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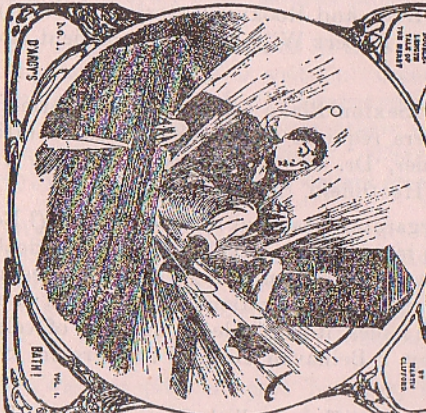
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THE GATHERING OF THE CLANS.

BY
MELBA
CLAYTON

NO. 1.
DANCERS

Vol. I.
PLATE I




Double-Length Tale of Harry Wharton & Co
GRAND CHRISTMAS NUMBER

Maguet

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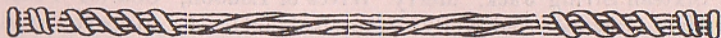
May 1914 No. 11

FRANKS' LIST
No. 11. May 1914. 2D.
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The Collector's Miscellany

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

No. 14 (5TH. SERIES). OLD SERIES, No. 100. MARCH, 1949



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No. 1, Vol. I.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 19th, 1911.

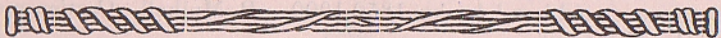
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A few copies of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12 (5th series), of this journal are still in print, price 1/3d. each post free. Parks, Printer, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorks.

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The Collector's Miscellany

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

NO. 14 (5TH. SERIES). OLD SERIES, No 100. MARCH, 1949

Favourites on Screen, Stage & Radio

BY LEONARD M. ALLEN

(continued from page 206)

A PART from a serial included in a miscellaneous programme nothing was heard of Blake on the radio until 1939. That year, on January 28th, a special serial play was introduced entitled "Enter Sexton Blake." George Curzon took the name part and a young Australian actor, Brian Lawrence, the part of Tinker. Great publicity was given to this event in the pages of the "Union Jack's" successor—"The Detective Weekly" and simultaneously a weekly episode was published in the paper. The adaption was from the pen of the old St. Franks author, Edwy Searles Brooks, under his pen name of Berkeley Grey. Evidently this attraction boosted the circulation of the "D.W." and in order to retain the new subscribers, after the completion of the serial, a favourite radio character was introduced into the Sexton Blake stories. This was none other than Mr. Walker of Band Waggon fame. The author, Ernest Dudley, now well known as the "Armchair Detective" wrote several excellent yarns with the spotlight divided between the detective and the junk-man.

Another company of old favourites to reach the screen were Jack, Sam and Pete of "Marvel" fame. As long ago as 1919 there was an announcement in the paper that the Daring-Pollock Film Company had nearly completed a series of films featuring the famous trio. Captain Daring, a hero of World War 1, acted the part of Jack, Eddie Willey, who had seen active service in Italy, that of Sam, and Ernest Trimmington, a giant negro from Bermuda, played Pete. The villain role of the series was in the hands of a well known music hall performer of the time, Captain Jack Kelly, the sharp shooting and stockwhip expert.

FINIS

The Golden Year of the Magnet

By Roger M. Jenkins

“THE reason I always enjoyed the Magnet so much” remarked an acquaintance of mine recently “Is because it was so full of personalities. None of the Greyfriars boys—or masters, for that matter—were merely names to me; they were all living characters, every one of them different.” There can be no doubt, I am sure, that hundreds of others will also carry with them for the rest of their lives not the detailed knowledge of the stories that collectors possess but at least a general impression of these eternal halcyon schooldays of Harry Wharton & Co. and also perhaps one or two particular incidents in the long saga of stories that stand out as a perpetual example of Charles Hamilton’s unerring skill as a writer.

One has only to contemplate the extraordinary long span of life that the Magnet enjoyed to realise that its author must inevitably have possessed (and of course still retains) qualities which make him stand out head and shoulders above his colleagues, past and present, in that part of the literary world which caters for the more youthful readers. It is true that there were many other fine writers in this class of wider scope than Charles Hamilton, but they none of them possessed that broad basis of humanity tinged with humour and flavoured with Classical erudition that mark out the author of the Magnet. Very few of them were able to create characters of more than ordinary calibre, and consequently few of them saw much reason for retaining such characters beyond the length of one story. Certainly Charles Hamilton’s characters were the only ones to make weekly appearances for such an incredible length of time. What exactly was the secret of the Magnet’s longevity? Let us take down a particular volume from the bookshelves and delve into its contents.

I am always inclined to think that the year 1934 was the golden year of the Magnet, though of course it is largely a matter of one’s own age and tastes. To my mind, however, the year 1934 seems best representative of Charles Hamilton’s more mature writing and weaving of plots. The first three issues of the year contain the conclusion of a series about a stolen diamond pin which Billy Bunter purchased for a shilling and sold to Fisher T. Fish for £2-10s. With No. 1354 began a slightly melodramatic series about the kidnapping of Bob Cherry by aeroplane as part of a plot to ransom him for one of Major Cherry’s latest aeronautical inventions. Perhaps a little farfetched, but we were more

than compensated by the bars of Walter's toffee which were given away as free gifts for four weeks at that time, the flavour of which remains with me still!

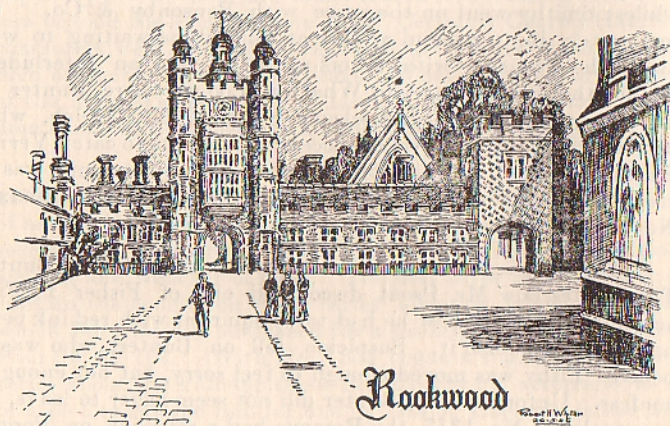
After this indifferent beginning, however, Charles Hamilton settled down to provide us with a succession of stories of the highest standard which was maintained for the rest of the year. No. 1359 entitled "Who Walloped Wingate?" was a neat little tale about Hilton and Price, and the latter's desire to get his own back against Wingate. This was, incidently, the only story of the year which did not form part of a series. No. 1360—"The Mystery of the Head's Hat"—relates how Vernon-Smith put red ink in Dr. Locke's topper before the Head left to pay a call on the vicar. The Bounder was able to escape punishment by telling falsehoods, but Nemesis was soon to overtake him, and when he was caught by Wingate the following week in "The Three Fishers" his father disowned him. Later, however, Dr. Locke decided to give him another chance, and Mr. Vernon-Smith partially forgave his son, pending his good behaviour at Greyfriars. At this point, Mr. Quelch fell ill, and his place was taken by a Mr. Smedley who was really the Bounder's cousin to whom the Vernon-Smith fortune would go if the Bounder were to be expelled from Greyfriars. Thus was the scene set in a masterly manner and the rest of the series is engaged in showing how all Mr. Smedley's attempts to get Vernon Smith expelled came to naught. Especially amusing are the holiday tales in this series, particularly No. 1365, in which Bunter, in expectation of a glorious holiday, agreed to go in the Bounder's name to Folkestone whilst Smithy went on the spree with Ponsonby & Co. Unfortunately Bunter found a tutor at Folkestone waiting to while away the vacation with school-work! After an interlude in France the scene changes to Wharton Lodge where Bunter did his best to get rid of his unwelcome co-guest, Mr. Quelch, whilst Mr. Smedley made several unsuccessful attempts to catch Vernon-Smith napping. When the term began again, the tempo was increased to a new pitch, and the series came to a grand climax in No. 1373.

The next issue was entitled "The Bunking of Billy Bunter." This relates how Mr. Prout discovered one of Fisher T. Fish's account books, and how he had to be squirted with red ink before he would relinquish it. Suspicion fell on Bunter, who was expelled. Fishy was moved enough to feel sorry, but not enough to confess. Unfortunately, Bunter did not seem eager to leave, and eventually in No 1377, the Remove had a rebellion on Popper's

Island in the Sark. Things become involved when a bank robber hid his loot in a hollow-tree on the island, but the inbroglio was settled satisfactorily in No. 1382, and the Remove returned to Greyfriars again.

No. 1383 is appropriately entitled "Bunter the Billionaire." Seven years earlier, in the farcical Bunter Court series we had been introduced to Bunter the landed proprietor. This time, however, Bunter obtained money, in unlimited supplies, through a chance encounter with a gentleman named Mr. Jarvis who was pursued by a transatlantic gunman known as Tiger Bronx. To evade his unwelcome attentions, Mr. Jarvis transferred his money to Bunter and acted as his valet, taking good care to inform the gunman of his action. What he failed to impart, however, was that Bunter was given only a life interest in the the money, and that on his death it would revert to Jarvis himself, who was hoping for a pleasant time when the gunman had been hanged for murdering Bunter. At any rate, Tiger Bronx turns his attentions to Bunter who took the Famous Five along for protection whilst they all went holiday making in France and Italy. As usual, Bunter becomes more and more offensive with opulence, and more and more frightened of the American. Eventually, in No. 1389 the affair was settled with poetic justice when it turned out that neither Bunter, nor Mr. Jarvis, nor Tiger Bronx was entitled to the money, but it must go to the Chicago Home for Stray Cats. And Bunter returned to Greyfriars, penniless, sadder if not wiser.

(continued)



COMIC PAPERS OF YORE

BY JOHN MEDCRAFT

IT was back in 1901 when the nation was first saddened by the death of Queen Victoria and then cheered by the successful termination of the Boer War that I first met Weary Willie and Tired Tim in the pink pages of "Chips" and during the next few years this paper, together with "Comic Cuts," "Big Budget," "Jester" and similar comic papers were amongst the most desirable things in my young life. Much has happened since those early carefree days but the impression has lasted and I can still recapture the thrill of bygone pleasures when browsing today over fondly remembered numbers. For a fleeting moment time stands still and I am a boy again, gazing longingly at the latest number of "Chips" alluringly displayed in the local newsagent's window, pondering weightily, whether to expend a halfpenny now or, possibly, because I had none to spend.

Although comparatively affluent with the munificent sum of twopence weekly for my pocket, I realised that this did not go far with a galaxy of penny and halfpenny comics to choose from and I usually purchased back numbers which were then freely sold at five for a penny (penny comics counting as two). I lived near Hoxton Market at the time and this squalid locality, once so rich in associations with the past, is for me forever invested with an aura of romance. Alas, the old Britannia Theatre has gone, bombed and demolished and the delightful old world shop of the late Benjamin Pollock now empty and neglected but memories survive.

Conveniently situated outside one of the many public houses that infested the district was a small stall kept by a frowsy old dame for the sale of back numbers of comic and similar papers and I was a regular customer. How I envied her in her chosen vocation, privileged to handle such delightful wares and to retire in the evening to a comfortable nest there to revel further in a boundless stock. That she probably existed in a dingy back room in one of the many mean streets that abounded in the district I neither knew or cared. To me she breathed the pure spirit of romance although the fragrance of her exhalations probably affected others differently. Still, she was a good sort in her way and never minded me sorting out specially required numbers from her stock. In this way I amassed considerable runs of comic papers covering the period of Tom Browne's activity and I am not alone

in rating the 1895 to 1906 period as the best in the 60 years history of boys' comic papers.

I am frequently asked why comic papers are not more collected. I think the reason is obvious; we read these comics at an age when our acquisitiveness had not fully emerged, they were read, discarded and often used to light the fire in the morning. Hence comparatively few copies survive and the would be collector is soon discouraged, only my friend Arthur Harris of Llandudno, in addition to myself, has achieved any considerable success in this limited sphere. Today the comic paper as we old boys knew it is almost extinct, knocked out by dual blows of the late war and the influx of crude American and Canadian funnies and finally submerged by the home produced imitations of the latter.

Looking back over 60 years it appears that "Punch" originated the comic paper through a series of adult humorous papers to the boisterous "Ally Sloper" which provided the direct link. But it was the Harmsworth brothers who saw the possibilities of comic papers for boys along these lines and started the Pandora Publishing Company in 1890 with this object in view. First to appear on May 17th 1890 was "Comic Cuts" followed shortly afterwards by "Illustrated Chips" on July 26th of the same year while in April 1895 the "Comic Home Journal" commenced. "Chips" No. 303, June 20th 1896 was a memorable number for it featured the very first adventure of two characters drawn by Tom Browne which were destined to become famous in this type of literature. A few weeks later, christened Weary Willie and Tired Tim, their weekly adventures occupied the entire front page and from then onwards have been the regular front page feature. The comic strip had arrived and other boys' comic papers both stable companions and rivals, soon followed suit but none of their creations achieved quite the same degree of lasting fame as Willie and Tim. Poor Tom Browne died but another artist carried on his work and characters and through further changes of medium Willie and Tim marched on without a break through two major wars and, though pale shadows of their former selves, are now disporting themselves in "Chips" which now appears fortnightly.

Chief rival of the Harmsworth papers was the "Big Budget" first published by C. A. Pearson on June 19th 1897 at one penny weekly. I rate this as one of the very best of the old papers for it was a comic and boys' journal combined, with fine serials by Maxwell Scott, Sidney Drew, Henry T. Johnson, Stacey Blake and other popular authors of the period. In this latter respect

the B.B. was superior to the earlier Harmsworth comic papers which contained serials of a curiously melo-dramatic type more suited to an adult. In the comic section the weekly adventures of Airy Alf and Bouncing Billy drawn by "Yorick" were the front page fixtures for 10 years only disappearing from this position during the last two years when the B.B. was on the downgrade. Many older stories were reprinted in the B.B. first being a drastically abridged version of Edward Viles' "Black Bess," originally published by Harrison in 1864-9. Then followed "Gentleman George and King of Diamonds" by J. G. Bradley, "Follow my Leader" by H. C. Emmett, and "Dashing Duke" all of which had been first published by the Emmetts in 1870-75. All of these reissues were freshly illustrated by W. M. Bowles while another well known artist who commenced in the B.B. is C. H. Chapman.

Yet another successful Harmsworth venture was the "Jester" which commenced as the "Wonder" on Nov. 16th 1901 price one penny and was later renamed. In many respects this was the equal of the "Big Budget" and carried many fine serials by Henry St. John, Morton Pike, Sidney Drew and Henry T. Johnson. Foremost in the comic section were Happy Ike and Gloomy Gus and the Bunsey Boys while Jack, Sam & Pete, Ching-Ching and other fictional heroes were enshrined for a time as comic paper characters. Occasionally the artist was not too particular in the choice of a subject, for the "Halfpenny Comic" first published by Harmsworth on Jan. 22nd 1898, contained the comic and unflattering adventures of Stanley Deadstone the Great Traveller.

Trapps, Holmes & Co., who published several halfpenny comics in opposition to the Harmsworth papers were active in this field for many years until eventually absorbed by the Amalgamated Press octopus. Their best papers were "Funny Cuts" which started in 1890, followed by "World's Comic" in 1891 and "Coloured Comic" on May 21st 1898. Another from the publishers of "Ally Sloper" was "Larks" which commenced in April 1893. All of these papers enjoyed long runs but there were many failures, the ambitious "Dan Leno's Comic" did not last long while "Jokes," "Comic Bits," "Skits" and others, now almost forgotten, ended in less than a year.

Harmsworth's first coloured comic paper was "Puck" which started on July 30th 1904 price one penny. This most attractive paper had a run of over 10 years and its outstanding character was Professor Radium whose marvellous inventions usually went

wrong at the critical moment with disastrous results to the on-lookers. On September 14th of the same year the "Butterfly" commenced and ran for many years. The Henderson coloured comic papers "Comic Life" and "Lot-o-Fun" were good value for a halfpenny while "Scraps" although rather more adult was equally good. The humorous adventures of Dreamy Daniel were a regular feature throughout the entire run of "Lot-o-Fun" which also contained many fine school serials.

In addition to the main comic characters there were many others, equally amusing, passing in an endless panorama of fun through the old time comic papers. Fred Karno's once famous Music Hall sketch, "Casey's Court" inspired one artist and this really funny series, which commenced in 1903, is still running in "Chips." In the same paper I recall the serio-comic misadventures of an Egyptian wizard whose efforts to please Pharaoh invariably landed him in the torture chamber weekly. Many others come to mind in half forgotten memories—Chokee Bill and Area Sneaker, Lucky Lucas and Neglected Jim, The Newlyweds, Billy Smiff's Pirates, Cholly and Gawge and other old friends of our boyhood.

I am often asked which section of my collection I value most. As I have collected intensively for the past 28 years this should be a difficult question but actually it isn't. I love the old Lloyds with their quaint woodcuts but should not put them first, nor the fierce and rare bloods of the Newagents Publishing Co., or even the grand Fox and Emmett journals. Neither do I give pride of place (though our younger brethren may deem it heresy) to my sets of the first 20 years of the "Gem" and "Magnet." None of these but the friends of my early boyhood, the comic papers.

FINIS

THE COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY

A journal for collectors and all who are interested in
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 YORKS., ENG.

INSIDE INFORMATION

BY LEONARD M. ALLEN

THE production of boys' papers has always been shrouded in mystery; even when the publishing houses decided to afford the author the credit of having his name published very few details of him as a person were supplied. The famous novelist Sydney Horler, however, has some interesting information in his book "Writing for Money" which, by his kind permission, I am privileged to quote.

In the course of a chapter dealing with the writing of serial stories the author tells us.....

"I shall never forget a visit I paid many years ago to the Boys' Fiction Department at that huge literary factory, The Fleetway House. It was in my very early days, and I was in negotiation with the Editor of "The Boys' Friend" over a serial.

I entered a huge room filled with noise. Several men were typing as though their lives depended on the speed and accuracy of their fingers. The din was so deafening that I could scarcely make myself heard. Curious to know what these industrious people were doing, I made an enquiry: they were supplying the paper with its next week's stories. Doing the job on the premises—for spot cash. Bush-ranger yarns, hidden treasure stories, detective extravaganzas—there they all were, being hurtled out at a rate that must have exceeded 3,000 words an hour. One ex-cultant was a positive virtuoso; during the twenty minutes I was in the room, the only pause he made was to insert fresh sheets of paper. He never stopped once to think....."

Probably this was the reason for the short lives of many of the old boys' papers but this "sausage machine" procedure could not have been the method adopted by the many favourite authors so in demand by collectors to day. One cannot imagine Maxwell Scott, who was so painstaking as to actually travel the journeys described in his stories, working in such surroundings.

Most of us are aware that stories credited to sporting celebrities were actually written by professional writers and Mr Horler reveals that the grand cricket yarn "Between the Wickets," which appeared in the 1925 "Chums" came from his talented pen. What is more he was only allowed 48 hours to create the story and produce the first instalment of 8,000 words ... a remarkable achievement.

The prices demanded for rare copies of old boys' books are a sore point with collectors but the following extract from Mr. Horler's book surely indicates the peak

"It is interesting to note that an increasing interest is being taken in "blood" fiction of all types. The other day, anxious to obtain a clean copy of a famous shocker written in 1840, a friend of mine was forced to pay no less than £22-10-0 for the book. When collectors begin to buy a certain species of literature, it is safe to assume that that class of fiction has achieved a definite status."

It is very curious that many writers of boys' fiction of the lurid type were the mildest looking of men but this feature was evidently not confined to authors alone as this further extract shows.

"This dates back to the days when I was feverishly scribbling Boys' Bloods at ten shillings per thousand words. The editor in immediate charge of these sanguinary fourpenny productions was a gentleman by the name of B———. To outward appearances he was the mildest-mannered person who ever sent a voucher down to the cashier, but I was not in that office very long before I found that B——— had a secret side. Seething within that ultra-respectable-appearing breast was a wild and whirling hatred of law and order, as constituted at that time this England of ours. B———, in short, had strong Communist tendencies. After casting his galley proofs behind him, he would sally forth of nights and preach the doctrine of Socialism at street corners. An odd cove, but interesting in his unexpectedness.

However ...

One day B——— came to me, frowning gravely. He carried proofs in his left hand and the censorious blue pencil in his right.

'I'm just going through your story, 'The Triple Headed Death,' Horler' he said.

'Oh yes?' I replied, thinking of the cheque.

He became more portentous.

'I'm sorry to say I've found a serious mistake. Look here' —pointing to a line on the proof—'your'e all wrong about the size of the bomb—we're not using them so big now.'

THE BOYS' REALM

BY HERBERT LECKENBY

(continued from page 196)

ANYWAY the paper would appear to have been a success from the first, for it ran for some years without much change in appearance, usually a sign that all was satisfactory. Some of the school stories which followed "The Muff of Melthorpe" were "The Bully of St. Simeons" by T. G. Dowling-Maitland (otherwise Max Hamilton), "The Five Hundredth Boy" by C. J. Mansford (a schoolmaster), "Dick Downtree's Schooldays" (Captain Harry Anithondyke), "The School in the Backwoods" (Allan Blair), and "Barred!" David Goodwin's first school yarn and one of his best. He followed it with another, "Forester of St. Osyths."

Other stories which appeared in the early volumes were "Peril of the Pacific" by Robert Leighton, a couple of Nelson Lee stories by Maxwell Scott "The Hidden Will" and "Nelson Lee's Rival." "Harry the Horseman" a fine circus yarn by Henry St. John; "Gunfleet Jim" and "Jack O' the Fens" by David Goodwin; "A World at Stake," "A Fight for Empire" and "The Iron Way" all by Reginald Wray; "The Mysterious League" by Stanhope Sprigg and "The Radium Seekers" by Fenton Ash.

Some time later—in Vol. 3 or 4, there started a rather surprising series of stories, introducing Handsome Harry, Ching-Ching, and the rest of the crew of the Fighting Belvedere written by that famous Victorian author, E. Harcourt Burrage. I say surprising because these once very popular characters belonged to the penny dreadful period, and Hamilton Edwards always declared himself an arch enemy of that type of story. Anyway the stories had quite a good run and often given the front page, and I don't suppose they did anyone any harm. Whether they are reprints or not I am unable to say. Several of Harcourt Burrage's serials also appeared, including "Tom Tarter at School." This was a reprint.

When the Realm had been running about four years there was a change of policy. Three years earlier the "Boys' Herald" had joined the Friend and the Realm, and as time went on I suppose it was found that three papers almost exactly alike were not altogether a success, so it was decided that the Realm should specialise in sport, especially football, a policy which was adhered

to almost to the end of its days. In addition to stories, cricket and football leagues were formed all over the country, and articles on all kinds of sport were featured prominently.

As a result there appeared in this grand old paper some of the finest sport serials ever written. Some which readily come to mind are the famous football yarns concerning the Blue Crusaders. The first bore that title, others were "For League and Cup" and "A Lad of the League." They were written by A. S. Hardy, perhaps the best of all writers on sport.

Another splendid story I vividly remember was "King Cricket" by Charles Hamilton. Robert Murray, later to be identified with Sexton Blake stories, also wrote many stirring serials, and other authors were Captain Malcolm Arnold, Clement Hale, Trevor C. Wignall and Henry T. Johnson.

It was not quite all sport however, for there was always a school story, and often a tale of adventure.

The Realm then went smoothly on its way until March 20, 1916 when war conditions brought about its temporary disappearance.

However no sooner had the sounds of conflict died away than we found it back on the bookstalls—on April 5, 1919. How different to the state of affairs following the last war. It was the same size, and again on pink paper, but the make-up was naturally a little different. Again sport was prominent, one serial at the beginning was "Blake of the Blue Crusaders" by A. S. Hardy. There was also a Sexton Blake story and there started very early a series of complete stories concerning St. Franks. These had a good run. The first ones were written by E. S. Brooks but I was once told by an editor that the later ones were written by someone else.

(continued)

J. N. PENTELOW.

THAT popular author J. N. Pentelow, during the latter part of his career was always associated by his many admirers with the Amalgamated Press. Apparently, however, he did some free lance work and in No. 207 of Geo. Newnes publication "The Captain" is a short school story written in his best vein, entitled "A Sinister Business."

Sale**Exchange****Wanted**

Wanted back numbers of Gem, Magnet and Schoolboys' Own Library (St. Jims, Greyfriars and Rookwood stories preferred) in good readable condition. Robert Wilson, 100 Broomfield Road, Glasgow, N. 14

Wanted Union Jacks, Sexton Blake Library—only stories introducing other characters required; Criminals Confederation, George Marsden Plummer, Dr. Huxton Rymer and the rest. Homer, Yulden Farm, Heathfield, Sussex. 15

Wanted information regarding year and name of paper (? Boys' Realm or Boy's World) in which appeared a serial story dealing with two castaways on the island of Lunga, in the Treshnish Isles off the coast of Mull, West of Scotland. Also price wanted for particular volume or issues, if available or for loan of volume or issues. Dr. Macartney, 2 Belhaven Terrace, Rutherglen, Scotland. 14

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