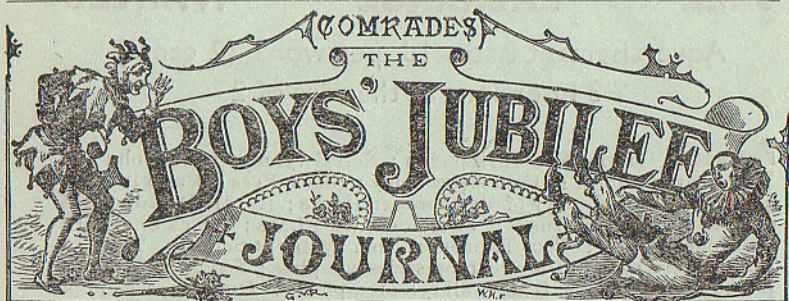


—THE—
COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY



AMUSEMENT, FUN, AND INSTRUCTION.



VANOC SLAYS THE SENTRY.

Vanoc;
OR,
THE GLADIATORS OF OLD ROME.

By J. N. PENZELow.

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

EYES, large, dark, and lustrous; face, a perfect oval; mouth, small, red, and beautifully shaped; nose, a shapely Grecian; hair,

black and curling, falling in wavy ringlets down her back; figure, perfectly proportioned, although somewhat petit—but no, my pen fails to do justice to the wonderful loveliness of Iris, the Roman general's wife.

Scarce eighteen when she married, but a short year before the time of which I write, she was already accounted the most beautiful woman in Rome.

Lovers had flocked to her by scores—dainty patricians, noble senators, rich knights; but

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The Collector's Miscellany

A journal for collectors of Old and Modern Boys' Books, Bloods, Penny Number Romances and Juvenile Drama

No. 6 (5TH. SERIES) NOVEMBER, 1946

A FEAST OF READING

THE BOY'S FRIEND LIBRARY

BY HERBERT LECKENBY

(continued from page 78)

IN passing it may be mentioned that a few of the earlier stories consisted of 144 pages, but the additional pages did not help much to get over this defect.

All the Jack, Sam and Pete stories which appeared, and there were a large number of them, were, I believe, all original; some of them, in my opinion, could have well been done without.

In the early days too, there were quite a number of new Sexton Blake stories, all written anonymously. Later on, of course, Sexton Blake had a Library of his own.

Probably the most famous of the stories were those original ones concerning St. Jims and Greyfriars, written, of course, by Charles Hamilton. They included No. 30 "Tom Merry & Co.", No. 38 "Tom Merry's Conquest", No. 288 "The Boy without a Name", and No. 328 "Rivals and Chums". They are certainly the numbers most sought after by collectors to-day, as much as 15/- each having been offered for them. Two others, however, No. 153 "The Silent Three" (a St. Jim's story) and No. 319 "School and Sport", one of Greyfriars, were written by substitutes. The former is very seldom referred to at all.

That the Library was a great success is proved by the fact that it was not long before three numbers were being published monthly. Later still there were four, and for a period (just after the first World War) even five.

Throughout the 'Kaiser' war, although there was a paper shortage, of course, it was never anything like as acute as during the recent one. Some papers died, or were suspended, but the "Boy's Friend Library" went on unperturbed with four issues per month. The only difference was that the price was increased to 4d., and the pages were reduced to 64. As much smaller type was

used the stories were not very much less in length. With some issues the printing was done long way on, with the idea of saving a little room.

To those who like statistics and have their favourite authors, a study of the men who contributed the 764 stories is extremely interesting. Unfortunately there are twelve of which I have not the details, with the remaining 752 the poll is as follows:—

S. Clarke Hook—66, with David Goodwin a very close second with 64. "Jack North" was a good third with 56. Those popular favourites of their day, Maxwell Scott and Henry St. John tied for the next place with 33 each. Then another tie, A. S. Hardy and Charles Hamilton, scoring 28. Eighth was Sidney Drew with 25, and Andrew Gray close up with 24. Cecil Hayter came 10th with 23 to his credit, and W. Murray Graydon had 20. Then Henry T. Johnson with 15, and Edwy Searles Brooks and Maurice Everard with 12 each. The lovers of Morton Pike, Walter Edwards and Robert Murray had to be content with 10 from each. Allan Blair, rather surprisingly had only a modest 9, and on the same mark were Reginald Wray and Eric W. Townsend. Duncan Storm and Captain Malcolm Arnold had 8, and Victor Nelson, John W. Wheway and Geoffrey Gordon 7. Fenton Ash scored 6, T. G. Bridges and Allan Dene 5. Eight authors had four each, and there were about 73 others who wrote no more than three, two, or a single story. In addition about 50 wrote anonymously.

Several of these authors, of course, wrote under more than one name. David Goodwin had several as John Tregellis, and Jack North as most collectors know, was Richard Randolph, Randolph Ryle and Harry Huntingdon. S. Clarke Hooke wrote one as Maurice Merriman, and Morton Pike and D. H. Parry were one and the same. In most instances I have given them the name they were best known by though it might be said that Charles Hamilton did become more famous as Frank Richards. However, it was simpler to give him his real name.

And now, what types of stories were they which went to make up these more than seven hundred? Well, some of them are difficult to classify. Nearly all Clarke Hook's were Jack, Sam and Pete stories. Some of them, like "The Rival Chieftain" could be classed as adventure, but what can one make of "Pete's Pupils" and "Pete, Moneylender". They were really sheer slapstick. However, I have given them all the credit of being adventures. Others like "The Football Detective" could come either

under the heading of "detective" or "sport". But if we take them as coming out something like this I don't think it would be far wrong.

School—179, Adventure—169, Sport—150, Detective—63, Navy and Sea—54, Industrial—29, Stage, Circus and Film—23, Historical—20, Prairie—19, War—16, Prison Life—6, Army Life—5, Planet—4.

The industrial stories include those of mill life, like David Goodwin's "Clogland" and the office boy type such as "Pluck Will Tell". Sea stories cover those concerning treasure islands and yarns like Goodwin's "Gunfleet Jim" and "The Boy Bargeowners".

Other points of some interest are that two serials were published twice in the first series. "The King of Scouts" (56 and 371) by W. Murray Graydon, and one of Maxwell Scott's Nelson Lee stories "The Black House" (209 and 519). Why the latter should have appeared twice is something of a puzzle for it was by no means one of Maxwell Scott's best or most popular. There were other instances of further reprints in the second series, but that is another story.

It is also worthy of note that after the Amalgamated Press obtained an interest in Cassell's and Pearsons, several stories which had once appeared in rival papers found their way into the "Boy's Friend Library". These include the Vernon Read stories from the "Boys' Leader" and the Martin Dale ones from "Chums".

Well, there is a brief outline of the stories contained in the "Boy's Friend Library" grand stories, good stories, indifferent stories, probably 75,000 pages of them, just about the finest feast of reading ever got together under one heading.

NOTE :—The numbers I require to complete my list are :—338, 409 to 412, 427, 428, 431, 432, 434, 436 and 453. If any reader of the "Collector's Miscellany" can supply them I should be extremely grateful.

FINIS



THE "BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY"

1st. SERIES, SEPT. 1905—MAY 1925

COMPILED BY HERBERT LECKENBY

(continued from page 77)

89—Rajah Dick	David Goodwin
90—War Lord	— — —
91—Jack O' the Fens	David Goodwin
92—Call of the South (Jack, Sam and Pete)	S. Clarke Hook
93—The Muff of Melthorpe College	Allan Blair
94—The House of Garth	John Tregellis
95—Mutiny (Jack, Sam and Pete)	S. Clarke Hook
96—The Merryn Mystery (Sexton Blake)	— — —
97—The Rope of Rubies	Michael Storm
98—Barred!	David Goodwin
99—Football Foes	A. S. Hardy
100—Pete's Great Plot	S. Clarke Hook
101—The Secret of the Thames	John Tregellis
102—Sexton Blake at School	Cecil Hayter
103—The Company Promoter	Mark Darran
104—On Turpin's Highway	David Goodwin
105—Sexton Blake in the Sixth	Cecil Hayter
106—The Black Mask	David Goodwin
107—Sexton Blake at Oxford	Cecil Hayter
108—Yellow Peril	Brian Kingston
109—Dan the Boxer	S. Clarke Hook
110—Dave the Barge Boy	David Goodwin
111—A Pit Hero	Max Hamilton
112—The Boy Editor	Alfred Barnard
113—Sahib and Sepoy	— — —
114—War of the Mills	David Goodwin
115—Guy of the Greenwood	Morton Pike
116—The Strolling Players	E. Harcourt Burrage
117—Britain Invaded	John Tregellis
118—Britain at Bay	John Tregellis
119—The Prize Fighter	S. Clarke Hook
120—In Wildest Africa	W. Murray Graydon
121—Britain's Revenge	John Tregellis
122—Pete's School	S. Clarke Hook
123—Sexton Blake in the Congo	W. Murray Graydon
124—Across the Equator (Sexton Blake)	W. Murray Graydon

(continued)

S. DACRE CLARKE

AUTHOR, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

BY JOHN MEDCRAFT

—continued from page 74

ABOUT this time, Clarke, ever ready to emulate a successful rival, entered the lists against the popular "Ally Sloper's Half Holiday" with a slavish copy entitled "'Arry's Budget" which lasted for about a dozen numbers and then faded out.

When "Comrades" finished after lasting for only 30 numbers, it was succeeded on April 16th, 1887 by the "Boys' Jubilee Journal" (see illustration on page 81), in which Clarke donned the mantle of Justyn Lambe in penning the opening serial "The Mysterious Mask" followed by "Guy Rayner at Oxford" and "Guy Rayner in Spain". Of particular interest is the first appearance of J. N. Pentelow who contributed two fine serials, "Vancé; or, the Gladiators of Old Rome" and a school story, "Damon and Pythias". These and other fine stories brought the "Boys' Jubilee" into the front rank but in spite of apparent success it ended at No. 61 and was succeeded by the "Young Briton's Journal" on June 16th, 1888. Although the majority of the serials in the new paper were original, reprints began to creep in and "The Voyage of the Conqueror" reappeared. Clarke was again prominent with "Guy Rayner Amongst the Brigands", "The Pride of the Ring" and "Jack Freeman's Schooldays" while Edwin S. Hope wrote and illustrated "The Lone Lagoon" and other stories. Two new authors in Charles T. Podmore and Edgar D'Arcy contributed "The Golden Dragon" and "The Dread Unknown" respectively, while George Emmett wrote "Too Much Alike" his first serial for Clarke. The "Young Briton's Journal" ended at No. 47, Vol. 2, and was followed on June 20th, 1889 by the "Boy's Own Journal".

Reprints were more numerous now and included serials by Ernest Brent, Charlton and John Holloway which had previously appeared in the Rollington journals. George Emmett added a sequel, "Too Utterly Good" to his previous story and Charles Stevens made a surprising entry with "Pearly Ben" although I think this, also, was a reprint. Serials by Clarke and others completed the issue and the journal ended at No. 41, being succeeded on May 29th, 1890 by "Boyhood". This was Clarke's

second attempt to emulate the "Boy's Own Paper" and a foredoomed failure, ending at the fateful No. 13 and was then incorporated with the "Boy's Graphic".

On July 30th, 1887, the irrepressible Clarke, ever ready to tilt at windmills, attempted to rival Henderson's "Young Folks' Paper" in its own particular sphere with "Boys and Girls" but again sadly misjudged his capabilities. The only serial of note was "The Fairies' Champion" by Edwin S. Hope in emulation of Roland Quiz, and the journal faded out at No. 17 being followed by the more robust "Boys of the United Kingdom" on Nov. 26th 1887. In this attractive and well produced journal, Clarke re-introduced an old favourite in "Mat Marchmont After School-days" and "At Oxford" while other good serials included "In a Pirate City" and "The White Monk of St. Andrews" by Edwin S. Hope but the early promise was not maintained and the paper ended prematurely, at No. 22. Its successor, the "Boys' Popular Weekly" commenced on April 21st, 1888 and got off the mark well with two fine serials by J. N. Pentelow, "Faithful unto Death" and "The White Cockade" while "St. Bartholomew" by Charles T. Podmore and "The Throne of Montezuma" by Edwin S. Hope helped to maintain the standard. "Caractacus the Unconquered" by Clarke in the style of Charles Stevens followed also "Born to be Hanged, or, the Doings of Three Bad Boys", an unfortunate story in both title and tendency. The death bell of this fine paper sounded when news was introduced in No. 31; two pages at first, then three and finally four. It was the last straw for the suffering subscribers and the end came at No. 41.

Into the breach on January 22nd, 1889 came "Boys of the Isles" with another badly titled story by Clarke in "Murder; or, the Knife with the Crimson Stain" followed by "That Aggravating Schoolboy", "Captain Moonlight", "Lion Jack" and "Mortlake of Tombstone" by Edwin S. Hope. This rare journal had a longer run than I hitherto thought and it ended at either No. 35 or 36. "The Bad Boys' Paper" which followed on Oct. 12th, 1889, is the scarcest of the Dacre Clarke journals and the crowning example of the many errors of judgement and good taste which contributed largely to his failure as a publisher. A worse title and one more likely to discourage the youthful reader and further inflame the already prejudiced parental mind it would be difficult to imagine. The chief serials were "The Brave Boys of Old London", "The Brigand's Revenge" and "Rolando; the

Marvel of Old Rome". I am uncertain of the exact finishing date of this journal but think it ended at No. 26.

"The Devil was sick; the Devil a Saint would be'. After "Bad Boys' Paper" ended Clarke bounded to the other extreme with the "Boys' Graphic" on March 8th, 1890 in an ambitious attempt to emulate the firmly established "Boys' Own Paper" with suitable stories and illustrations, coloured plates and sanctimonious editorials. But all to no purpose. "The Boys' Graphic" ran to two half yearly volumes and with all serials ending in the last number it quietly-faded out on Feb. 28th, 1891. No flourish of trumpets, no boastful announcement of a new journal to follow, not a word of explanation. Clarke's first spell as a publisher had ended.

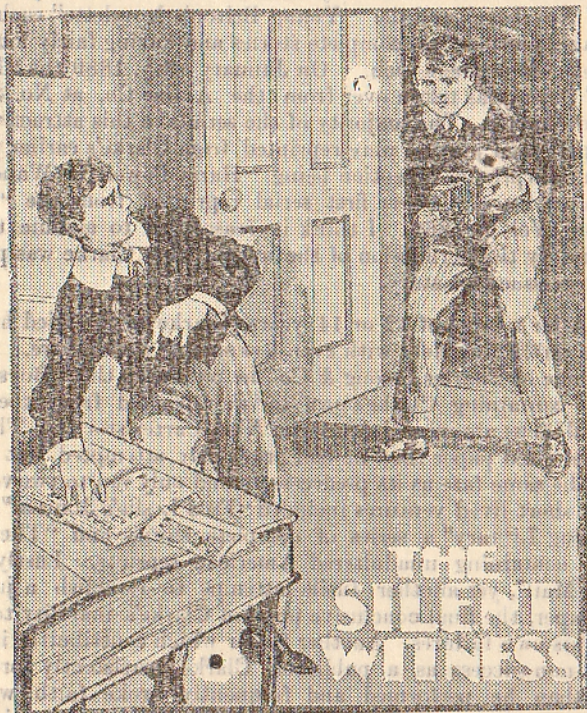
Other earlier ventures by Clarke included the "Guy Rayner's Boys' Novelette" and the "Young Briton's Novelette" each being 16 page, journal size, complete stories and having fairly long runs approx. 40 numbers each. On January 13th, 1889 the "British Boys' Paper" was taken over from the Aldine Co. at No. 46 and ran to No. 86. The majority of the serials in this attractive and well produced journal were reprinted from Clarke's earlier papers, the one surprising exception being "Harry Power the Wanderer", Harcourt Burrage's very first serial reprinted from the "Young Briton" Vol. 1, 1869. I think it reasonable to assume that it was not by the permission of the author that Clarke was permitted to reissue this story.

After a lapse of 12 or 14 years, Clarke again tried his luck in the publishing field with even less success than before. Under the name of Charles Strong & Co., he published the "Boys' Peep Show" containing Clarke's own serials reprinted from the older journals plus abbreviated American Nick Carter stories. This was a larger sized paper than he had previously attempted but it met with the same fate as its predecessors and only ran to two volumes. Other short lived ventures included "Fred Leslie's Journal", "The Amazing Library" a series of complete stories and "The Boys' Star" containing unadulterated American reprints. Lastly "The Boys' Mail", yet another futile attempt to establish a juvenile newspaper, the final conclusive proof of Clarke's inability to learn from his own failures. Another factor which contributed, in part, to his non-success as a publisher, Clarke persistently promised more than he performed and frequently broke faith with his readers, an elementary but vital fault. To this day we are inclined to discount any statement attributed to Clarke and my friend,

F. N. Wearing's article on "Guy Rayner" in the "Collector's Miscellany" No. 3, February, 1946, furnishes reason for this. Briefly, the letter written by Clarke to Brother Wearing, circa 1907, and quoted by him in the above article, contains one gross misstatement and several other inconsistencies.

An energetic and capable man within limitations Clarke was unfortunate in operating at a time when competition and values were keen. Had he lived today, many promising fields and avenues of profit would be wide open to a man of his character and ambition. What ultimately became of Clarke is uncertain. It has been said that he went to the U.S.A. and there wrote under several pseudonyms. It may be true and it is to be hoped that there he found the success that was denied him here.

FINIS



A typical illustration reproduced from the "Gem"

THEY MET SEXTON BLAKE

No 1 RUPERT WALDO

BY H. M. BOND

WE have all admired the physique of those stalwart individuals used to advertise the abilities of various physical culture experts, and I dare say many of us have wished to emulate them. But whether or not it is possible to transform a weakling into a strong man in real life, Mr. Edwy Searles Brooks did even better in the fictional world and created a man of herculean strength while to all outward appearances he was just an ordinary person with no outstanding abilities either physical or otherwise. Such a man was Rupert Waldo, commonly known to readers as "the wonder man". His great strength coupled with a streak of daredevilry in his make up more or less guaranteed that, sooner or later, he would cross the path of law and order, and this, as all old "Union Jack" readers will know, he did many times.

It would take a deal of space to describe all his escapades, and in any case it is not my intention to go into details of stories, but he certainly did some remarkable things and stood up to even more. Sexton Blake himself, with whom Waldo naturally came into contact so many times, could not stand up to his strength, even though he (Blake) more or less countered every illegal move of the Wonder Man. Despite the differences in their outlook towards life Waldo and Blake were always good friends at heart, and there was never any real malice between them. A curse from Waldo now and then when foiled by Blake, but such a curse was soon forgotten as this remarkable character literally laughed his way into a further Robin Hood escapade. The punishing of tyrannical business men or contemplative warmongers was always a favourite job with Waldo and I do not think any Sexton Blake author could have given better treatment to such adventures by such a character, or as would beset such a man, than did Mr. Brooks.

In the later stages of his career, Waldo decided to become an aid to the law instead of a nuisance, and he set himself up as a "peril expert". Although the authorities frowned upon his activities even in this field, they nevertheless had to admit his usefulness to them at times, and it is true to say that Sexton Blake received great help in many ticklish problems through the strength and resourcefulness of this super man.

But that trace of daredevilry came to the fore again and ultimately Waldo became once again a crook. But he was a different kind of crook and I do not believe he has any parallel in fiction despite the introduction since of so many characters of a Robin Hood nature.

The Waldo series was unique; far fetched perhaps, but vastly entertaining. I might add in conclusion that Edwy Searles Brooks introduced Waldo's son into his famous Nelson Lee "St. Franks's" stories. Here was a perfect reproduction in miniature as it were. Waldo "the wonder boy" held great sway for a time with Nipper & Co., but his career was rather shorter than that of his popular father and he vanished into the realm of dead characters long before the final Rupert Waldo yarn appeared in the last but one issue of the old "Union Jack".

NOTE : The next character to be dealt with in this series will be LEON KESTREL, THE MASTER MUMMER created by Lewis Jackson.

oooOooo

ROUND AND ABOUT ROOKWOOD

BY ROGER M. JENKINS

IT was inevitable in my schooldays that after prayers the headmaster would make some reference to our behaviour outside the school, exhorting us to guard zealously the *tone* of the college—an appeal which usually fell, I am afraid, on deaf ears. Nevertheless, I can see now the import of these addresses, for there most certainly are a number of uninteresting schools without tone or character to them. Rookwood undoubtedly was not in this class; its history was chronicled with a vivacity and spontaneity that seemed to gush forth as from a spring. As an instance of a direct contrast to this school, let us digress for a moment or two to examine St. Franks.

In a recent magazine article about Charles Hamilton, it was stated that although many people contended that his style was easy to imitate, no one succeeded in doing so. I feel sure that Mr. Hamilton was not only thinking about the substitute writers, but also the St. Franks' stories which were so obviously an attempt to cash in on his success. But St. Franks was a dull place. The background for fantastic detective stories, no amount of ingenuity on the part of its creator could make it live. From

time to time it was burnt down with monotonous regularity, and arose phoenix-like from its ashes—but it hadn't changed; occasionally some masters would go mad (under the influence of a drug, of course), but the most we could muster was a slight morbid curiosity. The absence of humour was a natural result of the painstaking thoroughness with which the stories were written; they never read convincingly and I think it fairly certain that their author was never satisfied with his work. They should have served as a warning to all those hack writers who thought that they too could write with the hand of the master. As school stories they are little better than a monument to failure.

How different was Rookwood! From the first story which appeared in No 715 of the "Boy's Friend" (20/2/15) to the very last which appeared in the 1940 "Holiday Annual", the whole saga of Rookwood was written with the grace and ease that distinguished the Greyfriars and St. Jim's stories by the same author. The Rookwood stories infused new life into the "Boy's Friend", but Rookwood, in spite of its many claims to fame, was very much the Cinderella sister of the three schools. To begin with, its history was only a third as long as its rivals, and it is significant that among the list of Mr. Hamilton's favourite characters, —Mauleverer, Cherry, Nugent, Linley, Vernon-Smith and D'Arcy—not one comes from Rookwood. Again, in the article about "Frank Richards" that appeared recently in "Picture Post", there was not one reproduction of an illustration from a Rookwood story. Nor was any really famous character ever at Rookwood. Why, then, do I think so highly of it when its more illustrious contemporaries should take first and second places?

The reason surely is this; the Rookwood stories stand today as a wonderful cameo of what a gifted author could do with his spare moments. I do not mean to imply that the tales were second-class. They were not; they just did not have first-class characters to act in them. There could be only one Bunter and one D'Arcy, and fate had decreed that they should not go to Rookwood. In a way, this was fortunate, for there were no hack writers who were tempted to write about the Fistical Four. From first to last, the tales were all by Charles Hamilton. This being so, why were they not so successful as the Greyfriars and St. Jim's ones? I think the reason lies in the fact that three weekly papers in the same vein were really too much of a good thing. The thing to wonder at is the fact that Rookwood survived so long as it did in face of such heavy competition from older established schools. But let us now look a little more closely at

this Hampshire seat of learning.

First of all, just where was Rookwood? That question, I know, has puzzled many. All of which we can be certain is that it is in the north-east corner of Hampshire, possibly in the vicinity of Aldershot. Certainly, it was sufficiently near for the Greyfriars XI to travel across country by train for matches (which is definitely a feat, as anyone who has tried to travel across country will agree). The name of Rookwood's rival establishment—Bagshot—may be another clue, for a small town of that name actually does exist in this locality.

Having determined the whereabouts of the school, we can enter—if old Mac will let us in—and browse around its hallowed precincts. Dr. Chishoim is frowning at us from his study window. This reverend gentleman is rather short-tempered and severe, unfortunately, and his stubbornness has caused both the masters and the perfects to go on strike at different times. His voice has been compared to that of a tin whistle—a disrespectful simile that would earn us a caning at least were he to overhear us. So let us move on, carefully avoiding that odd pair of masters in the quad who appear to be Mr. Greely portentously booming out good advice to poor Mr. Mooney who is nervously blinking in all directions as if looking for a line of escape. From the study window of the Forth Form master, Mr. Bootles is smiling vaguely at us, but as we approach the image becomes blurred and it seems quite another person altogether: could it be Mr. Richard Dalton?

(continued)

THE COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY

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STOP PRESS

I must apologise to readers for the lengthy interval between Nos 5 and 6 of this journal. It has all been due to pressure of business. With this issue too, many subscriptions will expire. We trust that we have interested you sufficiently to justify your renewal. When writing of anything in connection with the "Collector's Miscellany" needing a reply by post please enclose a stamp. Remember how those 2½d.'s mount up. A new journal for O.B.B. fans is the "Collector's Digest". Publisher is Mr. H. Leckenby and the price is 1/1 per issue.

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