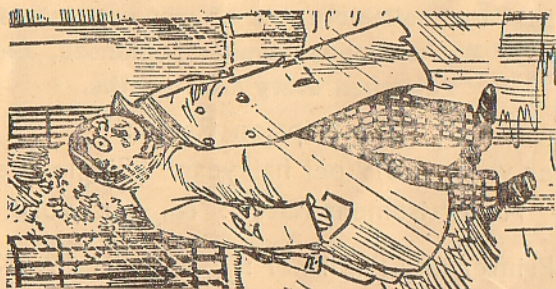
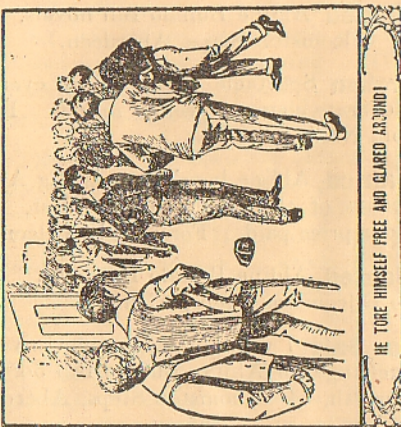


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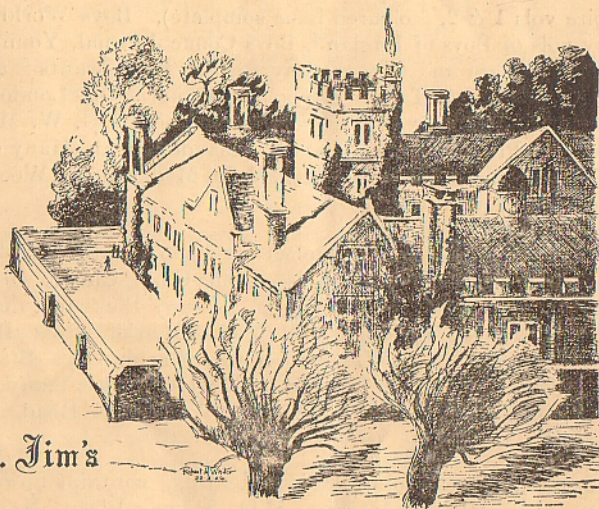
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The Collector's Miscellany

*A journal for collectors of Old and Modern Boys'
Books, Bloods, Penny Number Romances, Etc.*

No. 13 (5TH. SERIES). OLD SERIES, No. 99. SEPTEMBER, 1948.



St. Jim's



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Advertisement Rates 1d. per word (2 cents)

For Sale Blueskin, Black Bess, Black Highwayman, Charles Peace the Burglar, Rupert Dreadnought, (orig edn), Handsome Harry & Cheerful Ching-Ching, Ned Nimble series, Tom Wildrake's Schooldays, Edith the Captive, Captain MacHeath, Dick Turpin, Jack Harkaway's Schooldays — After Schooldays — At Oxford — Amongst Brigands etc., Outlaws of Epping Forest, Brigands of the Sea, Rags and Riches and many other Brett and Hogarth House romances. Oliver Twiss, Mazepa, Black Monk, Ela the Outcast and other Lloyd bloods. Don Zalva, Desdichado, Nuggets, Varieties, Young Folks vols 7—11, 14—20, 26, 30—32, 39—41 & 43. Up-to-Date Boys complete set, Boys of the Empire vols 1 & 2, (coloured issue complete), Boys World vol 2. Many vols of Boys of England, Boys Comic Journal, Young Men of Great Britain and Boys Sunday Reader, state wants. Aldine Powerful Dramatic Tales, Reynold's Mysteries of London and Court of London 12 vols, orig. cloth, mint set. G. W. M. Reynolds' and Pierce Egan's romances. Claude Duval, Many others. Reasonable exchanges considered. John Medcraft, 64 Woodlands Road, Ilford, Essex.

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12

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12

The Collector's Miscellany

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

No. 13 (5TH. SERIES). OLD SERIES, No. 99. SEPTEMBER, 1948.

THE BOYS' REALM

BY HERBERT LECKENBY

THE Boys' Realm" was launched as a result of the success of the "Boys' Friend" as a penny paper, for there is no doubt at the time it was the leading boys' paper in the land. The star of Edwin J. Brett was growing dim, and the Aldine Company, though a thriving concern, concentrated mainly on the complete story libraries published in fours at intervals. So there appeared to be room for another paper specialising in serials and Hamilton Edwards was not slow to take advantage of the situation. The subsequent career of the Realm justified his optimism.

The new paper was preceded by a lot of publicity, Harmsworth always had the advantage of plenty of papers in which he could boost a new comer to the family. In addition full pages were taken in two successive issues of the "Big Budget"—one of the few rivals running on similar lines. A year later Pearson's returned the compliment when they started the "Boys' Leader."

The Realm then, first saw the light of day on Saturday June 7th, 1902, but was actually dated June 14th, due to the publishers' policy of dating their periodicals a week in advance. How well I remember it! For weeks I had been waiting in eager anticipation, my appetite whetted by those preliminary announcements, mixed with anxiety as to how I should raise the capital to get it. However I managed it somehow, and when the copy was finally in my hands I was not disappointed. Except that it was printed on pink paper, and the make-up slightly different, it was a second edition of the "Boys' Friend," page size about $10\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$. I can picture it as though it were but yesterday.

There were three serials, pride of place—the front page being given to "The Muff of Melthorpe College" by Allan Blair, illustrated by T. W. Holmes. The two others were "The Quest of the Scarlet Star," author Reginald Wray, artist H. M. Lewis, and "The Black Galley" a historical yarn written by John Finmore, drawings by G. M. Dodshon.

In addition there was a long complete story of 10,000 words "Billy Gurdstone's Pluck" by Archibald Roper, and the first of a series of short complete stories concerning Captain Handyman, a copy of Captain Kettle. These appeared anonymously but were supposed to have been written by an old sea-dog named Captain Shand.

To complete No. 1 there were articles "When I was a Boy" and "From Weakness to Strength," and finally the "Editor's Chat" adorned of course with a portrait of Hamilton Edwards.

I can set down all the details I have given without referring to the copy itself, an example of the strange tricks one's memory plays, referred to by Mr. Goodyear in the last C.M.

(continued)

THE LAST OF W. STEPHENS HAYWARD

THE late F. N. Wearing's article on W. Stephens Hayward in CM No 12 was a fitting tribute to a fine writer whose full blooded adventure stories were immensely popular in their day and still read well. A widely travelled man, whose experiences of savage lands was unsurpassed by his contemporaries in this class of literature, Stephens Hayward turned his knowledge to good purpose as an author of boys' stories. Partly on this account and partly because of a general pugnacity of disposition, he was known as the "Fireater" among the old bohemian writers of Fleet Street.

Drink, a common failing of his class, was his downfall and with the object of restoring a shattered health he went to live quietly by the sea. A wise step but taken too late.

He was writing "The Idol's Eye" for "Sons of Britannia" at the time and no copy was received from him until almost the hour for going to press, so Harcourt Burrage wired to him and later received a small roll of paper directed in a sprawling hand. Within was found several pages covered with incoherent words ending with "In the wood—wood wood-in the-the-wood" and so on.

It was obvious that Hayward must be seriously ill, so a friend and fellow member of the Emmett staff went down to see him and found him dead. The curse of Victorian Fleet Street had claimed another victim.

J. MEDCRAFT

"BLOOD" AUTHORS OR ARTISTS —**WHICH THE BETTER ?**

BY R. A. H. GOODYEAR.

I MUST not leave this world without confessing most of my many shortcomings. Firstly, in my writings about Old Boy's Books I have used guarded phrases, as I have never been sure of dates and have but a misty recollection of authors' names and titles. In this regard I have lagged far behind John Medcraft, J. P. Quaine, Henry J. Steele, Herbert Leckenby, Maurice Bond, Joseph Parks, William H. Gander, and the late James J. Wilson, Barry Ono, F. N. Wearing and Ben Winskill.

Some of these stalwarts are (or were) almost living pages of the British Museum catalogue, so accurately have they given dates and titles and full painstaking details. Indeed, I have often thought that if some of them devoted themselves to original work instead of to the achievements of their literary heroes of the past, they might produce and get printed better yarns than those of the dead-and-gone authors they praise so highly.

One of them, for instance, is having an article on penny dreadfuls published shortly in a well-known annual book of high literary quality. Should that not inspire him and others like him to make a personal reputation in the world of letters instead of dwelling so long and lovingly on the work of those who have gone before him? In fact he would in many cases have nothing much to beat, for I say unhesitatingly that hundreds of the serials and long complete stories formerly published in our penny weeklies were poorly written and sometimes ungrammatical.

The speeches these old writers put into the mouths of their characters were often absurdly stilted and unreal. In support of this statement I quote here a few examples from the *Boy's Standard*, Vol X, No 250, August 14, 1880, presented to me recently by our good mutual friend, Henry Steele, the Harrow bandmaster :

"Nay, put back thy knife ; already has enough innocent blood been shed to satisfy its insatiable thirst."

"So you chose that fair and innocent maiden for your victim —left her in the hands of that hideous monster, doomed to a fate worse than death, to droop like a flower transplanted to a foreign soil."

"To the Vampire," he hissed! "By the powers of sulphur-dome he shall not escape me. By heavens, he has already stolen the costliest jewel I ever possessed!"

Would anyone but a ranting actor of the old school have made a simple soldier or even the hunting squire of a village talk like that? Should we ourselves, any man Jack of us, think of expressing ourselves in such flamboyant phrases? How we should have been stared and laughed at if we had!

I claim that the popularity of the great majority of the old boys' stories was attained through robust action of the cut-and-thrust type, so cleverly illustrated by some gifted artists of the period. In this very number of the "Boy's Standard" — a 68-years old copy — there are two pictures of outdoor scenes of violence and sudden death which reveal the vernal background with delightful verisimilitude — every leaf of the trees depicted with photographic faithfulness, while in one of them the moon is shining through a vista of foliage on an evening of quiet beauty which makes one long to be out on such a queenly night.

Why, one wonders, do not our amateur historians, in their interesting articles, oftener honour the artists, named or unnamed, to whose thrilling pictures such publishers as Brett and Fox and Henderson owed so much of their success. As one instance among many, I assert that W. Boucher never got anything like the credit he deserved for his illustrations to "Young Folks' Paper" serials and that the illustrator of "Treasure Island," "The Black Arrow" and "Kidnapped" did almost as much as Robert Louis Stevenson himself to beautify those since famous stories in the eyes of the juvenile readers of the time. So also did the illustrator of "Giantland" and its "Tim Pippin" successors, whose name at the moment I cannot recall.

I do not think I stand alone in my opinion that "Old Boys' Artists" would be as mesmeric a title as "Old Boy's Books," for in my own schooldays it was nearly always the illustrations which thrilled me most and it is those which, in my old age, linger sweetly in my memory when the letterpress of the stories has been mainly blurred by time.

FINIS

A few copies of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12 (5th series), of this journal are still in print, price 1/3d. each post free. Parks, Printer, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorks.

CURIOSITIES OF HAMILTONIANA

BY JOHN MEDCRAFT

THE collector of modern boys' papers is an incurable enthusiast who takes his hobby seriously but I am wondering if he is not a little too intense, too prone to laud the gods of his own limited range with perfervid praise. Since the news of Charles Hamilton's marathon activities became generally known a few years ago, the Cult of Hamiltoniana has reached major proportions and is a tribute to the ability and popularity of a fine writer who overshadowed his contemporaries in the field of boys' periodical literature between the wars. But during the 20 years prior to the first Great War—the Golden Age of boys' literature—there were many first class writers of superior ability and wider scope and we who remember the great days of David Goodwin, Maxwell Scott, Sidney Drew, J. N. Pentelow and a host of other fine authors, can afford to smile tolerantly at our younger brethren.

Charles Hamilton has created a variety of characters, some of which and one in particular will be remembered when the stories they figured in are but a dim memory, but it must not be forgotten that the majority of these creations ran ad infinitum whereas the older writers were continually turning out fresh stories in a far wider variety of settings with many different characters.

In output Charles Hamilton's pre-eminence is unquestioned but I doubt if such mass productiveness is an unmixed blessing for no author, however gifted, can proceed at high speed without a proportion of errors and the use of padding. Hamiltonian padding was always amusing and the obvious errors due to lack of specialized knowledge could be ignored but not the mistakes that offend the intelligence. A famous historical personage is reputed to have said, "I can believe the impossible but not the improbable" and there are many improbabilities in the Hamilton stories. To select one at random, "Gem" ½d. series No. 44 "Tom Merry & Co. in Town." in this story nine juniors in three independent parties decide to celebrate a special holiday by a day in London and all take single rail tickets to town. Finally, they return to St. Jims in Sussex from Euston.

Another oddity familiar to all who know his early stories in the "Union Jack," "Marvel," "Pluck," "Boys' Friend" and "Vanguard" is the use in his St. Jims and Greyfriars series, of

many character names that had originally appeared in these earlier and totally unrelated stories. From memory I can recall Wingate, Nugent, Talbot, Glyn, Clive, Selby, Trimble, Kildare and Wharton and reference would probably reveal many more. With the scope of any telephone directory available for easy choice of names, it is surprising that Charles Hamilton should have repeated himself so frequently in this respect. In the "Marvel" in 1908, he wrote a few stories of Netherby School and Beechwood Academy with Hurree Singh, Redfern and Owen Lawrence as central characters. These stories did not last and Hurree Singh was later transplanted in Greyfriars but we heard no more of the other two until, needing fresh characters for the St. Jims series, they were split into three and reappeared in "Gem" No. 211 as Redfern, Owen and Lawrence. Ingenious but unnecessary.

The same connection can be noted in his choice of pen names, Frank and Hilda Richards are well known but the significance of Martin Clifford and Owen Conquest is missed until linked with the lesser known Clifford Owen.

In those early days Charles Hamilton could have no thought of the vogue his stories would eventually create otherwise he might have ordered things differently. Or that a major war, by the suspension of his medium of expression, would be indirectly responsible for replacing the lost host of boyish readers with a devoted band of collectors and enthusiasts. In the past, enterprising publishers of Victorian boys' papers occasionally hired suitable persons to impersonate their fictional heroes and thus perpetuate the legend that they actually existed; Ching-Ching and the Sloper family are cases to point. The Hamiltoniana enthusiast needs no such optical illusion for he is already half way towards that belief. At least, so one would gather from the interest taken in the scholastic establishments of Greyfriars, St. Jims and Rookwood, their histories and traditions, situations and personnel and other details down to the domestic arrangements of the various masters, beyond which such amiable lunacy can surely go no further.

Nevertheless, the fervour of this devoted band must be extremely gratifying to Charles Hamilton and an encouragement in his new outlet as a writer of book length boys' stories.

GEORGE PURKESS Senior and Junior

BY JOHN MEDCRAFT

THE success of Edward Lloyd and the popularity of his penny number romances inspired many other enterprising printers and newsagents to enter this profitable field and as the publishers of this class of literature increased so did the authors. Amongst the foremost was Pierce Egan the Younger, son of the author of "Boxiana" and "Life in London" whose fine historical romances had an immense sale. Their popularity can be gauged by the many copies of "Wat Tyler," "Robin Hood," "The London Apprentice" and others which exist today, more than a hundred years after publication. Another ambitious writer was James Lindridge, who catered for the appetite which Harrison Ainsworth and Bulwer Lytton has done so much to stimulate by writing "Jack Rann" and "Captain MacHeath." Hannah Maria Jones, Malcolm J. Errym, Thomas Frost and a legion of other Victorian authors served their novitiate in penny number fiction a century ago.

Thomas Frost, on the threshold of a distinguished literary career, tells how he submitted his first long story to Edward Lloyd. "We are chary of undertaking the first productions of young authors" said Lloyd's manager blandly, at the interview, "So many are such trash and unreadable. Also our publications circulate amongst a class so different in social position to the readers of three volume novels that we sometimes distrust our own judgement and place the m.s.s. in the hands of an illiterate person—a servant or machine boy, for instance. If they pronounce favourably we think it will do." Apparently the story did not reach the level of this dubious standard for it was rejected by Lloyd but published later with considerable success by W. M. Clark.

The best known of Frost's earlier stories were "George Barrington the Gentleman Pickpocket" in 29 numbers; "The Corsican Brothers; or, the Fatal Duel" in 39 numbers, 1852; "Paul the Poacher" in 60 numbers and "The Black Mask; or, the Mysterious Robber" in 30 numbers, 1850. These were all published by George Purkess the Elder who was active in the field of sensational literature between 1845 and 1860 during which period he issued 17 penny number romances, a library of complete stories and a series of penny plays. He also co-operated with Lloyd and Strange in the publication of other romances.

All of these were well produced and with rather better illustrations than the average for this class while a definite upward step was taken by issuing the stories complete in the dignity of publisher's binding.

"The Library of Romance" ran to 65 numbers, each a complete 16 story emblished with a lurid woodcut and title to match. Another extolling the deeds, real and imaginary, of a notorious wretch was "The Life and Adventures of Jack Sheppard" in 29 numbers, execrably illustrated with crude woodcuts but this story had been previously published by other firms and Purkess used the original blocks in his issue. Also reprinted was M. G. Lewis's gruesome classic "The Monk" in 36 numbers with better but milder illustrations than usually adorned this fearsome story. "Paul Jones the Pirate" in 68 numbers and "Adam Bell ; or, the Archers of Englewood Forest" in 24 numbers were both written by Pierce Egan the Younger and contained several original illustrations by the author.

"Roderick Dhu, Clan Alpine's Chief ; or, the Scottish Outlaw" in 57 numbers, 1850, was written by Thomas Archer and first published by Hextall & Wall in 1843.

"The Life and adventures of Jack Rann alias Sixteen String Jack" in 52 numbers and "Captain MacHeath the Bold Highwayman" in 27 numbers previously mentioned, were well written and very popular highwayman romances. Another full blooded highwayman romance was "Tyburn Tree ; or, the Mysteries of the the Past" in 45 numbers written by John Dicks and first published by R. S. Swift a few years previously. This story possesses considerable literary merit and I rate it as an ideal blood. "Jack Cade the Insurrectionist" in 32 numbers, 1851, was penned by James Cooke while two others by anonymous authors were "The King of the Beggars ; or Bampfylde Moore Carew" in 36 numbers and "The Unknown Warrior ; or, the Secret Band" in 24 numbers. "Dick Turpin's Ride to York in 9 numbers was a reprint of the version first published by Glover in 1839. Finally, the last romance to be published by Purkess was "Ben Bolt ; or, the Perils of a Sailor" in 16 numbers and written by Thomas Peckett Prest, his first and last story for this publisher.

The elder Purkess died in 1862 and was succeeded by his son, also named George, who became proprietor and publisher of "The Illustrated Police News" in 1863. This was a large 4 page periodical with the front adorned by crude illustrations of gruesome incidents from current crimes. About 10 years later the

younger Purkess commenced publishing penny bloods with illustrations of the same type that appeared in the "Police News," "Calcraft the Hangman" in 30 numbers and "Marwood the Hangman" were two of the earliest followed by "Florence Maybrick" "Harriet Stanton" and other penny number romances based upon recent crimes. The most popular of all was "Charles Peace the Burglar" in 100 numbers, a well written but long drawn out story which was reissued several times. Two interesting departures from the crime sequence was "Mother Shipton's Life and Predictions" in 14 numbers and "The Life of Buffalo Bill" in 74 numbers. The latter was a composite version of several of the original American stories and is the only known penny number serial dealing with this redoubtable but over-rated character.

Compared with contemporary Victorian publishers of this class the younger Purkess issued few penny bloods but the "Illustrated Police News" was his sheet anchor and had a large circulation. This and similar lurid publications were a feature of small newsagent's windows on publishing day up to about 40 years ago and never failed to attract groups of morbid individuals including many juveniles, absorbed in the pictorial record of ghastly details.

FINIS

OLD BOOK-MARGIN SCRIBBLERS

BY R. A. H. GOODYEAR

COLLECTORS condemn the habit of scribbling on the margins of books. I like books with such marginal comments: they are often deliciously forthright and refreshing.

My copy of "Jack Harkaway's Schooldays" is torn here and there and some pages are missing. On other pages are scrawled such phrases as "Blithering drivel", "Bung it through the mangle," "Squash it flat," "Garbage—absolutely septic trash." Speaking from memory, the last criticism came opposite an account of Jack Harkaway being placed in irons by his schoolmaster—a monstrous outrage, which no author should have permitted himself to include even in the maddest schoolboy fiction.

At the end of a copy of "Ivanhoe," which I bought with concealed delight in a York secondhand shop under the shadow of the Minster, a previous owner had dug a hard-pointed pencil in

to declare, "Some day I'll rewrite this impossible story as it should be written," and I chuckled to myself as I murmured, "Bravo, old lad; let's all rewrite a classic apiece and set the world gaping."

My copy of "The Lambs of Littlecote" has at one time been lent out to someone who was unfairly severe with it. He noted on the margins such withering impressions as these: "How immensely Burrage has gone off in this yarn!" "Oh, poor stuff! I'm yawning my head off," "Not a spot on Handsome Harry." I treasure these comments because they are obviously honest, if much undeserved. My own frank opinion is that E. Harcourt Burrage's earlier stories were brighter than his later ones, when his radiant enthusiasm had waned.

One lucky find of mine was a slightly incomplete copy of Pierce Egan's "Life in London," that extraordinary chronicle which captivated Britain in mid-Victorian days. The doings of the rowdy-dowdy young pair of bloods, Tom and Jerry, appear to have shocked the owner of the book. He used different coloured inks—red, green, blue, violet—to give force to his expressions of disgust: "A disgrace to civilization," "Should have been sent to Colney Hatch," "Why were'nt they hanged together?" "Thousands must have been tempted into dissipation by this pernicious publication," "They should have been fried in oil and fed to the seagulls on the Thames," "I'd have ordered these two bounders a hundred strokes of the cat—the incorrigible wasters!"

Nothing in Pierce Egan's "Tom and Jerry" would upset the equanimity of the grandsons of today; the practical joking of that time would seem ridiculous and nitwitted to them. Presumably a collector would not buy a book which had been scribbled on; to me, however, that would be the best book of all, throwing amusing sidelights, as it would, on the reader's mind and character. Were the marginal scribbler himself an author of repute, so much the better for the book. The pencilled remarks of Frank Richards on almost every page of a yarn by Charles Hamilton, for example, or vice versa.

FINIS



Favourites on Screen, Stage & Radio

BY LEONARD M. ALLEN

FEW attempts have been made to portray the schoolboy and his adventures on the stage and screen. Apart from such plays as "Young Woodley" and "The Guinea Pig," both dealing with adult subjects, and a knockabout film of Narkover, featuring Will Hay, there is little to record. Sexton Blake, however, has been the central character in several dramas through both mediums. Early in the century a number of short films were produced and the "Union Jack" co-operated by advertising them. These were the days before the big combines controlled cinemas and we find in a 1914 "Union Jack," No. 548, an announcement that "The Clue of the Wax Vesta" will be shown at picture houses as far apart as Leeds, Ipswich and London. Probably by a mutual agreement with the film company the U.J. at the same time introduced as their serial story "Orders under Seal" which was described as "a dramatic story version of the film of the same name."

A few years later a full length Blake film was released which included Tinker, and as the criminal—Mr. Reece. I believe that well known actor of the silent film in this country, Langhorne Burton, enacted the role of the detective. He definitely did appear in the same part for a series of two reels in 1929.

With the advent of the talking picture Blake was again before the cinema public. This time George Curzon depicted the sleuth in a full length film with a title very reminiscent of the old days "Sexton Blake and the Hooded Terror." The part of the villain was in the very capable hands of that master of the melodrama, Tod Slaughter. Slaughter had previously appeared, with his company, in screen versions of several of his stage successes, notably Sweeney Todd and Maria Marten, the former a popular subject for the boys' story. Both these plays were also the subjects for condensed versions on the Regal-Zono gramophone records, spoken by the same casts as the films. More recently there have been other films of Blake with David Farrer in the role; these can only be described as "thick ear" melodramas and no pains were taken to emphasise the deductive powers of Blake.

Several stage plays have been written around the detective; Arthur Wontner and again, George Curzon, playing the part on

occasion. The former appeared in a play entitled "Sexton Blake" at the Prince Edward Theatre, London, in 1930. Suitable publicity was given by the "Union Jack" and later, when the company took the play on tour, a list was given each week of the present and forthcoming theatres in which it was playing. The story was subsequently published in the paper, specially written by the playwright, Donald Stuart, and re-titled "Mr. Midnight."

That famous character "The Saint" has been the central figure for many films after he first found fame through the pages of "The Thriller." So popular were these with American audiences that the author, Leslie Charteris, went over to Hollywood to supervise them and has now remained in that country to produce the Leslie Charteris Detective magazine. At one time Charteris was seriously considered for the leading role as "The Saint" but this did not materialise and the part was played amongst others, by George Sanders. Another famous character of "The Thriller" was Mr. J. G. Reeder, that eccentric detective created by Edgar Wallace. He too, was depicted on the screen in an excellent British film, with Will Fyffe.

(continued)

THE "BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY"

1st. SERIES, SEPT. 1905—MAY 1925

COMPILED BY HERBERT LECKENBY

(continued from page 190)

260—The Corinthian	Brian Kingston
261—The Millionaire Sportsman Sidney Drew
262—Rogues of the Racecourse ...	Andrew Gray
263—Nosey Parker's Schooldays Cecil Hayter
264—The Skipper of the Challenge	David Goodwin
265—The Fool of the Navy	John Tregellis
266—Land of the Rising Sun (J.S.&P.)	S. Clarke Hook
267—The Schoolboy Athletes Sidney Drew
268—Max the Middy	John Tregellis
269—Midst London's Millions	Andrew Gray
270—Off to Australia A. Arnold
271—The Middies in Morocco	David Goodwin
272—Pete's Aerial Treasure Hunt	S. Clarke Hook
273—The Three Scapegraces Sidney Drew
274—For the Honour of St Simeons	David Goodwin
275.—Buffalo Bill's Boyhood Claude Custer

(continued)

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THE COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY

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