Buddle believed to be the truth, he might still seize the chance of trying to destroy Shannon and embarrassing the Headmaster at the same time. So Mr. Buddle sat tight, and hoped for the best.

Mr. Scarlet was on his feet, resting his finger-tips on the table before him. He spoke genially.

"It has been a most pleasant assembly, gentlemen. I thank you for your attendance." It was the normal formula. "We shall meet once again before the summer vacation is upon us. Is there anything further before I declare the meeting closed? Well, Mr. Crayford?"

Mr. Crayford had risen. He darted a swift glance in Mr. Buddle's direction, and then faced Mr. Scarlet.

"Only a word, Headmaster! I understand, sir, that your picture is on the cover of the school magazine which is due out to-morrow," said the games master smoothly.

There was an astonished buzz in the room. Some masters were standing, others were still seated, but all eyes were on Crayford. Mr. Buddle seemed to feel himself turning green with mortification and dismay.

"Extraordinary!" ejaculated Mr. Fromo.

Mr. Scarlet was staring at the games master in utter amazement. He spoke, with words crisply articulated:

"You understand what?"

Crayford shifted a trifle uneasily under the stony glare from the Head of Slade, but he still spoke calmly.

"You have allowed a photograph of yourself to appear on the cover of 'The Sladeian,' Headmaster. It is an unusual gesture, but, as I said to Mr. Buddle, it is democratic on your part."

Again that excited buzz through the room. Every master, with the exception of Mr. Buddle, was on his feet now. Mr. Scarlet eyed the games master with cold appraisal.

He said: "I do not understand you, Crayford. You surely must be aware that I would never, under any circumstances, allow my own likeness to feature on the cover of any magazine."

"Indeed, sir?" Mr. Crayford looked embarrassed, but Mr. Buddle, watching him, guessed that it was simulated.

"Then I can only conclude, Headmaster, that Shannon has used a photograph of yourself without your permission."

There was a breathless silence in the Staff Common Room, but Mr. Buddle detected lurking grins on the faces of several masters standing furthest away from the Headmaster's table. Mr. Lidbetter was smiling openly and contemptuously. Mr. Fromo, by the Headmaster's side, looked horrified.

"Extraordinary!" repeated Mr. Fromo, parrot-like.

Mr. Scarlet had stood in silence for a moment or two. Now he spoke again, with icy dignity:

"Please make yourself clear, Mr. Crayford. Have you assumed for one moment that I would allow my likeness to appear on the cover of a magazine produced by the boys of this college?"

Mr. Crayford turned a little pink.

"Indeed, no, sir! It seemed most unlikely. But as it is the talk of the entire school --"

"What!" Mr. Scarlet rapped out the word. "You say it is the talk of the entire school. In that case, other masters must be aware of it." He turned from Mr. Crayford, and faced the rest of the staff. "Has any other gentleman

heard anything of this somewhat incredible story?"

There was a general shaking of heads. A murmur of negatives. Faces showed blankness, surprise, thinly-veiled amusement. Mr. Buddle sat tight.

Mr. Scarlet said sourly: "I thought not."

Crayford had lost his urbanity now. He spoke impetuously.

"You'll find out to-morrow, when you see yourself on the cover of 'The Sladeian.' Mr. Buddle knows about it, Mr. Scarlet."

"Mr. Buddle?"

The Headmaster's gaze swept to the back of the room.

He said impatiently: "Are you able to interpret Mr. Crayford's exact meaning, Mr. Buddle?"

Mr. Buddle rose to his feet. He breathed hard. Grim of face, he walked to the front of the room. He knew, only too well, what was on the cover of the new issue of the magazine. It seemed to him now that Shannon must have been guilty of the utmost stupidity in involving the Head of Slade in a tasteless jest. He had to fight either to save Shannon from the results of his stupidity or to save Mr. Crayford from the results of his ill-nature. But Mr. Buddle had already decided to fight for Shannon. If Mr. Crayford came a cropper in the process, then so much the worse for Mr. Crayford.

Mr. Scarlet said, a little more patiently this time:

"Can you clarify Crayford's remarks, Mr. Buddle?"

Mr. Buddle replied casually: "Mr. Crayford, sir, told me earlier this evening that Shannon had placed a picture of yourself on the cover of the magazine. I told him he could rest assured that such was not the case."

Mr. Scarlet looked from Mr. Buddle to Mr. Crayford and back.

"Mr. Buddle is pitifully biased in favour of Shannon," said Mr. Crayford hotly. "I have every reason for believing that the boy has used a photograph of the Headmaster on the cover of the magazine."

"And I," yapped Mr. Buddle, "am quite certain that he had done nothing of the sort."

"You have had an advance view of the cover, Mr. Buddle?" interposed Mr. Scarlet.

"No, Headmaster! I am speaking from my personal knowledge of Shannon's character. He would never dream of using a photograph of yourself without asking your permission. I suggested to Crayford earlier this evening that it is unwise to listen to chance comments which he may hear passed between a few senior boys. He is liable to misinterpret them, as I feel sure he has done in this case. I repeat that suggestion to him now."

Mr. Crayford was about to make a sharp rejoinder, but Mr. Scarlet lifted his hand and waved him down.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, do not let us lose our sense of proportion." The Headmaster, to Mr. Buddle's surprise, had a benign smile on his face. "If Shannon has actually placed a portrait of myself on the cover of 'The Sladeian,' he has acted thoughtlessly. I feel, however, that we must take it as a compliment that he desired to do so. It is some proof of the esteem and respect with which he regards his Headmaster. Shannon, if he has used my photograph, must have taken that photograph himself. He is an excellent photographer, I believe, Mr. Buddle?"

Mr. Buddle did not speak. He felt bereft of words. Crayford was scowling, annoyed that his malicious little charge of dynamite was turning out to be a damp squib. But Mr. Buddle, who knew more than Crayford, was appalled.

Mr. Scarlet, raising his eyebrows a trifle, repeated his question.

"I asked you, Mr. Buddle, whether Shannon is not considered a first-class photographer."

Mr. Buddle pulled himself together.

"Yes, sir, first-class!" he agreed.

"Quite!" Mr. Scarlet nodded happily. "Shannon has given us some splendid photographic studies of his own on the cover of the school magazine. I recall his brilliant picture of my

favourite rose. If Shannon has taken a photograph of myself, I feel sure that it must be a good one, for he seems to have a gift in that direction."

There were murmurs of approval in the room, and a few sly smiles. Mr. Crayford was gnawing his lower lip. Mr. Buddle stood motionless, doing nothing, saying nothing. There seemed to be nothing to do or say.

Mr. Scarlet was speaking again.

"Shannon is an ingenuous lad. He wishes this photograph of myself to come as a surprise to the school. We will not spoil his pleasure, gentlemen, by letting him know in advance that we are aware of what he has done. He has planned a surprise. It shall come as a surprise. On that happy note, gentlemen, I declare this meeting closed."

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Twenty minutes later, Mr. Buddle stood alone in his study. He felt shattered by the unexpected turn events had taken. He hardly knew whether to laugh or to cry.

After the meeting, he had found Pinky-Mi awaiting him in his study. The two had conferred. The initial urge of both was to murder Shannon at dead of night. But a mutual detestation of Crayford caused them to decide that Shannon, though guilty of thoughtlessness, was more sinned against than sinning.

"Shannon's an ass," said Pinky-Mi indignantly, "but he meant no real harm. What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve. My father would never had known anything about it if it hadn't been for Mr. Crayford trying to stir up trouble."

Mr. Buddle perforce had to agree with those sentiments. After Pinky-Mi had gone, Mr. Buddle, alone with his thoughts, came to the decision that there was nothing he could do in the matter, and that there was no sense in worrying unduly concerning what course events might take.

Mr. Buddle went to bed. It seemed

appropriate that he should take with him the Gem containing that amusing story "D'Arcy Maximus." Just occasionally, as he chuckled his way through that pleasant tale, his mind turned aside to Mr. Scarlet and Mr. Crayford. He wondered what they would think when they saw the new issue of "The Sladeian" the next morning.

Not unnaturally, the affair caused a sensation throughout the school. The seniors cast dignity on one side and their laughter was loud and long. The juniors shrieked with merriment as one man. The members of the staff, who would have known nothing of the joke but for Mr. Crayford, laughed loudest of all - and each master was thankful not to be in Crayford's shoes. Slade rocked over it, from stem to stern.

That morning, in the break after the first session, Peter-Roy Shannon had hurried to his study on the Sixth-Form corridor. There, as he expected, he found the two large parcels of newly-printed school magazines. Hastily he cut the cord, dragged aside the outer wrappings, and took out the top copy.

There it was, under the title "THE SLADEIAN" in old-English lettering. The donkey gazed out soulfully from the cover. Under the splendid picture was printed: "Photographed near Slade College" and the signature Peter-Roy Shannon. In other circumstances, Shannon would have taken some time to live down that caption.

Bitterly regretting that he had ever had the bright idea of using the donkey on his current cover, Shannon made the best of a bad job, and hurried with the copy of the magazine to the Headmaster's study. It was a rule that the first copy of each new issue should be taken to Mr. Scarlet before general distribution took place.

Hoping against hope that the Headmaster would be absent, Shannon tapped on the door and entered. Mr. Scarlet

was there, seated at his desk.

"The new magazine, sir!" said Shannon.

"Ha! Shannon!" remarked Mr. Scarlet. He smiled pleasantly rose to his feet, and took the copy from the senior. "Some more pearls of wisdom, I'm sure, from our inimitable editor."

Shannon managed a sickly smile. He had himself in hand. If nature had given him short weight when brains were dished out, he did not lack nerve. He needed that nerve now.

Mr. Scarlet donned his glasses, and scanned the cover. The pleasant, anticipatory smile froze on the Headmaster's face. His eyes were glued on that glorious picture of Neddy.

"All right, I hope, sir," ventured Shannon.

Mr. Scarlet looked up. He gazed glassily at the schoolboy editor. He said nothing.

"Thank you, sir," said Shannon. "Good morning, sir."

He turned, opened the door. Every moment he expected the clap of thunder. It did not come. Shannon departed, and the door closed.

Again Mr. Scarlet gazed down at the cover of "The Sladeian." With tight lips and grim brow he stared hard at the picture of the humble donkey on the cover of the magazine.

"Upon my word!" muttered Mr. Scarlet.

He pressed a bell button on the wall, and dispatched a servant to fetch Mr. Crayford. Five minutes ticked away while Mr. Scarlet stood, stiff as a ramrod, by his desk.

Mr. Crayford entered at last. The handsome young games master looked just a trifle anxious. Without a word, Mr. Scarlet pointed to the cover of the school magazine.

Mr. Crayford bent forward. He scanned the cover. He jumped. He looked up at the Headmaster. He looked again at the picture of Neddy. A red flush started at Mr. Crayford's temple and spread down to his neck. Then, involuntarily, he gave a little snigger. He checked it. Helplessly, he sniggered

again. The snigger became a laugh, and perspiration rolled down his cheeks.

Mr. Scarlet spoke in a grinding voice.

"If you will tell me the joke, Crayford, we will laugh together."

The urge to laugh left Crayford as suddenly as it had come. The colour fled from his face, leaving him pale and sickly.

He said huskily: "Headmaster --"

"Last evening," said Mr. Scarlet, his voice vibrating with barely suppressed anger, "you informed the school staff that my photograph was to appear on the cover of this magazine. This morning - I find - this!"

"They said -- I thought --" Crayford was confused and stammering.

"It was a premeditated insult to the Headmaster of this school," said Mr. Scarlet evenly. "Crayford, you know without my telling you that I have no alternative but to ask for your immediate resignation."

For a moment Mr. Crayford's head swam. The last thing he wanted was to lose his comfortable, well-paid post in a school like Slade. Deeply, he regretted his cleverness of the previous evening.

"Sir, please allow me to speak!" He was floundering. "I never knew - I had no idea - I beg your pardon most sincerely--"

"I assume," said Mr. Scarlet, interrupting ruthlessly, "that you had seen this picture and knew that it was to be printed on the cover of the school magazine - that the idea occurred to you to make an unseemly and intolerable jest involving the Headmaster of Slade. Such childishness is incredible in a man in your position. You will leave Slade to-day."

Crayford stared at him aghast. All the bombastic self-assurance of the games master had evaporated now.

He said nervously: "I never saw the picture till now, sir. I had no idea it was to be a picture of an - an animal. Some of the seniors were saying that your picture was on the cover.

Those young devils --"

"What! Control your language in my presence, Crayford!"

"Shannon must have spread the tale around," groaned Crayford.

"I do not believe for one moment that Shannon spread such a tale around, Crayford. Even were he sufficiently disrespectful, he would know only too well that anything of the sort would entail serious consequences for himself. Certainly someone saw the picture, and was guilty of this revolting jest. That someone, Crayford, was you!"

"It was not I, sir," muttered Crayford miserably. "I only did what I felt was my duty at the staff meeting last evening."

"Nonsense!" barked Mr. Scarlet.

Crayford tried to recapture a shred of dignity.

"Couldn't you scrap the whole issue of the magazine, sir? Shannon won't distribute them till mid-day. Couldn't you have every copy destroyed?"

Mr. Scarlet gave a snort of impatience.

"Don't be absurd, Crayford! You are well aware that if I ban this issue it will only accentuate this ridiculous jest. To prohibit the publication of this picture would make a sensation which would never be forgotten. It would even appear that I took the matter seriously. If there is any truth in what you say --"

"It's the truth, sir," hissed Crayford.

"Do not raise your voice!" said Mr. Scarlet contemptuously. "If it's the truth, then you are abysmally stupid - and there is no place on my staff for anyone with such a failing. You may leave my study."

"Please, sir -- this injustice --"

"Leave my study!" rapped out Mr. Scarlet.

And Mr. Crayford left the study.

.

At mid-day, the copies of that memorable issue of "The Sladeian" were distributed. And, as we have observed before, Slade rocked from stem to stern.

Lower School boys shrieked and kicked up their heels. Staid seniors hooted with laughter. Even the prefects gave dignified smiles in public and loud guffaws in private. Thanks to Crayford, the staff joined in the joke. Most masters believed that Crayford, having discovered in advance the subject for the cover, had tried to be funny at the expense of the Headmaster.

Mr. Crayford himself made diligent enquiries through Upper School, but without success. He was too late. The Sixth Form, having had a few hours advance warning of what had happened, closed its ranks. As Mr. Crayford questioned first one and then another, he found that he was going round in circles. Everybody had heard the rumour from somebody else, but there was no hint as to who had started the story.

Shannon, all innocence, reminded the games-master that the subject for the cover was never disclosed in advance. Oh, yes, Shannon agreed - it was just possible that somebody might have seen the original photograph of the donkey lying on his desk and might have guessed its destination. But it might have been anybody.

And when a fellow like Shannon puts self-preservation before a strict regard for the truth, there is nothing much that the Mr. Crayfords of this world can do about it.

Mr. Crayford was weary and without hope when he reached Carslake of the Fifth.

"Yes, certainly somebody told me that the Head's mug was to be on the cover," assented Carslake. "I can't remember who it was. After all, everybody was talking about it. Wait a minute, surely it was you who told me first, sir!"

"Me?" ejaculated Crayford.

"Yes, of course it was you," babbled Carslake happily. "At the nets. Don't you remember?"

In despair, Mr. Crayford left it at that, and the school went joyfully on

its way.

Late in the afternoon, a lugubrious Mr. Crayford sought out Mr. Buddle in his study.

"Old Pink has given me the sack," mumbled the games master.

Mr. Buddle knitted his brows. He rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"A man who sets out to make a fool of his employer is playing with fire," he observed. "You have a spiteful nature, Crayford. I have warned you before that one day it would be your undoing."

"I never knew it was a donkey on the cover," muttered Crayford. "I just thought Old Pink would be mad at his picture being used. I can't even find out who started it all."

Mr. Buddle smiled faintly.

"I don't want to leave Slade," said Crayford wretchedly. "It wasn't my fault, but Old Pink isn't in a mood to see reason. Can't you do something to help me, Buddle? I remember Old Pink gave you the sack once."

"Quite so - but the circumstances were very different from this. And you may recall, Crayford, that when I asked for your support on that occasion, you refused it," said Mr. Buddle.

Crayford stood silent. He was at the end of his tether or he would never have approached his old rival.

"I'm sorry for you. I can say that!" said Mr. Buddle at last. "I doubt whether anything I could say to Mr. Scarlet would cause him to alter his decision."

"You could try," said Crayford in a low voice. "It wouldn't cost you anything."

Mr. Buddle's brows were knitted. Crayford was the one member of the staff whom he disliked intensely. Mr. Buddle believed that Slade would be a better place without Crayford. But the little English master had a kind heart, and he was the last man to kick another when he was down.

He said slowly: "I will have a word with Mr. Scarlet. I can't promise anything, but I will do my best."

Ten minutes later Mr. Buddle was with the Headmaster, in the latter's study. Mr. Scarlet's expression was grim.

"I understand that Crayford is leaving us, Headmaster," said Mr. Buddle tentatively.

"Well?"

The monosyllable did not sound encouraging, but Mr. Buddle stuck to his guns.

"It is not my place to question your decisions, sir," said Mr. Buddle. "You are the Head of Slade, and you know what is best for the school. But do you think it is wise to discharge Crayford under these circumstances?"

"Wise, Mr. Buddle?" Mr. Scarlet leaned back in his chair, and put the tips of his fingers together. He did not sound quite so autocratic as usual, and Mr. Buddle wondered whether he might have had second thoughts over his earlier decision. "I shall be glad to hear your views."

"Crayford is young and inexperienced," said Mr. Buddle, speaking slowly. "Nevertheless, I feel sure that he had no knowledge of what actually was on the cover of the school magazine. He really believed that Shannon had used a photograph of yourself, Headmaster."

"The man was guilty of exhibitionism," snapped Mr. Scarlet.

"That is true, Headmaster," said Mr. Buddle. "But most young people are exhibitionists in one form or another. It is certain that someone had advance knowledge of the subject matter of the cover picture, and made an absurd joke about it to Crayford. He was taken in, as the saying goes. He believed what he said last night, whatever his motives may have been."

Mr. Scarlet looked curiously at the English master.

"You think that we should enquire further into the matter, Mr. Buddle?"

Mr. Buddle shook his head.

"No, sir! It will be wiser to ignore it. Certain seniors were obviously parties to this unseemly jest, and, with seniors concerned in the matter, it would be extremely difficult to trace the matter

to its source. It would cause undesirable sensation in the school. The same thing applies, in my view, to the dismissal of Crayford. It would be far better to ignore what has happened, and it will soon die a natural death."

Mr. Scarlet cleared his throat. He tapped on his desk, his brows creased in thought.

"You have a high opinion of Crayford, Mr. Buddle?" he asked.

"No sir! I dislike Crayford. He is the one man on the staff with whom I can seldom pull. All the same, I feel it would be a mistake to dispense with his services as a result of this absurd prank. That is all I have to say, sir."

Mr. Scarlet rose to his feet, and moved to the door. He opened it courteously for Mr. Buddle.

He said: "I am inclined to agree with you, Mr. Buddle. You may send Crayford to me now."

.

So Crayford stayed at Slade. In icy tones, Mr. Scarlet intimated to the gamesmaster that, providing he eradicated "stupid exhibitionism" from his character in future, he could, if he wished, retain his post. Crayford was tempted to stand on his dignity, to tell his Chief loftily that he had another post under consideration and that nothing would induce him to remain to waste his gifts at Slade.

But prudence won the day. Mr. Crayford listened meekly to all that Mr. Scarlet had to say, and then thanked him humbly.

He never got down to thanking Mr. Buddle. Not that Mr. Buddle expected or wanted his thanks. But, at least, in the weeks of term which followed, Mr. Crayford was subdued, and it was likely to be some time before the two masters came into conflict again.

Gradually the sensation occasioned by the "Head's photograph" died down, but most fellows would cherish that special issue of "The Sladeian" for many years to come.

As for Mr. Buddle, who fought for the guilty in preference to the innocent, he had his copy of "D'Arcy Maximus" bound in cloth, with the title of the story in gold-letting on the spine. Even to this day "D'Arcy Maximus" is his favourite issue of the Gem.

The First Person

By C. H. Churchill

Readers of the Nelson Lee will, of course, remember that the majority of the old series St. Frank's stories were written in the first person, with the effect that Nipper appeared to be telling the story. It may come as a surprise to those who have never seen the pre St. Frank's stories to know that Mr. Brooks introduced this system for the first time in No. 96 published on April 7th, 1917, containing the story "Nipper's Notebook" or "The Vengeance of Parteb Singh." St. Frank's was not introduced until No. 112 and then not every week until No. 128 onwards.

During this period (No. 96 to No. 128) a number of non St. Frank's stories were published written in the first person or, if you like, by Nipper. I will not enter here into the pros and cons of the merits of the two systems. Some prefer one, some the other. My own choice would be those "narrated throughout by Nipper" but I know that many people do not like this type of story. I thought, however, it would be of interest to quote the "Introduction" which appeared before chapter one in No. 96. Here it is, --

INTRODUCTION

"Nipper comes to a momentous decision."

Nelson Lee's consulting-room was quiet and peaceful. The hour was just eleven o'clock p.m. and the clock on the mantelpiece had only a second before announced the fact in a slow, musical voice. The electric lights were switched on, and a cheerful fire blazed in the grate.

A big easy chair was drawn up before the fire, and within it lolled Nelson Lee, lazily pulling at a cigar, and scanning the evening paper. The famous criminologist was attired in dressing-gown and slippers, and he certainly looked extremely comfortable. As a matter of fact, he was extremely comfortable.

The clock ticked quietly, and this was the only sound except for the occasional rustle of Lee's newspaper.

The detective was not the only occupant of the room, however. Nipper, Nelson Lee's young assistant, was seated at the table, his elbows reposing gracefully upon Lee's blotting-pad, and his chin, in turn, reposing in his two palms.

Nipper was reading, too, for a book lay on the table - a cloth-covered "shilling edition." The lad was very quiet, and had been quiet for some little time. He and his famous master were indulging in a little ease after a rather strenuous day.

Suddenly, however, the quietness was disturbed.

A grunt came from Nipper - a grunt of impatience and disgust. The next second his book came flying across the room, its pages fluttering wildly, and the volume landed with a smack upon Nelson Lee's opened newspaper. There was a tear, and the book went clean through the newsheet.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Lee, starting up.

"Sorry, gov'nor," said Nipper with a grin. "I didn't know you were there!"

"Upon my soul, Nipper, what are you playing at?" demanded Nelson Lee, turning his head and frowning. "Didn't know I was here! And, in any case, what do you mean by wildly hurling your book across the room?"

Nipper twisted round in his chair.

"I'm fed up!" he said impatiently.

"I'm not surprised - you demolished enough supper, at all events!" declared Lee tartly.

"I mean I'm fed up with that rotten book!" growled Nipper. "Fed up to the giddy neck. I've never read such piffle in my life!"

"If you are dissatisfied with the story that is no reason why you should throw it at me!" was Lee's reply. "If you want to vent your spite on somebody throw the book at the author - he is the guilty party, I should judge."

"Guilty! He ought to be hung, drawn, and quartered!"

Nelson Lee could not help smiling.

"I am afraid you are rather severe, Nipper," he said. "What has the poor man done? I believe you selected the book yourself, now I come to think of it. The cover, at all events, is attractive."

"It's supposed to be a detective story, Guv'nor," explained Nipper. "I'll bet the chap who wrote it never met a real live detective in his natural existence! I've been trying to get the hang of the plot for hours, and it's so complicated that I'm in a blessed maze all the time."

"Perhaps your intelligence is at fault, young 'un?" suggested Lee.

"My intelligence!" grunted Nipper. "I'll bet the author himself couldn't make head or tail of the thing! It's simply a mass of wild rubbish from start to finish. I didn't wade through to the finish, though."

"Then you oughtn't to pass sentence-"

"Have a good look at the book yourself, gov'nor!" growled Nipper. "The detective in it - the bang-up, go-ahead private crime investigator - is about as senseless as my left slipper. He doesn't see clues which stare him in the face. The story's piffle in every page!"

"My dear lad, don't get excited about it."

"I'm wild!" said Nipper. "I thought the yarn was going to be a ripper, and I meant to compare this fiction-detective's methods with yours. But that's impossible. The author ought to be suppressed."

Nelson Lee picked up his torn newspaper.

"Moral: Don't buy any more of his books," he said leisurely.

"I jolly well won't," was Nipper's reply. "Why, I could write a better detective yarn than that myself. I've got heaps of real material to go at, anyhow. Some of our adventures would beat this stuff into fits."

"Oh, you could write a better yarn yourself, Nipper?"

"Yes, I could!"

"Then why not try?" suggested Lee, drily.

"Eh?"

"Why not become a full-blown author yourself, my lad?" went on the detective. "If you are so certain of your capabilities - I don't like to call it boasting - you should prove your words."

"Who's boasting?" demanded Nipper warmly.

"Didn't you say that you could write a detective story?"

"Yes, I did. And I will, too!" declared Nipper decidedly. "I'll write up one of our cases, and if I don't make a better job of it than this chap I'll - I'll admit that I'm a duffer!"

"That will be something novel, at all events!" murmured Lee.

Nipper got up from his chair, and paced the consulting-room. There was a tense expression upon his face, and he was obviously suffering from inward excitement. His master's suggestion, uttered in jest, had impressed Nipper greatly.

For ten minutes Nipper paced the room, then he came to a halt before Nelson Lee's chair. There was an eager light in his eyes.

"I'll start right away, gov'nor!" he exclaimed intently.

"Eh?" Lee laid down his paper. "You'll start, Nipper?"

"Yes. I've come to a momentous decision," replied Nipper. "I'm going to write up a kind of journal in my leisure time. I'm going to set down some of our most exciting and mysterious cases. I've got heaps of notes packed away, and I'll choose the adventures in which I took a pretty prominent part. I'll show you whether I was boasting, gov'nor!"

And so the die was cast.

From that hour "Nipper's Notebook" came into being.

Note:- The following pages will prove very conclusively that Nipper was not bragging when he declared that he would write some exciting and mysterious detective stories. All the episodes are worked up from notes which either he or Nelson Lee took at the times of the actual adventures. Nipper's yarns in his journal are surprisingly well put together, and only require a slight amount of knocking into shape. My task of editing the journal, and preparing the tales for publication, has been - and is - a light and pleasant one. - Author.

End of introduction in No. 96

I think the idea of "Nipper's Notebook" was for it to be a reply to "Tinker's Notebook" which was appearing in the Union Jack round about this time. It was a much bigger thing of course and was to lead to all stories being written in the first person until September 1924 when the system was changed and Lee and Nipper left St. Frank's for a spell to chase up Professor Zingrave. This idea was unpopular, of course - anyone would have known this except the person who thought of it - and they had to be brought back to St. Frank's in about six months. The stories, however, continued to be written in the third person from then on.

Quite a number of stories after No. 96 written in the first person (both St. Frank's and non-St. Frank's) contained chapters not written "by Nipper" but by Nelson Lee, Eileen Dare, Sir Montie etc. I, personally, find them most attractive, with a charm of their own and rather out of the ordinary.

In case anyone should be interested, here are the stories from No. 96 to No. 128 which were in the first person, -

- No. 96. "Nipper's Note Book" or "The Vengeance of Parteb Singh."
- No. 97. "The Manor House Mystery."
- No.100. "The Clue of the Twisted Ring."
- No.103. "The Sheriff of Blazing Gulch."
- No.105. "The Ivory Seekers."
- No.109. "The Case of the Crimson Feathers."
- No.110. "The Affair of the Duplicate Door."
- No.111. "The Yellow Shadow."
- No.117. "The Clue of the Decoy Letter" or "The Hidden Warning."
- No.119. "The City of Burnished Bronze."

- No.121. "The Circle's Great Coup."
 No.123. "The Island Stronghold."
 No.124. "The Compact of Three."
 No.127. "The Underground Fortress."

Plus, of course, all the St. Frank's stories included between these numbers.

I trust any reader has found my little dip into the past interesting and that he enjoyed reading again the smooth and familiar phraseology of Mr. Brooks.

* * * * *

W A N T E D : Boys' Cinema 1919 - 1921; School Friend 1919 - 1921;
 Schoolgirls' Own Libraries 1st Series; Holiday Annual 1922, 1934-1941.

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W A N T E D : Magnets for binding; complete series 1927 onwards. Also
 Boys' Friends, Rio Kid and King of Islands stories.

KEN HUMPHREYS, 9, NOTTINGHAM ROAD, HUCKNALL, NOTTINGHAM.

W A N T E D : Pre-war copies of CHAMPION, TOPICAL TIMES and PUCK.

HEARN, 191, ARBURY ROAD, CAMBRIDGE.

W A N T E D : Hobbies Weekly No. 27 (April, 1896) to No. 1420 (Dec. 1922). Also
 all issues for years 1940 thru' 1945. Schoolgirls' Own Library No. 86 -
 The Guardians of the Castle, No. 181 - Custodians of the Caves; both by Hilary
 Marlow.

HOPKINS, 129 SHARDELOES ROAD, LONDON, S.E. 14.

W A N T E D : CHAMPION ANNUALS 1923, 1924.

HANSON, 68 HUMPHREY LANE, URMSTON, NR. MANCHESTER.

Three Cheers for the Thomson Papers

by J. R. SWAN

Many readers in the past have commented on the lack of articles appearing in C.D. on such papers as the WIZARD, HOTSPUR, SKIPPER, ROVER and ADVENTURE.

They were well known to the trade and readers as 'THE FAMOUS FIVE:' so the other group of the same name who appeared in the MAGNET can hardly claim to hold the exclusive copyright of the name!

Although I have in my bookcase at home bound volumes and loose issues of the MAGNET from 1930 until the end, I must admit that many times I get a trifle bored with reading about that paragon of virtue - Harry Wharton and his gang of incorruptibles! Then of course there was that Fat Owl of the Remove who scoffed grub up and down the studies, was kicked from pillow to post, and must have irritated readers at times for his overwelcome presence in the stories. Even the very few GEMS that I have show D'Arcy as an outdated fop from Regency times! How on earth young boys understood his lisp has always been a complete mystery to me. I suppose that I must have grown up with it. I took the GEM each week from 1927 until the final issue.

THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY - or surely it should have been called THE ST. FRANK'S LIBRARY because Nelson Lee played such a minor part in it - does not also escape my criticism. What an egotistical character was Edward Oswald Handforth who seemingly dominated the stories. A close relation of that other chump of Greyfriars, Horace Coker, if ever there was one - or maybe a blood brother! Any such person in real life would have been brained with a cricket bat at once if he ever attended our old school!

But don't take me too seriously, Lads! I have never doubted that the above mentioned papers had good circulations in their day, or they would not have continued so long. It's logical and common sense to accept this point. But in the early 1920s a large and powerful rival entered the field of boys' story publishing. Thomson's of Dundee 'pinched' as it were hundreds of thousands of readers from the old Amalgamated Press by their new boys' papers and new style of presentation and realistic meaty tales. There is no doubt that boys wanted to read these yarns instead of the staid preaching type which the A.P. persisted with. Let us face the facts - many A.P. editors have in the past confessed that the Dundee papers caused them great concern by their own papers dwindling in circulation - and as a last resort they had to copy the Thomson style of presentation by such papers as CHAMPION, TRIUMPH, RANGER, STARTLER type.

How I personally enjoyed the stories that appeared in the WIZARD! No preaching on what was right and wrong - we had enough of this in school and Sunday school. The villains always ended up either in a sticky heap or regretting their step from virtue! The bad men also apart from having a bullet in the heart or head were eaten up by crocodiles or some other creature. Good healthy adventure stories featuring every country under the sun - that was the programme. Probably the most famous character ever to appear in the WIZARD was THE WOLF OF KABUL - a British Secret Service Agent, who operated in the North West Frontier of India. His real name was Bill Sampson, but unfortunately his blue eyes used to give him away when

THE SKIPPER

NOVEMBER 1950 - PRICE 2¢



*Watch
his eyes
follow you!*

NO-1
of
THE
GREAT
NEW
STORY
PAPER

FOR BOYS

he was disguised as a native! Still, with his twin knives and his native servant Chung they took on all comers! CHUNG was himself a colourful character, who, after surveying the battered heads of his enemies, would remark with his eyes filled with sadness, "Lord, I am full of humble sorrow - I did not mean to knock down these men - 'Clicky-ba' merely turned in my hand." "Clicky-ba" of course being his ultimate weapon! a cricket bat bound with copper and brass with some ominous reddish-brownish stains on it, through coming into contact with so many heads!

These two characters who even a giant walking statue couldn't stop are still making an appearance in the present ROVER AND WIZARD after nearly 30 years - many are reprints of course but they still make great reading for the present generation.

Do you remember WILSON? The stories of an incredible athlete who broke all the world records - when he was reputed to be nearly 120 years old! Fantastic of course, with his breathing exercises and wild roots on the Yorkshire moors - but as boys we 'lapped' it up (excuse the pun). W. O. G. Lofts told me that when he recently appeared in a T.V. programme with Chris Brasher the well known B.B.C. commentator who was formerly a great international runner (he helped to make the first sub-minute mile by assisting Dr. Bannister) Chris Brasher talked to him of nothing else but of how these stories inspired him to do great things on the track. These stories are still appearing in the Thomson papers today, and a world best-selling magazine seems interested in their popularity so I am told.

A serious rival to Sexton Blake was Dixon Hawke in the ADVENTURE and his stories ran from 1922 and are still running today in SPORTING POST - another publication of D. C. Thomson's. Copies of THE DIXON HAWKE LIBRARY (which appeared way back in 1915) are much sought by collectors today and the "CASE BOOKS" which contained dozens of short stories.

Easily the greatest school rival to Greyfriars and St. Jim's was the school stories of RED CIRCLE in the HOTSPUR. Dead-wide Dick, the school Captain. Dixie Dale the sporting master - Smuggy certainly the unpopular one! The boys were in houses - coming from all over the world. Transatlantic-House (U.S.A. Canada) Conk (Colonial House) from the British Empire. Home House - from the United Kingdom. Boys did have some resemblance to reality as they did grow up in time - and move into higher forms, unlike the Peter Pan Greyfriars and St. Jim's boys. These stories which started in the late 1930s are still appearing today.

THE BIG STIFF was another series of school stories - this being the nickname of a schoolmaster named Sempimus Green! He had an uncanny knack of taming wild boys and making them keenly interested in education! His methods were certainly unusual but he did get the results! This character must not be confused with another of the same name in the WIZARD who was a Scotland Yard detective - real name this time being Jim Ransom - who last appeared in 1962.

THE BLACK SAPPER was another long series that strikes a cord in my memory. He turned up time and time again in THE ROVER. Tales about a man in a black, tight-fitting costume who used to cause great upheaval in more ways than one. He travelled through the earth in a submarine shape burrowing machine. Often or not he used to cut right through the Underground Railway! As a young boy, in my imagination whilst waiting for a train on the tube I thought that the BLACK SAPPER might appear any minute!

Another couple of favourites was also in the ROVER - Cast-Iron Bill a wonderful goalie - and Wily Watkins the schoolboy who knew all the dodges in how to get out of things!

I should think that my favourite character in the SKIPPER was Mustard Smith - a schoolmaster who used to teach the kids of circus performers. What complications were caused when the strong man's son got naughty! Other characters in this paper which was the only war casualty were BIG BAD WOLFF: CAPTAIN ZOOM: and a great series entitled GHOST GUNS ALONG the DEADWOOD.

One could go on and on like the babbling brook about the old stories - everyone had their own particular favourite and if I have not quoted them in this article - perhaps I can enlighten you further if you contact me?

What I liked most about the papers was their approach to boys. They treated them as equals and personal friends. Editors were breezy in chats - youngish looking with cheerful faces - who wore sporting clothes and who were reputed to have travelled all round the world and knew what they were talking about. No stern preaching A.P. editors here with stiff winged collars, pin-striped suits and who you would have to call 'Sir' but someone who conducted a paper after your own heart and in your own 'boyish outlook.'

Since I first started collecting now well over 25 years ago (I don't think I ever left off since boyhood), I have received hundreds and hundreds of letters from Thomson paper collectors and enthusiasts and one would be surprised to know how many with nostalgic memories there are in our own circle. I believe I'm correct in saying that there are probably far more than the general reader would imagine.

I can remember with some amusement a writer in C.D. many years ago (Harry Homer) writing that the Thomson papers were complete muck, and he could not in his wildest imagination think that they would be collected in years to come. £2 each offered ROVERS 1935 was a recent advert in the EXCHANGE & MART which is the answer - that boys' papers will always be collected by future generations.

If I have upset one or two diehard Hamilton or Lee fans in the opening remarks in this article - well you can always come round and brain me with your cricket-bat! Seriously as an adult I well and truly appreciate the skill that Charles Hamilton put into his stories - and the writing of E.S.B. - but as a boy I must confess that the Thomson papers were certainly my meat!

W A N T E D : CHUMS Vols. 19, 20, 21.

ROWLAND STOREY, 95 PANDON COURT, SHIELDFIELD, NEWCASTLE upon TYNE, 2.

W A N T E D : DIGEST ANNUAL 1958; CHUMS 1910 and 1914.

WOOD, 367 BADDOW RD., CHELMSFORD

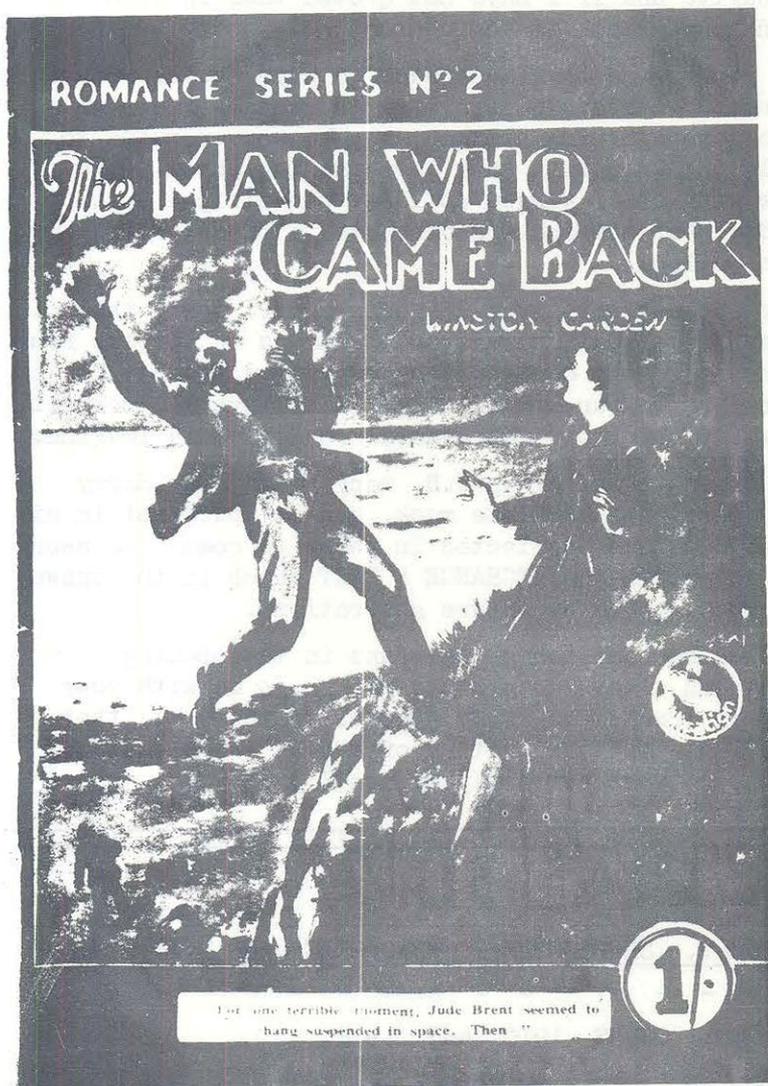
W A N T E D : The following MAGNETS to complete volume - 829, 873, 876, 877, 882, 888.

ROBERT WILSON, 100 BROOMFIELD RD., GLASGOW, N.1.

MY GREETINGS and GRATEFUL THANKS to ERIC FAYNE, (the late) BILL GANDER, HARRY, TOM, IVAN, JACK and ALL MIDLAND CLUB MEMBERS, BEN, FRANK and ALL LONDON ALBERT WATKINS, and especially HENRY WEBB. STAN KNIGHT, 288 HIGH ST. CHELTENHAM.

Cardew's Romance

By Laurie Sutton



In a "Let's Be Controversial" article published earlier this year mention was made of a series of romances written by Charles Hamilton under the pen-name of Winston Cardew.

Through the courtesy of Peter Hanger, who possesses these stories, I have recently had the opportunity of reading them. There are five titles, published by William C. Merritt in similar format to the Topham school stories. The titles are not at all the sort that we normally associate with Charles Hamilton, and are as follows:

1. Peg's Angel
2. The Man Who Came Back
3. Love Wins at Last
4. The Girl From Monte Carlo
5. For Love of a Land Girl

It is quite clear from these stories that the writing of romances was not Hamilton's strong point. The plots are very simple and very predictable, and can usually be easily anticipated in the first couple of pages. This was suitable enough for Greyfriars, where it was the author's deliberate policy to give youngsters the

sense of satisfaction in thinking they had cleverly spotted something, and where the main interest is to delight in the company of our schoolboy friends. But where the characters are strangers and hold no real interest for us an unfolding plot seems essential.

The actual romance is of a very watery nature, and hardly gets further than the Figgins and Ethel or Bob and Marjorie stage - except, of course, that the chief characters actually marry in the end. The stories hardly seem to merit a special publication, and were perhaps more suited to the inner pages of a very respectable ladies' journal. We must, of course, bear in mind that they were written twenty

years ago, at a time when it was not customary to see 12-year old schoolchildren kissing and cuddling in the streets. Nevertheless one cannot escape the conclusion that Charles Hamilton's implication that passionate love-making was a private affair and unsuitable for novels would be considered rather old-fashioned even twenty years ago.

All five of the "Romance" series follow a similar pattern. There is always a big country house owned by one or other of the lovers, and the plots can be quickly summarized:

"Peg's Angel." Peg and Grace Vernon are sisters, but have been brought up in different homes by a couple of aunts. Grace has now inherited a mansion and wealth, and Peg is about to join her and share her home. Before leaving her Aunt Agatha Peg meets Derek Compton on a cliff top. They talk, and Derek tells Peg he has a trouble on his mind - no, he is not in love, he says. When Peg reaches her sister she finds that Grace is engaged. Her fiance visits her a week later, and he naturally turns out to be Derek. After a time Derek confesses his love to Peg, and then goes away. He writes to Peg to say he will be loyal to Grace and not bother Peg again. Grace finds the letter, goes back to nursing (where she met Derek during the war) and leaves Derek to Peg.

In "The Man Who Came Back" Paula Brent's husband, Jude, is believed to have been drowned three years before, and she has promised to marry Michael Heathcote. Jude Brent reappears, having heard that his wife has inherited Cedar Court, and extorts money (he cannot appear openly as he was wanted by the police at the time of his "drowning.") Paula has a rival in Mildred Wylie, a distant relative who lives with her and who had hoped to inherit Cedar Court. Mildred spies on Paula and finds out about Jude when Paula meets him at midnight by the "Lovers Leap" (on a cliff summit). When Paula leaves Jude Mildred is seen by him. In a struggle Jude tries to push Mildred over the cliff but goes over himself. The verdict is "accidental death," Jude being partly drunk at the time.

In "Love Wins at Last" the hero meets Cynthia Caryl, who is sitting in the branches of an oak tree writing a letter. "I'm Dick Forrester...Late of the Loamshire Fusiliers," he tells her. Dick immediately falls for Cynthia (no, she doesn't fall on him) but Cynthia, as it happens, is already engaged to Dick's best friend, Sir Michael Trent, mainly because Colonel Caryl, her uncle, wants her to marry into wealth to restore the family's fading fortunes. Caryl, finally breaks off with Sir Michael and marries Dick, going with him to start a life of farming in South Africa.

"The Girl From Monte Carlo" opens in the Casino gaming rooms, where Doris Wilmot is gambling her wealth away. She retires broke, and Ronald Vane offers to help her and loans her the fare to England. He later meets her again when visiting the house of his uncle, Major Gadsby, where she is employed as a governess under the name of Miss Mitford. She had gone to Monte Carlo with a dirty devil, Marcus Monk, who said he wanted her to look after his wife, but she found out when she got there that he was single! She naturally walked out, but was afraid of what people might say or think. All Doris's prayers are in Vane, so she marries Ronald.

Derek Trent stars in "For Love of a Land Girl." Derek has known Francesca Morcom as a child, and has corresponded with her during his Army years. After the war he writes again after a lapse of time, having heard that Francesca has inherited Morcom Court. Derek gets an invitation to Morcom Court and, being wise, he promptly accepts. He loses his way, and enquires of a Land Girl working in a

potato field. (Hoe, hoe!) He tells her his story, not knowing that she is, in fact, Lady Morcom, who worked as a Land Girl during the war and still does some work on her own estate. As a result she stays away from the house for the few days in which Derek stays there, but he meets her again as a Land Girl and proposes, saying he has given up his intention of trying to wed for money. So Francesca knows that he is worthy after all.

Besides supplying William Merritt with these love stories Charles Hamilton also started off a series of detective stories of the same length as the Winston Cardew tales, though I am unaware whether the series progressed beyond the first title, "Death in the Dark." Charles Hamilton used another St. Jim's surname for his detective story pen-name, the author appearing as Michael Blake. I cannot recall any mention of Michael Blake in earlier articles in the "C.D." or other papers devoted to our hobby, and again I am indebted to Peter Hanger for the loan of the booklet.

In "Death in the Dark" the Hamiltonian touches do not appear obvious at first, and it is chiefly the names of the characters that supply the initial clues; Pawson, the butler, with his "throaty voice;" Joyce, the keeper; and, to a lesser extent, Dick Paget, the hero. One or two other clues to authorship are to be found in the dialogue. Only Charles Hamilton's police chiefs would use such expressions as "Gammon!" and "Don't be an ass!" For good measure we have a quote from Gray's Elegy ("Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife") and references to "a man in a funk" and the use of a "cudgel."

Leading characters in the story, apart from Dick Paget are Brenda Fleet (the flighty niece of Lady Button); Sir George and Lady Button (owners of Oakforest House); Marley Belcroft (a fat, lecherous millionaire); Captain Randal (a 40-year old hard-up Old Etonian). The story takes place in the house and grounds of Oakforest House, which had been sold by the Crawleys (an old county family) to a city man, Sir George Button, whom Lady Button (one of the Crawleys) married in order to keep the place in the family. The "Death" of the title is that of Belcroft, who is found dead in a wood in the grounds of the house. As Paget had left him there after felling him for his pestering of Brenda Fleet, Paget thinks himself a murderer. However, John, the footman, also had a grudge against Belcroft, as the latter had been paying attention to Angela Price (Brenda's maid).

As I don't normally read detective stories I cannot really assess the merits of "Death in the Dark" as such. There are one or two improbabilities, such as Paget's assumption that Melford was dead as a result of a punch on the jaw and presuming himself a murderer without even verifying the death. Also the rather casual behaviour of the police in the days following the murder while Lynch Grant (the Ferrers Locke) did most of the work relevant to the police. There are the usual possibilities from whom the reader may select the murderer, but no silly red herrings, and the final identity is predictable quite early.

The characters are quite well drawn, with a nice description of Lady Button:

"Only Lady Button showed little sign of stress. She was, of course, grave. But she was as acidly methodical as usual, and in spite of agitation above and below stairs, the house continued to run on smooth wheels, as it were --- a glance from the cold fish-like eyes of her ladyship was enough to recall any servant who forgot himself or herself, to a proper sense of things. Her ladyship was no longer a Crawley, but she was still County. Millionaires might come, and millionaires might go, but the County went on for ever."



Above we print a picture which is typically Macdonald and typically Hamiltonian. Two horse-drawn vehicles racing side by side along a snowy country lane. The life, the action in the picture is tremendous. You can almost hear the thunder of the horses' hoofs.

Those who are acquainted with the Boys' Friend of 1915 will be reminded irresistibly of the cover picture which Macdonald drew to illustrate the first Rookwood story. There is a great similarity between our picture and that one. On the Rookwood occasion, the Classical brake was racing with the Modern one.

The scene, as we said, is typically Hamiltonian. He always loved horse-drawn vehicles. Even in a post-war Bunter book, the star was a horse-drawn caravan.

But, in fact, the scene we reproduce is not genuinely Hamiltonian. It comes from the 1926 Christmas Number of the Gem, the story in which was written by a substitute writer. We ourselves would have thought that, even as long ago as 1926, a scene of waggonettes, brakes, traps, or horse-drawn four-wheelers, whatever they were called, was very much outdated. But it's still an attractive picture.

Macdonald did not discriminate between genuine and substitute stories, thank goodness. He drew as well for the one as for the other. We reproduce this picture in memory of one of the really great artists of the Amalgamated Press.

Females in the

by S. GORDON SWAN

Blakian Firmament

APART FROM THE LADIES who loved him, Sexton Blake has encountered many fascinating women in the course of his career. The intentions of some of them were more lethal than loving; others, while on the wrong side of the law, sometimes double-crossed their employers to aid the detective; in one instance at least a girl following the same profession was involved.

In point of time we find the Princess Lara heading this list. This lovely fugitive from an Eastern Zenana presented herself at Sexton Blake's rooms after escaping from the Seraglio Palace and created an International Situation. (Yes, they had them even in those days, nearly sixty years ago.) Blake was embarrassed and bewildered. The Princess had fled to escape marriage to the Grand Vizier, Ahmed Pasha (a gentleman of fifty-nine with three wives). She had married an English husband who was now being held as a hostage by the Turks. Seeking refuge in Blake's chambers, she remained for some time, surely the most glamorous lodger the Baker Street menage had ever known!

Lara may be included among that exclusive but extensive coterie who went for Blake in a big way. Although she had a husband, she displayed a strong predilection for her worried host, calling him her 'lord' and generally intimating that in the event of anything happening to her husband the detective appealed to her as an acceptable substitute. The Turks offered to free the husband if Lara was handed over to them, but Blake refused to give her up. The situation was only solved by Blake visiting the Sultan and pointing out that the Grand Vizier's proposed alliance with the Princess was part of a scheme to oust the ruler from power. When the husband was released and came to claim his bride Blake kept out of the way so that he would not have to say good-bye to her. It is evident that his susceptibilities were deeply touched by her proximity.

The next name on the list is that of Cora Twyford. I can find only one recorded encounter between her and Sexton Blake, just subsequent to World War I, but there were many stories of Kit and Cora Twyford published in the early twentieth century, in "Pluck" and "The Boys' Friend." Brother and sister detectives, they were a sort of John Steed and Emma Peel in their day. Cora disguised as a flower-girl and an old lady, and on one occasion impersonated a Sicilian bandit's daughter, who had shot her father and taken his place as the head of a band of revolutionaries and criminals.

In Cora's adventure with Blake, she performed some smart detective work and was instrumental in rescuing Tinker from danger. Described as dark-haired, with dark, sparkling eyes and piquant features, she was an engaging heroine of an adventurous type such as is popular to-day.

In the gallery of notorious women, Fifette Bierce ranks high for poise, glamour and sophistication. An adventuress and decoy for Leon Kestrel, the Master Mummer, she made it plain to that amazing crook that while assisting in his plans she was not by any means to be regarded as his plaything. One has to admire her for her culture and charm, in spite of her criminal proclivities.

When Kestrel bowed out of the arena of crime, Blake met a more mature Fifette once again in the company of a man known as Aarvoldt the Eel., a prototype of Houdini. That was the last heard of the polished adventuress, although her brilliant accomplice Kestrel was destined to be heard of again.

Next in sequence is another adventuress named Madame Clotilde, who had a delicately moulded face, dark eyes and a mass of dark, wavy hair crowning her white forehead. She was involved in a theft from a bank, and the chase led to Monte Carlo. Although she eluded arrest (what a number of these crooked women escaped; their creators must have had a soft spot for them!) Madame Clotilde did not return to compete again with Blake.

I cannot remember meeting another woman in the Blake saga who ran a matrimonial agency as Mercedes Dahn did. Square-shouldered, with abundant hair and dark eyes, she contrived to make a living by bringing together American millionaires and cultured English ladies. The kidnapping of a girl called Ursula de Winton brought her in contact with Sexton Blake. In this unusual story Blake enlisted the aid of an odd assistant, a baboon, to trace the missing girl. The ultimate fate of Mercedes Dahn and her matrimonial agency remains in doubt; all one knows is that she was detained by a Scotland Yard officer.

Next in sequence comes another Madame Clothilde (no connection with the previous one, except in the relationship of crime). This was one of those fascinating ladies that Anthony Skene wrote of in his elegant prose. That unique criminal, Zenith, encountered her at Smith's Kitchen, where she made advances to the albino in order to gain his co-operation in securing a certain document. Her association with Blake was brief, but notable inasmuch as she did her best to kill him. Definitely one of the lethal ladies, this Clothilde.

We are indebted to Anthony Skene also for Gloria Dene, who was known as Brown Bessie and acted as a decoy for that hideous crook Mr. Happenn, alias the Gargoyle. This "modern" girl with blue eyes, painted lips and an Eton crop, finished, audacious and alluring, brought the wrath of her boss on her head by assisting Blake.

Although she was mentioned in a succeeding story (which also introduced Zenith) Gloria Dene did not reappear -- a fact to be regretted.

Another young lady who made her appearance in two stories was Denise Drew, who carried the symbol of the Carrier Pigeon and acted as a master crook's messenger. As she appeared in conjunction with that impudent adventuress Eileen Hale, the reader was assured of a sufficiency of feminine wiles and subterfuges.

Sexton Blake met La Balafree, the Scarred Lady, when she was disguised as a nun. She was seeking the formula of a most devastating gas whose destructive properties make it sound very up-to-date. La Balafree, sometimes known as Madame Lenoir, was on a par with Milady in "The Three Musketeers." Blake addressed her as Mrs. Bond, referring to a lady who called to her ducks "Dilly-dilly, come and be killed." Deadly and dangerous, she got away at the end, and it is possible we might have heard more of her but for the untimely death of Arthur Paterson.

Here, in conclusion, it seems appropriate to mention a charming girl called Nita Caraccio, familiarly known as Red Nita. This young lady seduced Tinker into carrying a bag which contained a little present for the president of a small republic on the borders of Spain. The present proved to be of an explosive nature and Tinker found himself facing a firing-squad.

A fitting estimate of Red Nita's character may be obtained by the following

dialogue towards the end of the story.

A French police official speaking:

"Do I understand, messieurs, that mam'selle here was also a criminal?"

"No, no!" said Blake. "She merely throws bombs at presidents."

We are told that Red Nita subsequently took to aviation. It is to be hoped she did not combine her two hobbies.

Princess Lara	"The Princess Lara"	Penny Pictorial	No. 474
Cora Twyford	"The Man With Two Lives"	Union Jack	No. 803
Fifette Bierce	"The Case of the Decoy"	Union Jack	No. 825
	"The Black Boomerang"	Union Jack	No.1457 (and others)
Madame Clotilde	"The Crooks of Monte Carlo"	Union Jack	No. 908
Mercedes Dahn	"The Affair of the Talking Ape"	Union Jack	No.1187
Madame Clothilde	"The Case of the Grey Envelope"	Union Jack	No. 1276
Gloria Dene	"The Adventure of the Gargoyle's Decoy"	Union Jack	No.1307
	"The Broken Stick"	Union Jack	No.1310
Denise Drew	"The Carrier Pigeon Conspiracy"	Union Jack	No.1296
	"The Mystery of the Master Crook's Messenger"	Union Jack	No.1252
La Balafree	"The Case of The Devil's Step"	Union Jack	No.1335
Red Nita	"The Spanish Circle Conspiracy"	Detective Weekly	79

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CARDEW'S ROMANCE (continued from page 98)...

There are one or two nice descriptive passages, such as that where Inspector Plummy's garden is contemplated by Lynch Grant.

Inspector Plummy's cottage stood on the edge of Swansdon....

" He stepped to the window and looked out. The long garden glowed with nodding hollyhocks. Beyond was a leafy lane, and beyond that, the dark shadows of woods - great old oaks with mighty branches. Grant's eyes dwelt on the scene almost lovingly. He had - or believed he had - rural tastes; and the calm and quiet were delicious after the roar of London. "

At the end of the story the murderer (John) gets clean away and is never caught, which seems to indicate the measure of Charles Hamilton's sympathy for him.

I imagine few of Charles Hamilton's admirers will feel anything but grateful that the Bunter books took over from Winston Cardew and Michael Blake.

* * * * *

WANTED: Books by Stanton Hope - adult or juvenile.

D. A. LIDDELL, "GLADSTONE." BISHOPTON. RENFREWSHIRE.

THE LEAF

by CLIFF WEBB

The day had been long and hard, and I had been glad to settle in front of the fire with a copy of Magnet to keep me company. Now I had finished the story.

Outside the wintry dusk was falling. It had become too dark to read any more. I lay back in my chair, feeling warm and comfortable.

I smiled to myself as I realized Mauly must have felt like this, on that comfortable study sofa of his. No wonder his lazy lordship had preferred his ease to the rough and tumble of the Rag! Who'd have it any other way?

My thoughts turned again to the more peaceful days of yesteryear, and suddenly - sadly - I wished I could return, however briefly, to boyhood and the days when I made that first thrilling acquaintance with the chums of Greyfriars.

I must have closed my eyes, for, all at once, I found myself emerging from a leafy lane into the cobbled street of a sleepy village. It was summer-time, and the sunshine fell upon my face like a warm hand. Where I was I did not know, but I felt as if I were on very familiar ground.

As I entered the village, a large plump figure, in uniform, came my way. A policeman! But he was dressed so strangely.

For one thing, his tunic was buttoned to the throat. For another, he wore a blue and white striped band on his cuff - which I thought only London policemen wore. Heavy side-whiskers adorned his face. His tread was slow and majestic.

" 'Arternoon sir!" he boomed.

"Good afternoon constable" I replied. "Might I ask your name?"

The constable did not seem to find my question unusual.

"The name's Tozer sir."

"Tozer! Then this must be - "

"Friardale sir." He pronounced it 'Froyerdil.'

Friardale! No wonder the place had looked so very familiar. Yet it did not seem strange that I should be there.

"Oh - ah - thank you constable." I gasped. "I - I'm looking for a place where I might get a cool drink."

"Ah! That'll be just the place then sir," boomed Tozer, pointing to an old-fashioned looking grocery store further along the street.

My eyes followed his pointing finger. Sure enough, just as I expected, on the shop window were the words "Clegg, Grocer."

I could hardly believe my eyes. Yet, I felt it could not be only a dream I was having. Tozer seemed real enough, and so did the heat rising from the old cobbles.

I approached Uncle Clegg's shop in some wonder, half expecting to see the name 'Chapman' written somewhere on the wall. I was about to enter the doorway

when what I thought was an earthquake happened.

Crash! A fat figure, emerging from the shop like an express train, bowled me over before I had a chance to get out of the way. We fell to the ground with the fat one on top.

"Ow! Beast! Why don't you look where you're going?" squeaked a fat voice. It was Bunter!

"Oh gad! " The collision had been painful enough. Now I felt as if I were lying under a steamroller.

"I - gasp - I say - would you - grooh - mind getting up?" I asked faintly. Bunter struggled to his feet, moaning and gasping.

"I say, it's all that beast Cherry's fault." he squeaked. "He's going to kick me!"

"Have another, old fat bean? I - oh!"

A cheery looking youngster with fair hair had emerged from the shop. He seemed rather crestfallen to see me sitting on the pavement. He rushed to my aid and helped me to my feet.

"You'll have to excuse Bunter sir," he said. "He can't help being a clumsy ass sometimes - and he's rather shortsighted."

"That's all right." I smiled. "No bones broken! You're Cherry aren't you?"

"Yes sir. These fellows are Wharton, Nugent, Bull and Hurree Singh - we call him Inky for short."

With a wave of his hand Bob indicated the four boys who had just joined us. I recognized all of them at once.

"Awfully sorry you got knocked over sir," said Wharton. "Not hurt I hope?"

"Right as rain my boy."

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, honoured sahib." said Inky sympathetically.

Johnny Bull stepped forward.

"You see sir, Bunter invited us to Uncle Clegg's - said he'd had a tip from home," growled Johnny, glaring at the Fat Owl. "We've ordered ice-cream and pop, and now Bunter says he can't pay for it. The spoofing barrel has pulled our silly legs again - as usual!"

"We shall pay Mr. Clegg, of course," said Nugent. "But we were rather fed up with Bunter, and - "

"And you decided to teach him a lesson, eh?" I laughed.

"Ahem. Yes sir."

"Look here" I said. "Why not let me join you in the ices and pop? My treat, of course!"

"That's jolly kind of you sir" said Wharton "But - "

"Nonsense my boy! After all, I've read about you all so often in the Magnet that I feel we are old friends. It would be a pleasure to me, really."

"Well - if you put it like that sir...."

"I do!"

"Then we accept" smiled Wharton.

"Hear! Hear!"

"I say you fellows! I'm coming too!" piped Bunter, eagerly. "I - I don't think you're a clumsy old donkey sir! I wouldn't you know. I have a lot of respect for old dodderers I hope!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well! You certainly have an original way of expressing that respect Bunter," I chuckled. "But you are very welcome to join us."

"Oh, good! Gerrout of the way Inky you ass!"

Bunter led the way back into the shop, almost trampling the Famous Five underfoot in his hurry to get to the good things.

Those ices were the best I've ever tasted. As we ate them we talked of many things concerning life at Greyfriars. Quelch and his downy ways, the latest St. Jim's match, and of how Coker had been up-ended in the quad just before the excursion to Uncle Clegg's. I was particularly amused to hear that Loder's head had received a bag of soot intended for Temple of the Fourth.

Bunter said nothing. He was far too busy packing away ices.

Time passed all too quickly, but when the Famous Five rose to go they invited me to tea with them in study No. 1 at Greyfriars. I accepted with delight.

We walked to Greyfriars along leafy Friardale Lane - scene of so many happy Magnet memories. Once I saw three furtive figures behind a hedge, and caught the whiff of cigarette smoke. Skinner and Co without doubt!

At the gates of the school old Gosling seemed put out at seeing me in the company of the Famous Five.

"And who might you be wantin' sir?" he asked, grumpily.

I told him I was going to tea with my friends.

"Don't mind Gosling sir." said Bob Cherry. "His manners haven't improved since he turned a hundred."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gosling's reply was something about "young varmints," but a half-crown slipped into his hand soon sent that ancient gentleman shuffling back to his lodge.

Once inside the school, I was taken straight to the Head's study to meet Dr. Locke. Mr. Quelch was with him, and after introductions we chatted pleasantly for half an hour whilst tea was being prepared in study No. 1.

Both the learned gentlemen seemed surprised when I told them that my knowledge of Latin and Greek was almost nil, but when I revealed an interest in writing, Quelch's eyes lighted up, and soon we were deep in a discussion of his famous "History of Greyfriars."

Both shook hands with me before I left. I had found the headmaster benign, and Mr. Quelch quite pleasant.

"I hope you enjoy your tea with the boys of my form, sir" said Quelch. "But pray do not allow them to detain you beyond the hour set aside for preparation."

For a moment his face assumed the grim expression I had often seen in the Magnet.

"I fear some of my boys do not devote sufficient time to the preparation of their lessons."

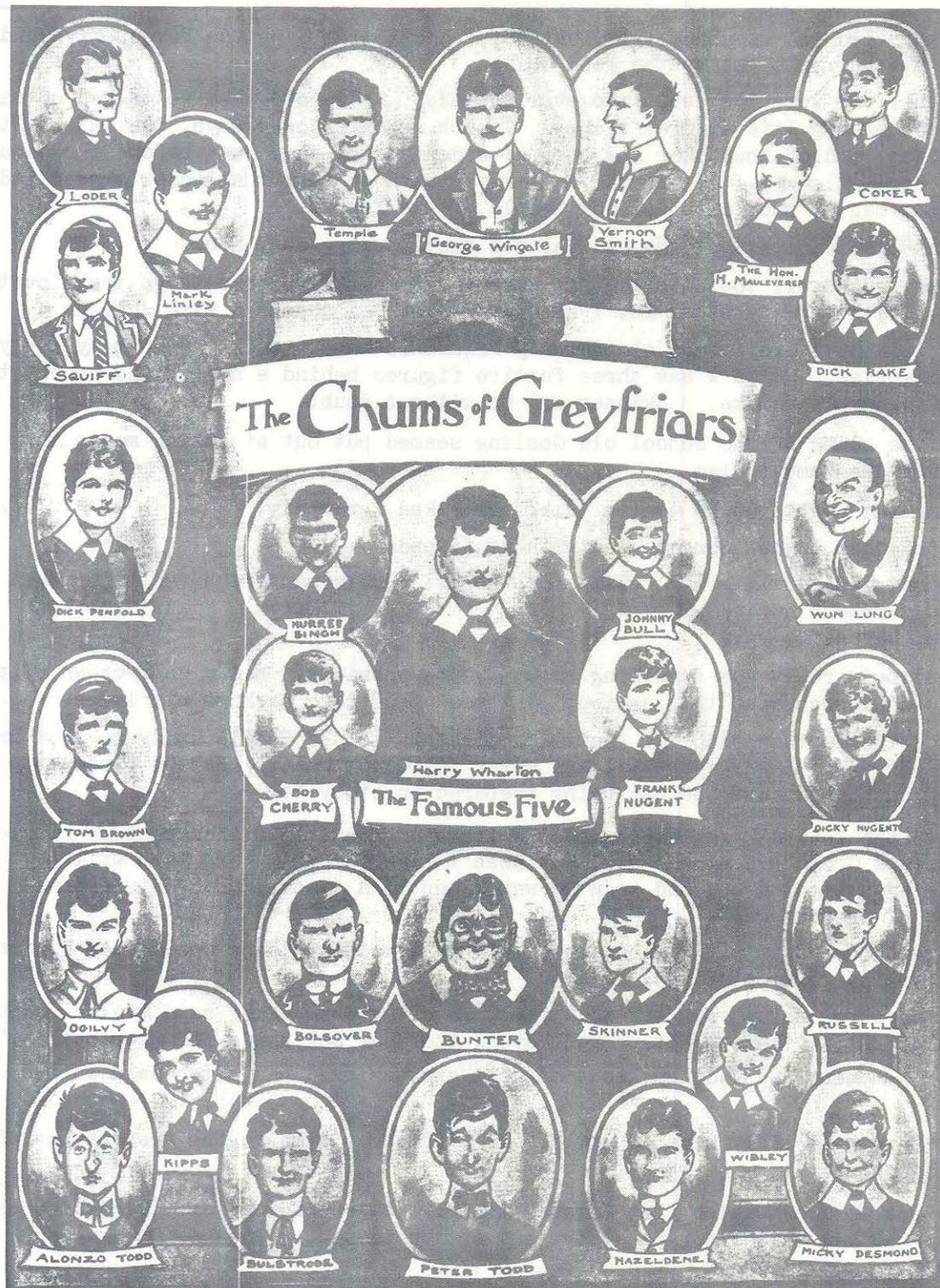
Having assured Quelch that I would take my leave before prep, I rejoined Harry Wharton, who had waited for me at the end of the passage.

"Tea ready?" I asked.

"Not quite sir," replied Wharton "but I thought you might like to see something of the school before going up."

"Nothing would please me more. Lead on!"

Wharton gave me the 'grand tour' as it were. I saw all the places I had read about, and some that I hadn't. On the way round several introductions were effected.



In January 1917, Greyfriars was introduced into the Penny Popular, replacing the Sexton Blake stories which had been running since 1912. The Greyfriars series commenced with the story from Magnet No. 1. To celebrate the occasion, an art plate (reproduced above) was given away that week with the Penny Popular.

I met Old Wingate and Gwynne, Dicky Nugent and his friends, Trotter, the page, and, finally, Mr. Prout.

But of my favourite Greyfriars character there was no sign. Apparently the great Coker did not deign to put in an appearance.

At last we arrived in study No. 1, and it struck me that at least half of the Remove seemed to have invited themselves to tea. In addition to the Famous Five and Bunter, I noticed Peter Todd, Linley, Vernon-Smith, and a cheery youth who turned out to be Wibley.

Tea in that celebrated apartment was a merry affair, and I felt just like a schoolboy myself. The food seemed to disappear at a great speed - especially at Bunter's end of the table.

The last crumb was just disappearing inside a fat mouth, when the door burst open and a big burly lad, with a red face, looked in.

"Oh, here you are! Now then you cheeky young sweeps! I'm going to - "

"Want anything Coker?" inquired Wharton.

"Yes! I want to mop up this study with a mob of cheeky fags!" roared Coker. "I'll teach you to handle a Fifth Form man in the quad!"

"Jevver see such a chap for asking for it?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Now look here, I - oh!"

Coker suddenly became aware of my presence.

"Who's that?" he asked, graciously.

"Jolly pleased to meet you Coker" I said.

"Eh? How do you know my name?"

"Oh, I've heard a lot about you my boy," I replied. "Especially about the way you play cricket."

Coker immediately looked a little less truculent.

"Have you sir? Then I suppose you've heard I'm thinking of asking old Wingate to give me a chance in the First Eleven this term" asked the unsuspecting Coker.

"Ahem - no - but I'd really love to see you play." I said, truthfully.

"Jolly nice of you to say so sir," said Coker, beaming. "My hat! I think I'll go and see Wingate now - strike while the iron's hot you know. Goodbye sir!"

"Goodbye Coker!"

There was a roar of laughter as the door closed behind the big Fifth Former.

"I'd love to see old Wingate's face when Coker asks him about the cricket," howled Bob Cherry. "It should be worth a guinea a box."

"The smilefulness will be terrific," agreed Inky. "But the absurd Wingate will eject the ridiculous Coker chuckfully on his neck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then, one by one, the other fellows left, and soon only the Famous Five remained. We spoke of their trips to India and Hollywood, of their voyages in the South Seas, and of happy Christmas times spent at Wharton Lodge.

I hardly noted the passing of time, until Bunter put his bullet head into the study again.

"I say you fellows, Quelchy's coming this way! He looks fearfully waxy. Scowling like a demon in a pantomime y'know. Bet he'll have something to say

about that old ass being here! He! He! He! "

"Oh crumbs! We're supposed to be at prep!"

I jumped to my feet, feeling very embarrassed. I had promised Mr. Quelch I would not keep his pupils from their preparation. Yet, because I was enjoying myself, I had done that very thing!

"Look here," I said. "I'd rather not meet Mr. Quelch just now - I promised him I'd leave before prep. Can't I hide somewhere? Outside the window perhaps?"

"Well, it has been done before," said Wharton. But he looked doubtful.

"The ivy's quite thick there, but I rather think a man of your weight might prove too much for it sir. It's rather a long way down y'know."

"I'll risk it. Help me through the window. Quick!"

A few moments later I found myself clinging to the thick ivy outside the window. I was in a blue funk. As Wharton had remarked, it was a long way down. A very long way indeed! I felt quite giddy. I was just about to change my grip on the ivy, when, to my horror, I began to slip. For a moment I seemed to hang in space. Then I felt myself falling.....falling.....

I awoke with a jerk, only to find myself still in the armchair before the fire. A dream! It had been only a dream after all! I smiled happily as I recollected the vividness of my dream. It had seemed so real.

Slowly, I rose to my feet and stretched. Something fluttered from my hand. I looked down, and my heart pounded again. For there, at my feet, lay a fresh ivy leaf!

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blake's

by RAY NORTON

by RAY NORTON

blunders

So many things have been written about Sexton Blake, that it is difficult to find something new to say. We all know of his career spanning seventy years or more, we have in fact been entertained and thrilled for more years than most of us care to remember, but I can't help thinking that the length of Blake's career is due, in part, to luck, because Blake has been guilty of oversights, or blunders, which could easily have terminated his career, or his life, many years ago.

The spotlight has focused attention on Blake's successes, leaving his failures in shadow, so by moving the spotlight a little we disperse the shadows and take a look at the other side of his career.

In "Raiders Passed" published in 1940, we find this situation: Blake, Tinker and Capt. Dack are involved in a murder case. Blake spreads the area of his enquiries by sending Tinker off on a line of investigation on his own. Tinker fails to return but manages somehow to get a message to Blake telling him to go to Binali, Binali being mentioned earlier in the story of course. This is all Blake needs, but what he doesn't know is Tinker is on Dack's ship, the Mary Ann Trinder, as a stowaway, and the ship with all the participants in the affair has set sail for the same place.

" By this time Blake was packed and ready. He went to the aerodrome and was ferried to Ireland. Time was going. The old Mary Ann Trinder was on her way - clear now of the channel.

Blake had to wait for the Lisbon plane, but it set off at last.

In all the rush he had forgotten one thing - a vitally important thing, as it turned out.

It did not occur to him to find out if Dack's ship was still lying alongside Gunson's wharf.

If he had done so, she would have been pulled into Plymouth Sound before she cleared European waters.

But Blake did not think of it. "

This oversight puts Blake's life in jeopardy when his 'plane is shot down by an Italian fighter, over the desert.

" Sexton Blake lifted himself up. He had lost count of time, he was sick and faint now, and how long he had been wandering he did not know - except that it stretched into weeks.

And now he knew he was all in. His carefully husbanded strength, immense though it was when he started, was giving out like the sands in an hour glass - faster as the end was reached.

Above him hovered the vulture. It had never left him. Whenever he looked up at the brazen sky he saw it like hovering death - waiting.

Another vulture, he could see it far distant across the sky, and it was flying fast. Coming in for the death, he guessed. And couldn't it travel, too? Couldn't -

Blake was running, dragging off his jacket, waving it madly above his head, trying to shout with parched lips.

"Plane! Plane!"

Blake was watching the machine, and when he realised he had been seen, even his iron nerve almost snapped with the relief of that knowledge. He crouched on the sun-played rock and stared.

And quite suddenly Sexton Blake began to laugh.

He was still laughing when they got him into the aeroplane. The machine took off once more. "

So Blake is out of the affair, and it's left to Dack and Tinker to bring it to a successful conclusion.

Everyone is capable of making mistakes; Blake is no exception. In "The Mystery of the American Envoy" Blake is saying:

"Isn't it possible that we have discovered what Grice was before he took up this pose at the Old House?"

Tinker whistled quietly.

"You're probably right. Grice was an engineer. It might help us in tracing him."

"There are thousands of engineers. But it certainly covers his education and his possession of mathematical books. On the other hand, it doesn't help any."

And this was where Blake was wrong - in this and one other point. It was of the most vital importance, and if he had seen it, he could have completed the case, and much suffering could have been saved.

Even Homer sometimes nodded. "

A small oversight that has vast repercussions, near the end of the story we find:

"Blake stared at Oldshaw. Oldshaw said: "It's no good looking at me, Blake. I've no more idea where Taylor's gone than you have." He sneered. "Rather hurts you to be ditched, doesn't it? A new experience for you. Taylor's a very clever man. I don't think you'll find him. Nor the girl, either - till it's too late."

Blake got up.

"Bring him along," he ordered. "I'm going to give him in charge."

"But the girl!" cried Tinker.

Blake spread his hands hopelessly. "What can we do except inform the police? Taylor's got all England and all the darkness of the night to drive in."

"Then we're done. The girl's done," stammered Tinker.

Blake nodded wearily.

"Yes, unless a miracle happens, we're done," he said. "

Oddly enough this is another case brought to a successful conclusion without Blake's help, and this oversight almost costs a girl her life.

Now without dealing with too much detail we find in "The Uncensored Letter" -

"I must be getting blind to the obvious," muttered Tinker.

In this he spoke more of the truth than he realised at the time. Blind to the obvious. That was indeed, the fact. Even Sexton Blake, who had already seen in this case a great deal more than anybody else, was blind to the obvious.

Neither he nor Tinker had their eyes opened until it was far too late. Yet the fact was standing out like a headland in a sunlit sea for all to observe. It

* * * * *

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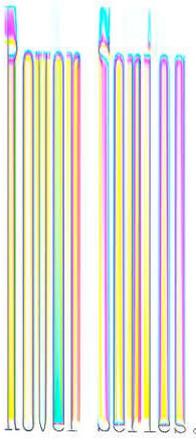
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THE OUTSIDER

THE STORY OF
H. P. LOVECRAFT

by W. J. A. HUBBARD

Introduction

Howard Phillips Lovecraft, the now well known American fantasy writer, was born in Providence, R.I., U.S.A. on the 20th August, 1890. He was the only son of Winfield Scott and Sarah (Phillips) Lovecraft, and was of English descent on both sides of his family, a fact of which he was very proud and which he often mentioned in his letters.

Lovecraft's father died when his son was only eight years of age and he was consequently brought up entirely by his mother, a possessive woman who was ill-equipped to deal with the rigors and dangers of this world. By his own account Lovecraft was a precocious child, sensitive and often preferring the society of grown-up people to that of other children, although he does not seem to have had an unhappy boyhood. Much of his time was spent in his grandfather's library, and he became very fond of reading, chemistry, geography and astronomy. Although he attended Hope High School, Lovecraft was largely self educated. The constant association with adults which marked Lovecraft's earlier years no doubt stimulated his imagination and influenced the genre of the literature for which he became famed. Lovecraft's earliest writings were mainly on scientific subjects and he was only sixteen years of age when he contributed a monthly article on astronomy to a local newspaper, the Providence "Tribune."

Continual poor health prevented Lovecraft from attending a local University, as had been planned, for his family was not only a good one but originally quite financially independent. Most of his life was spent in Providence, where he lived with his mother and two widowed aunts. As time went on declining family fortunes forced him to support himself by "Ghost" writing and revising (and in some cases practically re-writing) stories by other authors. Lovecraft's first published story "The Alchemist" (originally written in 1908) appeared, in 1916, in the "United Amateur," a publication controlled by the United Amateur Press Association which Lovecraft had joined in 1914 and in which he took a great and active interest. From now on Lovecraft's work began to appear in American amateur magazines such as "Vagrant" and "The Tryout." Lovecraft, incidentally, ran his own amateur magazine, "The Conservative." It may also interest my readers to know that he contributed at least two poems to the late Mr. Arthur Harris' amateur magazine, "Interesting Items."

It was during the 1914/18 War that Lovecraft began to write the stories that were to make him famous. The founding of the **well known** fantasy pulp magazine, "Weird Tales" in the early 1920s was a great opportunity for him and he was assured of a regular market for his yarns when his story, "Dragon" (originally written in 1917) appeared in the October, 1923 issue of the magazine. This yarn created an immediate impression and from now on Lovecraft's work was always welcomed by readers of "Weird Tales." Recognition of the author was still slow in coming, particularly in higher literary circles, but by the late 1920s Lovecraft's stories were being reprinted in such anthologies of horror stories as those edited by Christine Campbell Thompson, Herbert Ashbury and T. Everett Harre. One yarn, "The Music of Eric Zann" appeared in the London "Evening Standard." Two other stories had honourable mention

in Edward J. O'Brien's distinguished annual collections of the best short stories. Lovecraft's stories were mainly originally published in "Weird Tales." Others appeared in "Amazing Stories," "Astounding Stories" and "Tales of Magic and Mystery." Only one book written by Lovecraft, "The Shadow over Innsmouth," was published in his lifetime and his reputation remained obscure and cherished only by a few warm admirers until the 1940s when his friend, another fantasy writer, August Derleth, and others, began collecting Lovecraft's work.

Lovecraft's success as a writer for "Weird Tales" brought him many new friends among whom was a Mrs. Sonia Greene, of New York, a fellow writer with whom he collaborated in at least two stories. They were married in 1924 but the marriage was not a success. After less than two years, during which time they lived in Brooklyn, they separated and a divorce was arranged in 1929. When he separated from his wife, against whom he never uttered one word of criticism, Lovecraft returned to Providence, which he never afterwards left except to make a number of visits to friends and relatives in the southern part of the U.S.A. Lovecraft was undoubtedly one of those men who should never be married. He was quiet and retiring, with the manners and behaviour of a gentleman in the true sense of the word. His wife, however, was a vital commanding woman and their personalities clashed as was almost inevitable in the circumstances.

Like quite a number of authors Lovecraft liked to work at night, no doubt because he found such conditions applicable to the genre of his stories - he was a fantasy writer. Indeed he would often draw the blinds and work by artificial light even during the day. He lived a solitary life - after the death of his mother in May, 1921 and after the failure of his marriage his two aunts shared his residence in Providence - but kept up an extensive correspondence with friends, admirers and collaborators. As the recently published Volume I of his Letters plainly indicates Lovecraft was an exceptionally fine letter writer. Some of his efforts ran to as many as thirty pages and must have taken hours to compose. He was also a severe critic of his own writing considering that "it was touched with commercialism and fell too far short of what he intended it to be." Troubled continually by ill health all his life Lovecraft became seriously ill in 1936 and died in March, 1937 of cancer and Bright's disease. He lies buried in the family grave in Swan Point Cemetery, Providence, but no stone marks his grave.

A very quiet, retiring individual, highly imaginative and not very strong physically, Lovecraft elected, no doubt for a variety of reasons, to live in a world of his own imagination, rather than in reality. This is not unusual with many people who suffer from continual ill-health. He had an alert, questing mind and began, even as a boy, to construct his own world. He drew from life what he wanted and rejected everything else. It seems to have suited him for there is no evidence, throughout his life, that he envied his fellow men, however much he might - secretly no doubt - regret his inability to do likewise. His literary work was influenced chiefly by the well known American fantasist, Edgar Allan Poe, and by such authors as the famous British writers, Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, M. R. James, Walter De la Mare and last, but not least, Lord Dunsany - all artists in writings of fantasy and the macabre. Another British writer whom Lovecraft greatly admired - he was very pro-British - was William Hope Hodgson, whose fascinating tales were given such prominence in Lovecraft's fine essay, "Supernatural Horror in Literature." Lovecraft was almost obsessed with a strong feeling for the past - he was particularly keen on the 18th Century and the well known American illustrator, Virgil Finlay, actually depicted him dressed in the costume of this period - and filled with a deep dislike for the present. Lovecraft even wrote a considerable amount of poetry in imitation of 18th Century verse.

Lovecraft's stories, as his friend and biographer, August Derleth, has pointed out, fall into two clear types - tales of fantasy very similar to stories written by Lord Dunsany and tales of horror and of "cosmic outsidersness" which although based on the work of such writers as Poe, Machen, Robert W. Chambers and Ambrose Bierce, show much of the influence of both Machen and Algernon Blackwood. Lovecraft's stories, however, show so much of the writer's own individual style and method that it has influenced many other writers in the genre. With the publication, by Arkham House, of many of Lovecraft's stories in the 1940s and the marked interest shown after the last war in the now current vogue of Science Fiction, and the wide appeal to readers of all ages in stories of "Other Worlds," quite a lot of his work and especially his stories of the Cthulhu Mythos concerned often with "Discoloration of Time and Space" have attracted considerable attention. Of these particular stories Lovecraft himself wrote "all my stories, unconnected as they may be, are based on the fundamental law or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practicing black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside ever ready to take possession of the Earth again." In these stories of the Cthulhu Mythos Lovecraft brought into being a complete mythology and geography - a wild, weird and wonderful, yet curiously impressive and convincing flight of the imagination by any standards. There is no doubt that the Cthulhu Mythos has placed Lovecraft securely in the great tradition of American horror and fantasy writing along with Edgar Allan Poe and Ambrose Bierce.

It cannot be denied that a taste for Lovecraft's work is special and almost definitely an acquired one. Despite this, however, a great wave of enthusiasm has developed over the past two decades and he has many admirers, even in the highest literary circles. Of course he has his critics, or shall I say more truly his denigrators, which seems quite inevitable these days in respect of many authors whose success seems to create jealous re-action to their work, especially after they have passed away. One of these so-called "critics" - Colin Wilson - insists that Lovecraft "was not a good writer - quite second-rate." Undoubtedly Lovecraft's greatest weakness as a writer was a tendency to melodrama - very understandable in a fantasy writer and a fault which he recognised himself. His writing was, of course, very much in the Gothic tradition, but in an original style. His biographer, August Derleth, wrote "he was a skilled writer of supernatural fiction, a Master of the macabre, who had no peer in the America of his time.... by his own choice he was in letters, as in his personal existence, an outsider in his time."

The Work of H. P. Lovecraft

Despite the fact he made many contributions, in addition to his professional work, and especially in his earlier creative period, to amateur publications, H. P. Lovecraft was not really a prolific writer. He wrote some poetry patterned on the 18th Century model, but none of it has any lasting quality and what is worth preserving of all his poetry has been published in one modest volume. Save for the finely written "Supernatural Horror in Literature" his Essays are negligible. His poetry of the weird, however, often contains a note of real terror and this is particularly evident in the long sonnet cycle "Fungi from Yuggoth" and the narrative werewolf poem "Psychopompos." Both these poems utilize place names and beings of the Cthulhu Mythos.

It is in his prose fiction that Lovecraft promises to survive. His stories fall readily into two classifications and sometimes are a combination of both. They are fantastic, or they are tales of terror and of "cosmic outsidersness." The

The tales of terror and "cosmic outsidersness" subdivide into "New England" tales and stories of the Cthulhu Mythos.

In my opinion the best of the early tales of terror are "The Rats in the Walls," "Pickman's Model," "The Horror at Red Hook" and "The Shunned House." Of the early stories influenced by Lord Dunsany I consider "Dagon," "The Doom that came to Sarnath" (my favourite Lovecraft story of this type) and "The Strange High House in the Mist" are worthy of high praise while the three Randolph Carter stories, "The Statement of Randolph Carter," "The Silver Key" and "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" are the best of the authors later period. Lovecraft's fantasy novel, "The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath" is a curious eerie story and personally I find it rather hard to read but its English is immaculate. It is quite unlike the two other novels, "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" and "At the Mountains of Madness," which are among the finest stories Lovecraft ever wrote.

The Cthulhu Mythos stories belong mainly to Lovecraft's last creative phrase. They utilize one of the oldest themes used by writers and poets and concern the age-old struggle between good and evil. These yarns are, in fact, similar to the story of the Christian Mythos as it relates to the expulsion of Satan from the Garden of Eden and the ever-lasting power of evil over mankind.

Lovecraft never made any attempt to deny that Lord Dunsany, whom he greatly admired, had considerable influence over his fantasy writing. He also freely acknowledged that it was from the famous British author that he obtained the idea of the artificial pantheon of evil Gods represented by such characters in the Mythos stories of Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth and Shub-Niggurath. Lovecraft also borrowed from other authors who influenced his style and had no hesitation in including the contributions, rather minor perhaps, of Arthur Machen, Robert W. Chambers, Edgar Allan Poe and Ambrose Bierce in the yarns he wrote.

The forces of good in the Lovecraft pantheon of deities were represented by the Elder Gods, none of whom save Nodens, the Lord of the Great Abyss, is ever named. Indeed Nodens is the only Elder God who actually made a personal appearance in Lovecraft's work for he played a small part in the fantasy yarn, "The Strange High House in the Mist." The Elder Gods apparently dwelt on or near the star, Betelgeuse in the constellation Orion, very rarely venturing forth to intervene in the unceasing struggle between mankind and the powers of evil.

The evil Gods were generally known as the Ancient Ones. They were named and occasionally, as in "The Call of Cthulhu," and unlike the Elder Gods, made rather frightening appearances in the tales. The chief of the evil Gods is Azathoth, the blind idiot God, "an amorphous blight of nethermost confusion which blasphemes and bubbles at the centre of all infinity." Then there is Yog-Sothoth, who shares Azathoth's dominion, and is not subject to the laws of time and space, Nyarlathotep, the messenger of the Ancient Ones, Great Cthulhu, God of the sea, Hastur, the unspeakable, the God of the air and winds, half brother to Cthulhu, and Shub-Niggurath, the God of fertility. Later on Lovecraft added to the pantheon, Hypnos, the God of sleep, Dagon, the ruler of the ocean depths, Cthulhu's lieutenant, Yig, the serpent God and the prototype of Quetzalcoatl, and such followers of the evil Gods as the abominable snow men of Mi-Go and the Night Gaunts.

There cannot be any doubt that Lovecraft never conceived the Cthulhu Mythos in its final form when he wrote the opening stories of the series, such as "The Nameless City" and "The Call of Cthulhu." When, however, he started to develop the whole theme, he began, in marked contrast to other authors whom I could name, to invite some of his fellow fantasy writers and collaborators to make additional

contributions. Such writers as Clark Ashton Smith (who wrote of the evil Gods Tsathoggua and Atlach-Nacha), Frank Belknap Long (The Hounds of Tindalos and Chaugnar Faugn), Henry Kuttner (Nyogtha) all added to the saga while August Derleth, the most prolific of them all as regards the Mythos, brought in Cthugha (an evil God corresponding to a fire elemental), and such horrible Gods and Demons as Lloigor, Zhar, Ithaqua and the Tcho-Tcho people. A writer named Michael Storm contributed a Cthulhu Mythos story to the magazine "Fantastic Worlds" in the summer of 1952. Perhaps Mr. Walter Webb can tell us something about him. It is said that Lovecraft and his fellow writers produced something like one hundred stories featuring the characters of the Cthulhu Mythos. Incidentally, Lovecraft did not hesitate, provided they were good enough, to include characters created by his fellow writers in his own stories.

It was necessary to build up a background to the Cthulhu Mythos and to the pantheon of good and evil Gods and Demons were added the "secret" or apocryphal books of black magic and such-like cults and practices. Some of these books were actually written by real writers and these productions were skilfully interwoven with the fiction. The chief of the books invented by Lovecraft and his circle of fellow writers is the dreadful "Necronomicon" supposedly written by the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred. The background of this magic book was so cleverly built up by Lovecraft that many readers of his stories actually thought it existed and various advertisements for the book appeared in Book Trade Journals. Other so-called "magic" books included the "Pnakotic Manuscripts," the "R'lyeh Text," the "Book of Dzyan," the "Seven cryptical Books of Hsan," the "Dhol Chants" (all contributed by Lovecraft), the "Book of Eibon (added by Clark Ashton Smith), the "Uraussprechlichen Kulden," said to have been written by a German named Von Junzt, but really the creation of a fine writer named Robert E. Howard, Ludvig Prim's "De Vermis Mysteriis" (invented by Robert Bloch) and Comte D'Erlette's "Cultes de Goules" and the "Celeano Fragments," introduced by August Derleth.

Most of the action in the Cthulhu Mythos stories took place in New England in the U.S.A. Salam, the famous witchcraft town in Massachusetts figured under the fictitious name of Arkham while Marblehead (a leading yachting and fishing centre) is featured as Kingsport. The Massachusetts country districts around such towns as Wilbraham, Monson and Hampden is renamed Dunwich. Such far off areas as Aldebaran and the Hyades also appear in the stories together with mythical places like Kadath in the Cold Waste and the Plateau of Leng.

The primary stories of the Cthulhu Mythos written by Lovecraft are given in the Bibliography appended to this article. Related stories by other writers include "The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym" by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Yellow Sign" by Robert W. Chambers, "An Inhabitant of Carcosa" by Ambrose Bierce, "The White People" and "The Black Seal" by Arthur Machen. Stories associated with the Cthulhu Mythos and influenced by Lovecraft in that the writers concerned were friends and admirers, are as follows - "Ubbo Sathla," "The Tale of Zatampra Zeiros" and others by Clark Ashton Smith, "The Horror from the Hills," "The Hounds of Tindalos" and "The Space Easters" by Frank Belknap Long, "The Shambler from the Stars," "The Dark Demon" and others by Robert Bloch, "The Eater of Souls," "The Salem Horror" and others by Henry Kuttner, "The Church in High Street," "The Tower from Yuggoth" and others by J. Ramsey Campbell, "The Mask of Cthulhu," "The Trial of Cthulhu" and others by August Derleth and such posthumous collaborations as "The Lurker at the Threshold" and "The Survivor and Others" by H. P. Lovecraft and A. E. Derleth.

The eagerness with which Lovecraft invited others writers to contribute to the Mythos gives some indication of the keenness which he infused into these particular

stories. In his last years he wrote practically nothing but tales of the Cthulhu Mythos. It was in this later period that his uncertainty about the standard of his work began to overcome him. No doubt ill-health had something to do with this but he began to ignore financial considerations and completely disregard the writing markets that were eager for his work. His manuscripts were often sent out in a decrepit state and were the despair of the Editor of "Weird Tales." Indeed if it had not been for the action of friends such as Augus Derleth and Donald Wandrei, certain of Lovecraft's finest efforts in weird fiction would never have reached the pulp magazines in which they were originally published.

Lovecraft had very firm ideas about the writing of tales of the macabre. Like Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Machen and William Hope Hodgson he believed in a serious treatment of unreality. He wrote "spectral fiction should be realistic and atmospheric - confining its departure from nature to the one supernatural channel chosen, and remembering the scene, mood and phenomena are more important in conveying what is to be conveyed than are characters and plot. The "punch" of a truly weird tale is simply some violation or transcending of fixed cosmic law - an imaginative escape from palling reality - since phenomena rather than persons are the logical heroes. Horrors should be original - the use of common myths and legends being a weakening influence." From this it will be seen that Lovecraft relied on "atmosphere" rather than "character work" in his stories. Such a situation frequently confronts a writer of fantastic tales. Lovecraft's greatest gift lies, of course, in his narrative power, which is outstanding, by any standards.

Whether Lovecraft's early death - he was only in his middle forties - deprived the world of weird fiction of some masterpieces cannot really be decided. Some critics consider that one of the last three stories that Lovecraft wrote - "The Shadow out of Time" - was the author's best work. Personally my favourite Lovecraft yarn is "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward," a two part novel written in 1927/8.

Conclusion

All admirers of the work of H. P. Lovecraft owe a great debt to two friends and fellow writers - A. W. Derleth and Donald Wandrei. Together they founded the publishing firm of Arkham House of Sauk City, Wisconsin, U.S.A., in 1939, with the avowed intention of keeping H. P. Lovecraft's stories before the reading public. Previous to their efforts only one book had been published professionally under the by-line of H. P. Lovecraft, this being "The Shadow over Innsmouth," brought out by the Visionary Press, Everett, Pa., U.S.A. in 1936 not long before Lovecraft's death.

The first Lovecraft books published by Arkham House were omnibus collections of his stories entitled "The Outsider and Others" and "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" that appeared in 1939 and 1943 respectively. Both books were issued in rather limited editions and sold slowly at first but the reading public was gradually bitten with the Lovecraft "bug" and since then no less than twelve books by and about H. P. Lovecraft and his work have been published by the firm. Each book has been most carefully set out and presented and make excellent reading for the Lovecraft devotee. Arkham House have also come to publish the work of practically all the famous writers of weird fiction. The venture of two young and at the time impecunious writers has turned out to be a great success.

Critical acceptance of Lovecraft's work has been mixed over since he first appeared before the reading public. No doubt the fact that writer originally

wrote for pulp magazines and so could hardly be a practical proposition for the "highbrow" critics has had something to do with this for such a writer should not have presumed to force himself to the forefront for consideration. I have already quoted the views of the eminent critic, Colin Wilson, on Lovecraft. But it is obvious to those that read Mr. Wilson's evaluation of H. P. Lovecraft in his book, "The Strength to Dream" (1962), that he is not the slightest bit interested in H. P. Lovecraft the writer, or in weird fiction as a whole, which he obviously dislikes. To Mr. Wilson Lovecraft is a bad writer, not because he wrote poorly but because "here was a man who made no attempt whatever to come to terms with life." In other words Mr. Wilson is only interested in Lovecraft simply as a psychological case history. Another critic has spoken of the fact that the horror story "from Poe to H. P. Lovecraft - has always had a symbolic tone suggestive of some hidden sexual fear." Certain psychiatrists have held that Lovecraft was homosexual, just because he was mainly friendly with male fellow writers, despite the fact he was at one time a married man. This so-called "freudian" criticism of well known people in all walks of life is, of course, common these days. The psychological angle must be considered before everything else. My own view is that if H. P. Lovecraft wished to live in a retired manner and as a recluse and found it enjoyable and convenient then what business was it of anybody else.

After all this so-called adverse "criticism," it is a relief to read the eminent American Poe scholar, Dr. Thomas Ollive Mabbott, on Lovecraft. In a review of the initial Collection of Lovecraft stories in "American Literature," Dr. Mabbott wrote "that he has a place seems certain," afterwards adding, "I have no doubt that it is an honourable place that should be accorded this truest amateur of letters." Another well known reviewer, Vincent Starrett, has written "The best of his stories are among the best of his time, in the field he chose to make his own." Other literary figures such as William Bolitho, Stephen Vincent Benet, Winfield Townley Scott and the famous French playwright, Jean Cocteau, have praised Lovecraft's work. Most critics and reviewers have preferred to ignore Lovecraft however, and have expected him to fade away.

Despite this, interest in Lovecraft has continued. His books are being read more than ever and second-hand copies of the early Arkham House publications have reached fantastic prices. Editions have been produced in French and Polish and it is rumoured that certain stories have been published in Yugoslavia. Eminent French critics have written articles on Lovecraft and his work.

At least one film has been made in Hollywood of a story by H. P. Lovecraft. This has recently been shown and is entitled "The Haunted Palace," based on the Lovecraft novel "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." Made by American-International Pictures in 1963, it stars Vincent Price as Joseph Curwen. The picture is a fairly faithful rendering of the plot but suffers, not unexpectedly, from being "Hollywoodized." It is reported that three other Lovecraft stories, "The Colour out of Space," "The Dunwich Horror" and "The Shuttered Room," are in production.

A second Volume of Lovecraft's "Letters" will be published in the spring of 1967 and there is hope that Arkham House will also produce a further book with what remains of unpublished material, probably with reprints of certain stories that have not appeared since their first publication in hard cover form over twenty years ago.

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BIBLIOGRAPHYPrimary Stories of the Cthulhu Mythos

The Nameless City	The Shadow over Innsmouth
The Festival	The Shadow out of Time
The Call of Cthulhu	At the Mountains of Madness
The Colour out of Space	The Dunwich Horror
The Case of Charles Dexter Ward	The Thing on the Doorstep
The Dreams in the Witch House	The Whisperer in Darkness
The Haunter of the Dark	

Arkham House Books by H. P. Lovecraft

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date published</u>
The Outsider and Others	1939
Beyond the Wall of Sleep	1943
Marginalia	1944
The Lurker at the Threshold (with A. W. Derleth)	1945
Something about Cats	1949
The Survivor and Others (with A. W. Derleth)	1957
The Shuttered Room and Other Pieces (with A. W. Derleth)	1959
Dreams and Fancies	1962
Collected Poems	1963
The Dunwich Horror and Other Stories	1963
At the Mountains of Madness	1964
Selected Letters of H. P. Lovecraft (Part I)	1965
Dagon and Other Macabre Tales	1965
The Dark Brotherhood and Other Pieces (by H. P. Lovecraft and Divers Hands)	

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W A N T E D : MAGNETS 1640, 1641, 1631, 1662, 1664, 1674; UNION JACKS, Years 1922 to 1933, urgently required numbers 1179, 1180. All letters answered.

JOHN BUSH, 34, DOUGLAS AVENUE, WHITSTABLE, KENT.

 Holiday Annuals 1936 - 38 £1 plus postage. Bound volume 20 blue Gems £3. 10. 0. plus postage. Gems, Magnets, S.a.e. Hard-backed School books 1/- each plus postage. T. Merry Annuals 10/- each plus postage.

GEORGE McROBERTS, 31, ARDENLEE DRIVE, CREGAGH, BELFAST 6.

 REQUIRED TO PURCHASE Any "MAGNETS" prior to 1934 containing stories that feature the Cliff House Girls.

LINFORD,
115, ALLPORT STREET,
CANNOCK, STAFFS.

ADSUM!

or "DICK PENFOLD'S HEIR"

(written after discussions on nomenclature in the Magnet, etc., at Merseyside O.B.B.C., August 1966, and dedicated to the late Tom Hopperton.)

by FRANK SHAW

Quelchy is querulous, pompous is Prout,
Mossoo the boys cruelly mock;
Mobbs injudicious, Hacker so vicious,
The door to boys' hearts could never un-Locke.
To their seniors each boy'll be thoroughly loyal,
Though Knox is obnoxious and loathsome as Loder;
If to Wingate they whined or to Quelchy, you'll find
It's among their own fellows they'd be in bad odour.
(So let's forget masters and prefects)

Isn't it true that as Richards' pen flew -
Or Clifford's, or Conquest's, or what,
In the very best style, with a yarn to beguile,
It's the boys and their names that will ne'er be forgot?
(Hullo, hullo, hullo --)

Wharton was moody, his temper uncertain,
Till charily cheered up by Cherry,
Who as Silver was sound, in emergency found,
Like Redwing reliable, matey as Merry

Grundy was grumpy, and Mellish malicious,
And Crooke wasn't straight, it is clear;
Deaf as mutton is Dutton, while Bunter's a glutton,
And Coker is cocky, I fear.

Alonzo is loony, lovesick Lowther is moony,
While Skimpole, of course, is just scatty;
The august Augustus, when done an injustice,
Is weady to get weally watty.

I can't understand, after years in this land,
Why the Inky-ness stayed so terrific.
Why does Redfern recur with Carne, Talbot, Kildare?
What school did they start in? It's never specific.

When will Fisher T. Fish speak English? I wish
That he would talk more like a Yank.
I reckon and guess that his speech must distress
Every Sherran and Silas and Hermann and Hank.

Wun Lung, too, no doubt, we could well do without,
A cartoon without justice or wit;
Then there's that poor little waif, never learned to talk
straihf,
Adopted by Morny - he just doesn't fit.

As an Irishman, too, I must just say to you
 Concerning the grinning Mike D.
 A shillelagh I'll borra, and bring thim all sorra
 Who invented a brogue that is all Greek to me.
 (Where are you, Ionides, you spalpeen?)

Wildrake's memory traces the wide-open spaces
 While Nugent is always so Frank;
 Wouldn't Wibley's charades and Kerr's mas-Kerr-ades,
 Win them a contract from J. Arthur Rank?

At professional wrestling Outram would shine.
 Couldn't Glyn send us gliding to Mars?
 Wouldn't Bunter's voice-throwing; the sweet music flowing
 From Hoskins, in these days, make both of them stars?

Like Mible our Trimble is not very nimble
 And Muffin is stuffin', that's all!
 Yet Wynn is a winner, though fat, and at dinner
 Can handle a pudding as well as a ball.

Bull was no bully though often pugnacious,
 Bulstrode less bellicose grew;
 While Mauly lay mute in the arms of Morpheus,
 Linley was learning his Latin "construe."

Garrulous Gosling - what he said was this 'ere --
 That Grimes was all grimy, of course;
 If you tried to eat coke at Miss Bunn's for a joke
 She'd send for old Tozer, the pride of the force.

Vernon-Smith has veered slightly from shady deeds nightly,
 Bolsover's stopped bunking at night from the dorm;
 Though Levison's shown he can leave smokes alone
 Hazel's still hazy on total reform.

Skinner can sketch, yet's a scapegrace, a wretch,
 And obviously Snoop is a sneak;
 Cardew is caddish, Pon usually baddish,
 And someone was Lawless in far Cedar Creek.

When some erring lads, dupes, asses, or cads
 Were booted by Blake, bumped, biffed with a bat,
 With duckponds so handy for luckless footpads -
 Where's the society for prevention of that?

Cousin Ethel's the toast of all Gemites true,
 Yet with Clara and Phyllis I fell in love too;
 But I truly confess as I make myself less,
 The lass without match was named M. Hazeldene.

How many boys are dead who read
 Of other boys whom Richards made?
 His heart was in it, while we cheer or grin at
 Undying boyhood be homage paid.

(NOTE: Frank Shaw, a Punch contributor, and well-known mainly for writing and speaking on Liverpool subjects in the Northern press, has a book entitled "LERN YERSELF SCOUSE," a spoof phrase book, now selling like hot puddens on Merseyside.)

Fullwood's Return to Study A

By JIM COOK

CLAUDE GORE-PEARCE poked the fire savagely and threw himself into an easy chair.

It was a very cold day and a half holiday. Most of the juniors had already left for Helmford, for it was the day of the great match, and the St. Frank's Junior XI had high hopes of winning this important football event with Helmford. And Gore-Pearce sat in his study nursing his usual grievance of being excluded from the team.

This afternoon he was more irritable than ever, for although the son of a millionaire, his money wasn't sufficient to buy him respect from the leading lights in the Lower School. Gore-Pearce had inherited from his snobbish mother a contempt for the lower classes of society. And he reflected his father's attitude to wealth by assuming that money can buy anything and anybody.

Gore-Pearce was beginning to accept the fact that he was not going to buy merit until Joan Tarrant had threatened him with the loss of her friendship unless he regained the leadership of Study A. Joan Tarrant, of the Moor View School, being similar in many ways to Claude, was frequently entertained by Gore-Pearce and this evening Joan was bringing her two friends, Bessie Groves and Hilda Smith, and was expecting Claude to report progress.

These three girls were generally together, and at the Moor View School they were regarded as being not what they should be. In other words, they took a pleasure in defying the school rules and in making mischief generally. Joan was pretty in a flashy sort of way but insincere. Whether Claude went back to Study A or not was a matter of supreme indifference to her, but she had delivered her ultimatum for no other reason than to see just what Gore-Pearce made of it.

And he took it very seriously. Ever since Forrest had usurped Claude's position as leader of Study A, Gore-Pearce had plotted and schemed to return but of late he had accepted defeat. Bernard Forrest was his master. Not even Gore-Pearce's wealth could be used to bring about Forrest's downfall. And now, Joan Tarrant and her friends were coming this evening and Gore-Pearce was in a very irritable mood as he sat in Study B.

He had sent Teddy Long and Hubbard, his study mates, down to the village for supplies for the tea-party for he wanted to be alone.

His thoughts were interrupted by a sharp knock on the door and Ralph Leslie Fullwood poked his head in.

"Isn't Long back yet?" he asked. "I'm waiting for some stamps I asked him to get for me in the village."

"No, he isn't back yet," Gore-Pearce snapped. "I like your confounded cheek using Long. I pay him for running my errands!"

Fullwood smiled.

"Well, I paid him as well. If I were you I'd claim my money back!" he said, and closed the door.

Gore-Pearce stabbed again at the brightly burning fire. He was in no mood for Fullwood or any of his kind this afternoon. He wondered idly why Fullwood was not at the match this afternoon but his mind drifted to the problem of the evening with the girls. Joan Tarrant & Co., were the only girls from the Moor View School who would associate with Gore-Pearce. Girls like Irene & Co., Winnie Pitt and Mary Summers and a few more of the popular ones were always eagerly sought after by the juniors but on these occasions Gore-Pearce never got a look in. Claude being a bit of a swanker appealed to girls like Joan Tarrant & Co., and they in turn in their flashy way aroused admiration in Gore-Pearce.

His mind chased over possibilities of getting back with Gulliver and Bell for here his money would be useful. He knew Forrest's popularity with these two juniors had begun to fall of late due to lack of funds but Bernard Forrest was still a force to be reckoned with. Forrest had brains. He was clever.

Again Gore-Pearce thought of his money. He also thought of his father's wealth and all the power that wielded that wealth. Forrest came back to St. Frank's after being expelled only because of the great help his father had given him. In fact without his father's assistance Forrest would have been helpless. And money must have been used, quite a lot of money, to carry out the plan to get Bernard reinstated.

Gore-Pearce frowned as he thought of the time when Forrest had paved the way for Gore-Pearce to be thrown out of Study A. Forrest's idea was duly carried out by Gulliver and Bell and suddenly Gore-Pearce had found himself thrown out of Study A after Gulliver and Bell had picked an imaginary quarrel with him. The scheming Forrest had pre-arranged the whole thing, for such was his faith in his father to get him back to St. Frank's. Forrest had made plans covering long after his return to the school.

It had all been cut and dried. Forrest had planned everything down to the smallest detail. Forrest had brains and was a hard nut to crack. And whichever way Gore-Pearce looked at it Forrest would upset any plan Gore-Pearce made to supplant Forrest's leadership of Study A. No, there must be another way out, thought Claude moodily.

He thought of Fullwood. At one time Ralph Leslie had occupied Study A but this was before Gore-Pearce had arrived at St. Frank's. Before Forrest had come to the school, too. But Claude's thoughts came back to Forrest. If Gore-Pearce wanted to continue enjoying Joan Tarrant's company he had to get back to Study A and he had to get rid of Forrest. Get rid of Forrest, that was the first thing that mattered. Forrest had to leave Study A. Of course, if Fullwood went back temporarily with his old cronies....temporarily!

Gore-Pearce got up and began pacing the study. His mind was now concentrated on Fullwood. Gore-Pearce was no fool and for the moment he could see no way in which Fullwood could be used. But he believed Fullwood would be welcomed back to Study A since he was the original leader and his breaking away from Gulliver and Bell had always been a sore point with them.

Gore-Pearce stopped pacing the floor of the study and sat down by the table. He was very thoughtful as he pulled a sheet of writing paper towards him. Then suddenly he seemed to have come to a decision and he commenced writing.

The letter was addressed to his mother. It duly arrived at the London home of the Gore-Pearce's, the following morning. Mrs. Gore-Pearce opened the letter at the breakfast table where Mr. Gore-Pearce sat hidden beneath a newspaper.

Claude had written thus:-

"Dear Mater,

I am sorry my weekly letter to you will not contain my usual happy news but the fact is, Mater, although I try to be popular with the chaps here, there are one or two who are jealous of me, jealous of our wealth, and because they fear I shall attain leadership by becoming captain of the Junior Lower School they put out false accusations about me and consequently I am always held back from gaining any advancement and respect from the fellows. Naturally Mater, the boys are only too willing to listen to these rumours about me, but I feel sure that if I could regain my leadership of my former Study I would soon be the most popular schoolboy at St. Frank's. But first, it is important to be leader of your particular study before you can rise to be captain of the school. Otherwise you remain a nonentity all the time you stay at school."

The crafty Claude had adopted the right line by assuming the role of a martyr. But the letter although addressed to his mother was indirectly written to his father and Mrs. Gore-Pearce's rising indignation was on the point of carrying out her son's wish. The letter continued:

"With all our wealth, Mater, I am well above many of the poorer chaps here and many of them rely on my generosity but at every turn I am hindered from advancing my social status among the chaps by Bernard Forrest, the boy who was previously expelled from St. Frank's but was reinstated by a trick of his father. It is he who wormed himself into my shoes and was responsible for my getting thrown out of Study A because I was leader. I held that position with pride for a long time, but Forrest is good at trickery like his father. He bam-boozled the fellows in Study A to overthrow my command and after a quarrel which Forrest caused I left the study and went in with two nondescript juniors in Study B.

In spite of my innocence Mater, I could get nobody to back me up. Everybody believed Forrest and now I am left out of any important game. I am very unhappy here for I am not being treated with the respect that is due to me. I am not receiving the attention that is due to my family's social position. But I shall carry on and keep my head high. Perhaps all the lies put out by Forrest will eventually prove to be the untruths they really are and then the fellows will appreciate my true worth. I will go on supplying any poor boy with assistance as I have always done. My studymates rely on my charity otherwise they would often be very hard up.

I must be feeling low today, Mater, for my letter doesn't sound very cheerful. Perhaps it is the cross I have to bear that makes me misunderstood at St. Frank's.

Your Loving Son, Claude.

P.S. I think the only way Forrest can be ousted from Study A is for Fullwood to resume leadership there. Fullwood was for a long time leader till Forrest came. "

Mrs. Gore-Pearce gave a little cry of alarm as she came to the end of her son's letter. Certainly it was the kind of letter that promised to incite any mother's devotion to her absent son but it was from his father that Claude was hoping to receive aid.

"William!" cried Mrs. Gore-Pearce. "This is from Claude. Read it and see if you can help the poor boy!"

"A letter from Claude, eh?" said Mr. Gore-Pearce as he looked up from his

paper. "What the devil does he want now, more money?"

He scanned the letter quickly but read it again thoughtfully. Then he rose and walked over to a writing desk and withdrew a paper from a drawer.

"Yes," he muttered, "I thought it was the same gentleman."

"What is it William, what are you going to do?" his wife asked peevishly.

"Why, this Fullwood Claude mentions, my dear, is the same gentleman I met at the Stock Exchange yesterday. The boy's father I mean. And Fullwood senior had dropped quite a packet from what I heard.

"But what about our son?" wailed Claude's mother. "What are we paying all that money to the school for if he is unhappy. You must do something about it, William. How dare they treat Claude like a common pauper?"

The millionaire waved her away and studied the letter again.

"Yesterday Fullwood senior was in great trouble; and although I have met him once or twice at St. Frank's I am not what you would term a close friend to him. But I do know he tried to borrow a loan to level off his losses and that it was refused. Now I am not entirely unfamiliar with the boys of St. Frank's since it was mainly through their interference that we lost Edgemore Manor and I think I can see a way out for Claude. Yes," he added gloatingly, "there's a chance to settle off some old scores with those boys. Don't you worry, dear, our son will get his wish; I will see to it personally!"

The vulgar, ostentatious millionaire was not likely to forget the time he came up against the St. Frank's juniors. But as this episode has already been described elsewhere it need not be ventilated here.

"I shall probably meet Mr. Fullwood tomorrow at the Exchange and I'll put my little proposition to him," he explained. "This letter from his broker mentions a Mr. Fullwood plunging heavily on RONDOS GILTS just before the Bank Rate rumour. And only the day before I had sold all my shares in that white elephant!" he chuckled. It tickled the vanity of this parvenu millionaire to know he had scored where others had failed. Gore-Pearce senior was well served by his brokers.

Mr. William Gore-Pearce stepped back sharply as several figures came running out from the London Stock Exchange.

"Confounded idiots!" he growled. "It must be the raise in the Bank Rate!"

Men and boys swept past him like racehorses coming up to the winning post and he waited till the rush was over before he stepped into the most famous building in London. Gore-Pearce's temper was like London's weather, never reliable. And although he was a wealthy man, rises in the Bank Rate were always a threat to his personal fortune. But acting on the good advice from his brokers he had forestalled any plunge that may have suffered him a loss. For Mr. Gore-Pearce was a Bear. That is, he was a speculator who sold securities he didn't as yet possess in the expectation of buying them back at a lower price before Settling Day. He was also a Stag. He had the day before applied for shares in some new issues with the intention of selling them at a profit today to members of the investing public. And now it looked as if the Bank Rate had risen and the speculating public would hesitate to buy new shares in any venture. But besides being a rich man, Gore-Pearce was also a lucky man and his brokers had held off.

Claude's father was a comparative newcomer to London's most famous institution for stocks and shares, for his status of millionaire erupted out of a war-torn

world when the door was wide open to men like Gore-Pearce who swept everything before them in their efforts to become the quick rich merchants ready to welcome home the men from the fighting Forces with eager hands open for their money.

Mr. Gore-Pearce pushed his way through the stormy crowds on the floor of the Exchange and walked up to a gentleman who had been watching the rise and falls of commodities resulting from the change in the Bank Rate. It would have been difficult to have overheard their conversation but suddenly the two gentlemen detached themselves from the throng and eased their way out into the street.

"I shall not keep you long, Fullwood" said Gore-Pearce. "Come over here for a cup of tea and I'll explain everything." And they entered a tea shop and sat down in a quiet corner. A waitress appeared and Gore-Pearce gave her his order.

"Now, Gore-Pearce, if you will kindly explain," began Mr. Fullwood. "What is all this mystery? What is the idea you have about my son at St. Frank's?". Gore-Pearce refused to say anything until the waitress had returned and placed a well laden tray on the table, and it was not till the girl had departed that he answered.

"You," said Gore-Pearce pointing a finger at Fullwood's pater, "You have lost a packet and it's left you in a fix; am I right?"

Mr. Fullwood looked at him curiously. He had met this aggressive, unpleasant man at St. Frank's when the Lytton Trust Scholarship award had been presented to a junior and many of the boys' parents had come down to see the presentation. The exams for the Lytton Trust Scholarship were held every January and although coming as it did soon after the Christmas holidays it nevertheless brought a fair gathering of parents down to the school. And Fullwood senior was not attracted by this clean shaven, slightly bloated and coarse person who had a son at St. Frank's.

"I want to help you" added Gore-Pearce.

It was true Mr. Fullwood had suffered a great loss but he sensed there was something more to it than this strange offer from this big man. Fullwood's pater sat waiting to hear the kind of strings attached to the offer to help.

"Well, I don't mind admitting this rise in the Bank Rate has affected me, but I don't quite understand....."

"Here, drink this!" said Mr. Gore-Pearce, thrusting a cup of tea at Mr. Fullwood. Etiquette had never really meant much to Mr. Gore-Pearce. In his haste to acquire a million the finer points of social decorum had vanished for him.

"It concerns my son at St. Frank's. His mother has received a very depressing letter from him. It appears the main body of the boys have ostracised him and even thrown him out of a study of which he was leader. Now I may as well own that I am not too familiar with college life - I have been too busy making my way in life - but it seems that your son can put my boy back in favour with the rest of the juniors and I want your help. I may as well tell you Fullwood" he added "I'll make good your losses if your son can pull this thing off for me!"

As Gore-Pearce had admitted his knowledge of Public Schools was very small. He wanted his son to be a leader, and if being a leader of a Study meant prestige then he would see to it that Claude became a leader. Even if it meant paying for it.

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Ralph Leslie Fullwood frowned as he looked at his watch. He had missed the last train back to Bellton and the next 'bus wouldn't be along for another hour. Already rain had begun to spatter on the pavement and it looked set for a wet evening.

He looked across the station yard in the hope of seeing the ancient taxi that was always available for passengers alighting at Bannington Station, but of course, it wasn't there now.

Fullwood with a shrug strode out into the Bannington High Street where shop lights were already gleaming in the early dusk. He had decided to walk the three miles back to St. Frank's; there was always the possibility of meeting another junior in similar distress to make company for him and he kept a sharp look-out.

He had spent the afternoon with Winnie Pitt and they had met Irene & Co., in Bannington later where plans and times had all been scrapped to fall in with Irene's wishes. Consequently Winnie had returned to the Moor View School with Irene and her chums and Ralph had smilingly assured the girls he would get back to St. Frank's in plenty of time. Now he was glad he had left Winnie with Irene & Co., for they had hired a car to take them back and they wouldn't be late. Had Winnie remained with him she would have been in this unhappy position of walking back in the rain.

He wished now he had accepted Irene's offer of a lift, but the fact was Fullwood wanted to be alone after he had seen Winnie Pitt safely on her way back. Fullwood senior had come down to the school the previous day and had explained to Ralph the strange position Mr. Gore-Pearce had placed him. Although his pater had seemed his usual cheery self the junior knew well enough that his father was secretly worried. And it was when he accompanied his pater to the station that Ralph was told of the plan Gore-Pearce had evolved for getting Claude back into Study A. Fullwood was not so surprised at Claude's father going to such lengths for his son but such was Mr. Gore-Pearce's conceit for an imaginary Lower School Study leadership that he was willing to pay Mr. Fullwood's losses - which were substantial. It made Ralph smile ruefully at the role had had to play to help his father. That he, Ralph, had to dislodge Forrest from Study A and forsake all his new found friends and go back with Gulliver and Bell. It was a tall order; a thoroughly nasty assignment; but he would do it for the sake of his father.

The affair to Mr. Fullwood was a ridiculous assignment for Ralph, an easy job. Just a simple arrangement of changing studies and if Mr. Gore-Pearce set so much store to his son's desire to be a study leader then surely Ralph would carry out his father's wish and do what Gore-Pearce senior wanted done. But had Mr. Fullwood known of the terrible consequences resulting from Ralph's change of friends he might have hesitated giving his son the appeal to help him.

No junior in all St. Frank's history had gone through such strenuous times as had Ralph Leslie Fullwood. Gambler, smoker and an out and out rotter he had ruled the destinies of the Junior School before Nipper came. And Nelson Lee's astute assistant had toppled Fullwood from his exalted position of self-appointed captain soon afterwards. The reformation of Fullwood in later years was welcomed by all the decent chaps although Fullwood had a terrible uphill fight to maintain his reformation.

Now, for the satisfaction of the Gore-Pearces, he was compelled to renounce his friends in the Junior School and pretend to go back with Gulliver and Bell whom he now despised more than ever. But he felt sure Clive Russell would understand; Clive being Ralph's special friend and study mate. And all the other chaps like Nipper and Co., Handforth & Co., Singleton, Somerton and all those decent juniors whom he choose to call his friends would, he felt, feel for him when the true story came out. But for the moment his lips were sealed. He would respect his father's wish and keep secret the reason why he was going back

into Study A.

He had reached the end of the High Street now and the rain was now falling heavily. Fullwood pulled his overcoat more tightly round him as he walked on in the cold, icy rain.

Suddenly a car, its headlamps thrusting a gleam on the wet road, braked to a standstill alongside him and a door opened.

"Come in out of the rain Fullwood!" shouted a voice he recognised as belonging to Bernard Forrest.

Fullwood hesitated for just one second but started to walk on. "Thanks, but I'd sooner walk!" he replied. But the car started up again and came up to him. Forrest held open the door.

"Come on Fullwood! Don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Get in and we'll take you back to St. Frank's!" pleaded Forrest in mock distress.

Then Ralph saw his father, with his strained look as he took the train back to London. He had agreed to do what his father had asked him and this looked a golden opportunity to begin operations. As much as he disliked the scheme he had to go through with it. Ralph hated the idea of conniving at Gore-Pearce's schemes, but Fullwood was a resolute junior and his father came first in any matter of importance and his father had stressed this was an important scheme.

With Forrest beside the chauffeur Fullwood sat between Gulliver and Bell as the car went forward in the rain. Inwardly Forrest was gloating at getting Fullwood in the car for never had he been able to get Ralph to fall in with any of his wishes.

"Quite like old times, Fully!" remarked George Bell.

"Yes, just like the old days!" chimed in Gulliver as he bent over towards Fullwood. "We've just come back from Bannington Races. Forrest lost heavily but Bell and I broke just about even."

"If you had been there, Fully, you would have seen one of your old favourites win today. Broken Spell won at ten to one!"

"By gad! Did it?" cried Fullwood, resolved now to carry out his father's wish and get back into Study A. "That nag owed me quite a bit before. So it has won at last!"

And as the car carried them back to the old school Fullwood cast away any doubts whether he would have courage enough to break away from his real friends and appear to go back to his old ways. But Forrest had to go. Forrest had to leave Study A. He thought it would be fairly easy to get rid of Forrest since Fullwood & Co., of Study A in the old days were a recognised trio. What Clive Russell would say made Ralph wince to think about it, but he had to go on with it. After all, once he got Forrest out of it perhaps that was all that was required of him for the banishing of Forrest was the main item in the plot. He supposed he would be expected to remain in Study A for a short time but after that Gore-Pearce was welcome to take over; very welcome indeed.

Fullwood felt a little easier in his mind now. It didn't seem so complicated after he had thought about it. He had only to explain to the fellows why he took over from Forrest and his friends would believe him. The fact that he was making a way for Gore-Pearce was obvious to anybody. Even the shrewd Nipper would see that it was only a job Fullwood had to do. But Ralph Leslie Fullwood forgot one thing. He did not allow for the evil mind of Claude Gore-Pearce. He did not

reckon on Claude's cunning and crafty nature. Had he done so he might have hesitated before agreeing to his father's wish.

Forrest was not aware he was carrying out Gore-Pearce's plan to have Fullwood back as leader of Study A when he transferred to the East House and went into Study 15. But whether it was the fact that Fullwood had re-entered his set or whether Forrest wanted to move out of Study A will never be known but when Ralph was seen with Gulliver and Bell and was a frequent visitor to Study A Bernard Forrest decided to go in with David Merrell and Frederick Marriott in Study 15 in the East House. Enoch Snipe, the other member of the Study 15, must have been paid by Forrest to move into Study 14 with Clifton and Simmons for he left without objecting.

It was Gore-Pearce's idea to let Fullwood stay long enough in Study A to break his friendship with his friends but somehow the plan misfired for the shrewd Nipper was not entirely unfamiliar with the moods of the juniors and the unconcerned way in which Forrest left Study A for the East House set him thinking. He called a meeting in his study and explained the possible reason why Fullwood may have suddenly gone back to his old ways. At the end of it even Handforth was willing to admit there was something peculiar with Fullwood's action.

Now that the way was clear for Gore-Pearce to release Ralph from his artificial leadership of Study A he held his hand. His most deadly enemy Bernard Forrest, was in the East House and the sadistic Claude enjoyed the discomfort which Fullwood so manifestly showed although Gulliver and Bell were entirely indifferent to Fullwood's feelings. In the old days Fullwood affected a disdainful outlook on everything and if Gulliver and Bell thought anything at all about Ralph's misery now they concluded he was reverting to his old self and treating the goody-goodies with contempt. And all this suited Claude's evil mind. His letter to his mater had brought about the removal of Forrest, the apparent break-up of Fullwood's friendship with Clive Russell, and Fullwood's high esteem with the other chaps, trouble with Gulliver and Bell when Fullwood was released from his promise to his father, and Claude's return as leader of Study A.

A week went by but although Fullwood remained in Study A he never really became the old Ralph Leslie. Nipper, who had been keeping a close watch, realised Fullwood was under a strain. Even when he suddenly entered Study A one day and saw a wave of cigarette smoke suspended towards the ceiling it was Gulliver and Bell who were smoking; Fullwood was sitting by the table doing his prep.

It was then that Gore-Pearce decided to leave Study B and apply for re-admission to Study A as it were. He entered Study A and found Gulliver and Bell discussing horse racing. Fullwood had left the study with Nipper earlier and Claude's entry had startled the two juniors.

"You fool, Gore-Pearce!" snapped Gulliver. "Why didn't you knock?"

Gore-Pearce chuckled. "It's your own fault for not locking the door. I could have easily been a beak and you wouldn't have stood a dog's chance!"

"What do you want, Gore-Pearce?" asked Bell. "You are not exactly welcome here you know!"

"And if Fully finds you here when he gets back he'll throw you out!," put in Gulliver cheerfully.

Gore-Pearce studied the pair thoughtfully. These two nondescript juniors had reigned in Study A for a very long time and they had shared its notoriety.

The type who became leader of this study conformed to certain directions laid down by the rascals of St. Frank's. In the old days Fullwood had responded to these rules by defying the conditions laid down by the School. Other juniors had likewise occupied the leadership of Study A after Fullwood. There was Wallace who had been transferred from the River House but he returned to that school soon afterwards. Claude Carter had been a contender but he had left St. Frank's for some reason. Bernard Forrest fitted the position well. Now with Fullwood out of the way Gore-Pearce would once more occupy Study A. He could easily buy off Gulliver and Bell. Now that Forrest had moved out they would welcome Gore-Pearce with open arms - or rather they would welcome his tin.

And when Claude had explained to Gulliver and Bell how he had arranged for Fullwood to get back into the study they laughed uproariously. He forgot to mention Joan Tarrant's ultimatum to him for now that Joan's whim had been satisfied she had entirely forgotten it. Gore-Pearce had yet to understand the idiosyncrasies of young ladies.

Gore-Pearce reigned as leader of Study A exactly one day. Forrest he was to realise had been playing with him. As Forrest had been playing with Fullwood. And Gulliver and Bell accepted the return of Bernard Forrest to Study A since they were too weak to refuse him. Such was Forrest's dominant personality these two juniors were completely under his thumb. Gore-Pearce's money was very welcome but Forrest had the brains. And since Forrest's supply of cash wasn't meagre the trio were well suited.

Ralph Leslie Fullwood returned to Study I with Clive Russell and Stanley Waldo. He had carried out his father's wish and Mr. Fullwood had written to say things were now back to normal. His affairs had been put in order by the loan Mr. Gore-Pearce had given him. And that loan would very shortly be paid back.

The outcome of Gore-Pearce's plot was one of the wildest fights ever seen at St. Frank's.

Now that Fullwood was released from any obligation he sought out Gore-Pearce and challenged him to a scrap behind the Gymn. And Gore-Pearce accepted the challenge. He couldn't very well do anything else since the whole of the Lower School knew of his part in the scheme.

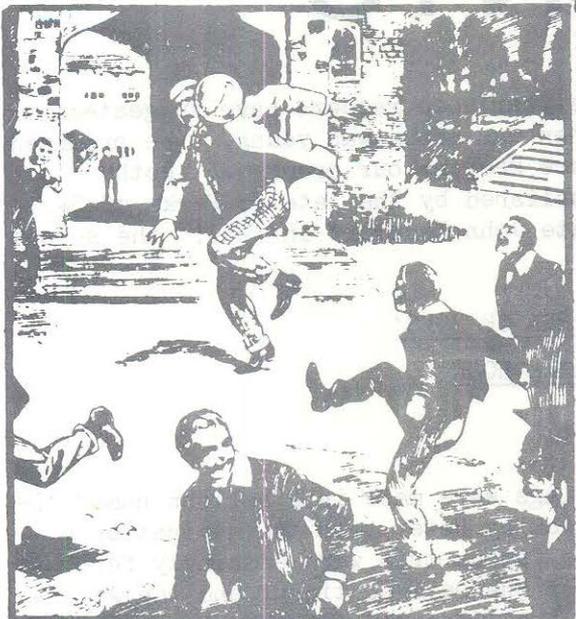
For once, Claude occupied the limelight. Not the sort of limelight he had bargained for but he was the centre of attraction as he entered the ready-made ring to face Fullwood.

It was a tough fight. By the end of round five both juniors were sobbing for breath. In the eighth round Fullwood delivered a blow that sent Gore-Pearce rocking. And seizing his chance at the opening he had made Fullwood followed up with a stinging, punishing blow to Gore-Pearce's chin and the millionaire's son crashed to the ground. He stayed there long after the referee had counted him out. The fight was over.

Fullwood was not unmarked, but his were scars of honour. They carried Gore-Pearce into the Gymn from the prying eyes of the prefects and masters. For Gore-Pearce was in a shocking state. All the pent up fury that Fullwood had been nursing was released in the blows he had given Gore-Pearce.

It will be a long time before Gore-Pearce crosses swords again with Ralph Leslie Fullwood. But as Handforth remarked, a leopard cannot change his spots; Claude Gore-Pearce will be a dangerous enemy in the future.

a famous picture



"Shoot, Tommy!" sang out one of the juniors. Tommy Doyle shot, and the ball crashed into the man's face, sending him reeling backwards.

Many readers will recognise this illustration. It is one of the most famous, if not actually THE most famous, in the entire Hamilton story. It appeared in the year 1906 on the cover of PLUCK (and also inside the same issue) to illustrate the first St. Jim's story ever written. That story was entitled "Jack Blake of St. Jim's." The picture was drawn by Leonard Shields.

Our reproduction, however, comes from a Rookwood story, published in 1917 in The Penny Popular. Same picture - different characters. The Rookwood story was passed off as "the early adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co.," but it was really a substitute story, and it had never appeared in the Boys' Friend.

A year or two ago in the Annual we reproduced another old PLUCK picture which had been pressed into service to illustrate Rookwood over a decade later. Economy at the Fleetway House? Or perhaps a shortage of artists due to the war?

To Friends and Collectors everywhere A MERRY XMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

TOM DOBSON, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

WANTED: Few copies of Girls Crystal, Film Fun, School Friend and Picture Show. Early 40s preferred.

K. ELLIOTT, 20, ST. JAMES ST., MOONEE PONDS, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA.

A THOUGHT FOR THAT GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS FOR YOUR SPECIAL FRIEND - WHY NOT A HALF-YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION TO COLLECTORS' DIGEST? Published monthly!

RE-PRINTS

EDITORIAL COMMENT: In Collectors' Digest this year some readers have suggested that we reprint some of the articles written when our hobby was young. We promised to do this in this year's Annual, and here we are keeping our promise. Both articles are from an old collecting magazine published by the late J. Parks of Saltburn. The first article was written by the late John Medcraft in 1937; the second was written ten years later.

THE DAWN OF THE MODERN ERA OF BOYS'

LITERATURE - S. CLARKE HOOK

By J. Medcraft

Many of Jack, Sam and Pete's early journeyings were made in a balloon named "De Old Hoss," a disrespectful allusion to Clarke Hook by Pete. In the navigation of this precarious and uncertain mode of travel the famous trio were amazingly fortunate. From China to the Sahara, thence across the Dark Continent and the Atlantic to South America, plus several crossings of the Andes and journeys to Hudson Bay and Patagonia, all this was accomplished without mishap.

Many equally thrilling adventures in a submarine followed, including a nerve-shattering journey along a subterranean river, not a bad performance for a vessel sold off cheaply by the Government of a Central American Republic in 1905.

In Marvel No. 230 we were introduced to "Pete's Steam Man," another unusually successful mechanical contrivance which could generally be relied upon in emergencies no matter how much trouble it gave in normal circumstances.

The motive power of the Steam Man was supplied by a form of petrol engine, but how the comrades contrived to obtain the necessary fuel in remote places is not stated; evidently the petrol consumption must have been as low as the power generated was high. Still, we recked little of these inconsistencies while the story was good and this series was deservedly popular.

Mention must also be made of the comrades four-footed friend Rory, an Airedale of remarkable courage and sagacity with an infallible judgement of character, at least, in Pete's opinion. Truly a dog in a million.

Clarke Hook also wrote a fine serial entitled "Jack, Sam and Pete's Quest" followed by a series, "Circus Pete" both of which appeared in the Boy's Friend in 1904/5.

Runs of the Boy's Friend containing these serials, also of the first 250 numbers of the Marvel (New Series) are very scarce and eagerly sought by collectors.

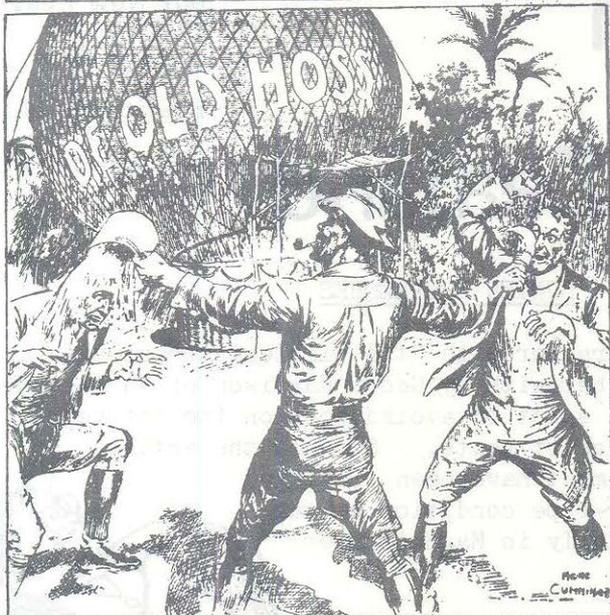
After several fluctuations of fortune in which the comrades lost their entire fortune and then amassed another with enviable rapidity, the interest in these stories began to wane a little so Clarke Hook introduced a new character in Marvel No. 393, a lad named Algy Stone.

In my opinion this was a mistake, Jack Sam and Pete were a reasonable and

**JACK,
SAM,
AND PETE.**
By S. CLARKE HOOK.

THE MARVEL
1st
EVERY WEDNESDAY

**STANLEY
DARE'S
MASTER-
STROKE.**
A Detective Tale.



* Golly! de 'Old Moss' am mighty beautiful! reared Pete, (singing his arms out in admiration)



His son, H. Clarke Hook, was the author of an amusing series of school stories dealing with the adventures of Specs and Co. at Lyncroft School, which appeared in Pluck in 1906/7.

* * * * *

SEXTON BLAKE:

How Did The Name Originate?

By F. N. Wearing

In 1894 when Harry Blyth wrote the first yarn about the popular sleuth for No. 11 of the halfpenny "Marvel," (Jan. 24th), he probably had in mind another detective of a similar name. The second Sexton Blake story came along about four months later when the "Union Jack" commenced publication, No. 1 was published April 27, 1894, but it was No. 2 which contained the second story about Blake. It was the "Marvel," however, which launched Blyth's famous character. The other character to whom I refer was Jackson Blake, a popular American detective creation who appeared in "Beadle's Dime Library."

About that date the Aldine Publishing Co. started reprinting the Beadle

balanced combination, but the new partner altered all that.

In a measure the results justified this importation and results count; the interest revived and the author had now a reserve of fresh matter to draw upon, but to those of us who remembered the early adventures of the famous trio the new combination was almost farcical.

Of the stories in the subsequent years there is little of interest to mention, and the Marvel ended its long run in 1922 just short of the 1,000th number, unlamented and unregretted. During the early years it was a grand paper but the final stages are best forgotten.

S. Clarke Hook also wrote many long complete tales of Jack, Sam and Pete for the Boys Friend 3d. Library, nearly all of which were original although practically all other titles in this library were abridged reprints of serials which had appeared earlier in the Harmsworth journals.

Fired by the success of his world famous trio, S. Clarke Hook launched other adventurous combinations along similar lines but none attained a fraction of the success enjoyed by Jack Owen, Sam Grant and Pete the Negro.

Brown Study in New Zealand

O. W. WADHAM,
our New Zealand
contributor,
meditates on
certain topics.



BUNTER'S BREECHES

That famous character with "the tightest trousers in Greyfriars, recreated herewith by Geoff Harrison of Napier, New Zealand, seemed to lose a lot of avoirdupois on the not very frequent occasions when he was shown in short pants. Somehow the artists had to be told to show that mountain of flesh that must have been displayed if Bunter was to be pictured in the over-ripe condition he was shown to be in as a general rule, especially in Magnet cover illustrations.

Maybe Billy Bunter is lucky he did not have to "tread the boards," so to speak, at a New Zealand college, where even teenagers up to 18 and 19 years-old always wear short trousers as part of their school time uniform.



THE LESSER LIGHTS

Naturally there are some long dead story papers and comics that have never been remembered in the pages of Collectors' Digest. One has only to browse over the pages of publications in a varied collection to come upon one or more never heard of before.

For instance, in Chips dated May 17, 1919, it is announced that No. 1 of "a cheerful paper for cheerful people" first saw the light on May 16. The new journal was called Cheerio, price 1½d. Cheerio seemed to be a combination of comics and story efforts, and could have been cast in the same mould as Fun and Fiction, for it was described as having "the best jokes, the best pictures and the best stories." With No. 1 was given "a magnificently autographed photogravure plate of George Robey."

How long Cheerio lived in the cheerful years of printed plenty it would be interesting to learn. It is not listed in that complete catalogue of comic papers, by W. O. G. Lofts and D. J. Adley, published in the 1963 Collectors' Digest Annual, so my guess is that Cheerio could have been a lesser light in the Fun and Fiction field.

Does anyone have any more concrete evidence?

There is another piece of information gleaned from 1 1919 copy of Chips:

"Charlie Chaplin appears every week in Young Britain, the new 2d. paper for boys."

I presume Charlie Chaplin appeared in cartoon pictures so, once again, was Young Britain following Cheerio (it was born a few weeks later) with a Fun and Fiction trend?

Finally in Chips of July 12, 1919, it is announced that popular serial stories from Chips, Comic Cuts, Jester and Funny Wonder were soon to appear in a new publication called The Big 4 Library. Seeing that I can find no further reference any place I am inclined to think that The Big 4 Library never saw the light of day. Can any collector confirm?

And now, having a look at a comic sent me by collector Geoff Harrison of Napier, N.Z., I find I should add a postscript to record another "lesser light" in boys' journals.

In The Butterfly dated October 27, 1934, it is announced that: "Boy's Broadcast, No. 1, Now on Sale Everywhere, Price 2d. 2 Free Gifts - 20 Big Pages, 6 Big Stories."

I wonder what became of that one? Its life was very brief, I presume.

THE CHANGELESS CHIPS

In all the vast collection of comics that came and departed in those dear, dead days from 1900 to 1940 none changed so little in appearance and general make-up as illustrated Chips.

True, Chips was nearing its 500 number when this century commenced, and was still going strong when 1940 faded, but its most popular period was undoubtedly the 40 years I have mentioned.

Before me I have Chips for Nov. 3, 1900, and Chips for March 19, 1938. How little page one had changed over the years! The popular pair were still wearing the same clothes in both sets of pictures, and Tired Tim was just as unshaven. In fact the only difference I can pick is the appearance of Willie's beard. In 1900 it was thin and pointed, in 1938 it was shorter and fork-like where it finished.

Page 2 in the 1900 number had a truly sensational serial, "The Man Without A Soul," by Hubert Trelawney. It concerned a professor of science who vivisects the body of a chance guest, and then places some of his organs into the body of a murdered man found near the professor's home. This restores the man to life, but he proves a truly objectionable character, with a huge and fierce tiger for a pet.

On Page 2 of the 1938 issue a thrilling tale of sea adventure, "Sunken Island," appeared. No author was named.

Page 3 in 1900 had a complete yarn, "The Black Sentinel," while 38 years later Dane, the Dog Detective featured in a complete story adventure of similar length.

The two middle pages in 1900 were made up of joke blocks and several sets of odd character adventures. Homeless Hector and Casey Court, the much-loved creations of 1938, were yet to be born.

Page 6 at the century's birth featured "The Man Spider," a polished villain

who dominated "the most sensational serial ever published." Same page in 1938 had "Rogues Marsh," a gripping serial of "strange intrigue in a desolate marshland village."

A complete story "The Rogues Gallery," an adventure of Professor Barton-Dare, was the last fiction in 1900.

Another complete story of Tubby Bright, a Bunter-like "cheery chappie," filled most of page 7 in 1938. Philpot Bottles had half a column.

A regular character, Sir Jerry a knight in shining armour, had most of page 8 in 1900. Joke blocks made up the balance. Then comes the biggest difference of all. Page 8 in 1938 ran a strip serial, "Chums of the E-Men Patrol." That strip adventure was the only notable departure from established set-up of Chips in at least 38 years.

Maybe pink is a lucky colour for a paper to prosper by. Several pink publications I have known have had long and successful careers. One, the Melbourne (Australia) Sporting Globe, born about 1900, is still going strong. Its pink, Chips-sized pages on New Zealand bookstalls always bring back to me cherished recollections of that other "pink one," with contents so vastly more entertaining and different.

COMIC CONCLUSIONS

It has been commented on how boys' papers and comics continued to turn out double numbers in the days of the first world war.

One of the biggest and brightest efforts was put out by Puck on August 5, 1917. The Grand Summer Double Number that year was 24 big pages for twopence. Eight pages were in colour, and there were sixteen pages of reading, prize competitions and games.

Puck, in its 40 years of colourful life, was noted for its excellent special issues, but that 1917 Summer Number must have been the most memorable of all.

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Just to travel on half a century may I congratulate the D. C. Thompson firm on that modern comic with the old-time look, Bimbo? Heading on to its 300th number Bimbo is a coloured comic in the Puck tradition, meant mainly for youngsters 5 to 12 years-old. All the reading connected with the drawings are below the pictures. There are no untidy "balloons" to spoil the impact of the excellent artistic efforts.

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The issue of Lot-o'-Fun for April 23, 1921, was certainly different from all other issues I have seen. Instead of 4 pages of comic pictures there were only three. Four full pages were taken up with a Pete, Jack and Sam type of serial, "Tuckaway Jack." The comrades, Sporting Bob Lord, Larry and Tuckaway Jack, were having adventures in the wilds of Western America, and Lot-o'-Fun was giving them more space than any serial in that popular comic ever had before.

Maybe the story was an attempt to steal some of the thunder of S. Clarke Hook's odd characters, then at the peak of their popularity.

The only other story in the Lot-o'-Fun in question was a school and boxing serial, "The Fighting 'Ts." Even Dreamy Daniel was absent that week. Harry Weldon had the front page, and much space was given to boosting Bubbles, No. 1 which was appearing that week.

SEXTON BLAKE: How Did The Name Originate? (continued from page 133)...

publications, and, in the issues of the "Half-Holiday Library" appeared the well written stories by Albert W. Aiken, one of America's star dime novelists. These tales dealt with Jackson Blake. Some of the attractive titles were:- "Jackson Blake, the Bouncer Detective," "Jackson Blake, the Fresh of 'Frisco," "The Fresh in New York," "Fresh, the Race-track Sport," and many others. These were re-printed many times during the run of the Aldine "Half-Holiday Library" under new titles.

I suppose Harmsworth, with the "Union Jack," and its self styled "crusade against the penny dreadful," thought it was a good opportunity to grab some of the Aldine thunder, with a similar named character, and thus Sexton Blake was started on his long career.

* * * * *
W A N T E D : S.B.Ls. before 1940 also UNION JACKS and other SEXTON BLAKE papers.

11, DUNLOE AVENUE, TOTTENHAM, LONDON, N.17.

W A N T E D : Good loose copies or volumes containing any one or more of the following: MAGNETS: 131 to 149 inclusive, 205, 238, 239, 309, 328, 337, 356 to 358 inclusive, 435, 773, 850, 858, 862, 863, 864, 865, 868, 942, 951, 985, 988. GEMS: Some issues between 801 and 832, 953, 954, 956, 975, 980, 984, 985, 989, 990, 992, 993, 998. POPULARS: 452, 455, 466, 472.

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COLLECTORS' DIGEST A VERY

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A

PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

