

# The Collector's Miscellany

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

No. 15 (5TH. SERIES). OLD SERIES, No 101. JUNE, 1949



## THE FADDIST FORM-MASTER!

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**A few copies** of Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, & 14, (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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**Wanted** Ferrers Lord stories, Boys' Friend 3d. and 4d. Library, etc. Henry Bartlett, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.



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NO. 15 (5TH. SERIES). OLD SERIES, No. 101. JUNE, 1949

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## The Golden Year of the Magnet

By Roger M. Jenkins

*(continued from page 214)*

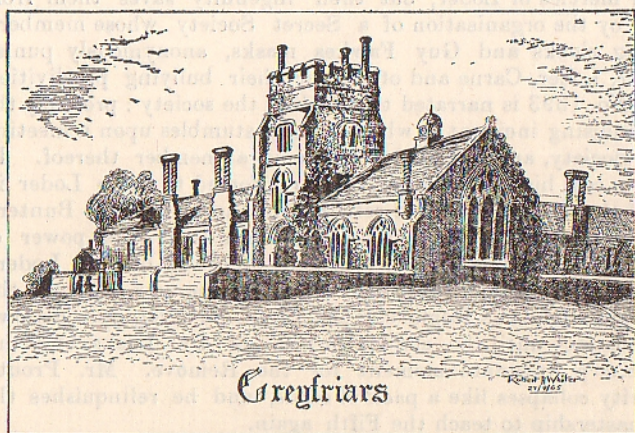
IN No. 1390 the Autumn Term started badly with trouble with Loder. As Dr. Locke and Wingate were involved in a car accident, Mr. Prout assumes the mantle of headmastership. The added strain of his extra duties made Prout lose much of his good humour, and he asserted his pompous authority by making Loder Head-Perfect, and expelling Wharton on Loder's bequest. Although the intervention of Mr. Quelch saves Wharton, the Remove master soon finds Mr. Prout intolerable as headmaster, and, after much altercation, leaves Greyfriars until such time as Dr. Locke may return. The Remove are thus left to the tender mercies of Loder, but their ingenuity saves them from defeat by the organisation of a Secret Society whose members, wearing cloaks and Guy Fawkes masks, anonymously punish Walker, Loder, Carne and others for their bullying proclivities. From No. 1393 is narrated the work of the society: probably the most amusing incident is when Bunter stumbles upon a meeting of the Society, and is forced to become a member thereof. In order to seal his lips, Brother Bunter is forced to whop Loder in one of the Society's Acts of retribution, and after that Bunter's desire to prattle suddenly vanishes! Eventually the power of the Society increases when irrefutable proof of one of Loder's many misdeeds passes into their hands, and he now becomes the unwilling ally of the Remove. Mr. Prout, however, goes his own pompous way until the sudden arrival of Dr. Locke ends his regime at a fortunate moment for the Remove. Mr. Prout's authority collapses like a pack of cards, and he relinquishes the headmastership to teach the Fifth again.

The Christmas number (No. 1401) is entitled "Christmas at Hilton Hall" and for the rest of the year we are treated to part of the story of how Billy Bunter insinuated an invitation to spend the vacation with Hilton for himself and the Famous Five. The festive season is well spent in the ancestral home on Blackmoor with the added interest of mischief-making by Price, an escaped convict on the moor, and a mysterious butler.



At the end of No. 1402 we must regretfully close the volume. The year is at an end. As we look back on it, we echo with the correspondent in the editor's chat "How does Frank Richards keep it up?" That, I think is the secret of the year 1934. It is a pity that none of its stories were ever reprinted, for it was a bumper year—the fare was varied, but always on the same high level. It is easy to pick out from other years series we like better—indeed, none of my absolute favourites appear in the year 1934. But we cannot pick out so easily another year in the history of the "Magnet" in which the quality of the writing remained at the same high level throughout, in which the plots were all woven with such satisfying intricacy, and in which such novel and entertaining stories came tumbling fast and furious, week by week, from the pen of Charles Hamilton without any sign of deterioration. I would not part with this volume for a small fortune, for it is indeed the finest example of the master-hand at work.

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## ADVERTISEMENTS

**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



## MURDER MOST FOUL —in Weekly Numbers

By the late R. A. H. GOODYEAR

TO turn the lurid murders of the present century — far too many of them—into serial stories and weekly-number tales could be the cause of pain and embarrassment to still living relatives of the murderers and therefore it isn't done. Doubtless we have advanced in delicacy of thought and action since the late Victorian era, when sordidly sensational murders were made the main theme of many popular serials and enormously increased the circulations of the papers publishing them.

Though I would run a mile rather than witness half a minute of any sort of murder, I confess that, as a boy, I revelled in what was then known as "a good murder story" and I am sure that my parents did also. At any rate, they never hypocritically made any attempt to prevent me from reading the murder tales and never for a moment did those yarns have the slightest ill effect on me.

Judging by the torrent of detective stuff, much of it septic trash, which is issued to-day I cannot think we have progressed a lot in the last sixty years. Real-life detectives scoff at the mistakes the story-writers make in their involved narratives, fantastic "clues" and irregular arrests.

What was wrong with Maria Marten of the Red Barn, a story so often told in penny numbers towards the end of the Victorian dynasty? Compared with some of the dreadful double and treble murders of the present time, with their horrible accompaniment of ghastly mutilations, you could class the Maria Marten crime as mild and straightforward.

Could any skilled author fail to make an absorbing story of "The Man they could not Hang," who at Babbacombe in Torquay killed the kind spinster lady who had so benevolently befriended him? Who can guess what ebony shadows darkened his mind at that terrible time? When they tried to hang him for his crime the trap of the scaffold three times failed to work. He escaped being hanged and was in consequence reprieved.

Human nature is complex and largely unfathomable. Whoever does murder has usually some motive for it. A sufferer from



epilepsy may commit a revolting murder without being fully conscious of it or remembering anything of it afterwards. There may frequently be only a hairsbreadth of margin between black murder and white innocence.

The B.B.C. give us noisy gun and pistol murders repeatedly. There are Murder Societies and Detective Clubs. Many high-class publishers include novels in their lists wherein successions of characters are coolly killed off by callous murderers as if they were of no more account than mad March hares.

All which is sheer unashamed fiction. Is not fiction founded on fact infinitely to be preferred? Give me for choice—yes, first and last choice all the time—the stories of real murderers, all people with but a single thought; to get rid of individuals whose continued presence on earth had become for some reason objectionable and unendurable.

Some may not believe there was ever such a wholesale murderer as Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, but there was a barber somewhat like him in Paris once and it wasn't merely a figment of the author's brain that he precipitated customers into his cellar and then slew them.

Tod Slaughter masterfully and brilliantly portrayed Sweeney Todd on the stage and radio. He likewise presented Jack the Ripper in a powerful characterisation of that loathsome arch-killer of Whitechapel. I have read a large volume by a French criminologist which confidently asserts that Jack the Ripper was a woman and a midwife, who hid her bloodstained petticoats under still more of the ample skirts which it was the fashion to wear then and aroused no suspicion, as the police were always looking for a man.

In a Press interview I had with Tod Slaughter he told me that his play was based substantially on the facts of the case. At intervals, when alone on the stage, he took out of his black bag a slender, cruel-looking knife and fondly kissed it—a horrific gesture which thrilled and chilled his audience. I believe that a successful book (converted into a film) dealt with Jack the Ripper's atrocities and was called "The Lodger."

Were I myself a publisher, I would not hesitate to commission my best authors to tell in vivid language the true story of every murderer whose crime was of widespread interest at the

*continued on page 235—*





## THE EVOLUTION OF THE COLOURED COVER

By JOHN MEDCRAFT

THE coloured cover of his favourite paper is one of those things which the modern boy takes for granted and, despite paper restrictions and quotas, it continues to gladden his eyes. To go back to the last year of normality the bookshops and bookstalls of 1939 were crowded with a variety of boys' books and papers in their multicoloured jackets and it is difficult to realise that not so very long before, the majority of boys' papers were issued without covers.

For almost half a century the penny number romances, popularly and often undeservedly known as Penny Dreadfuls, were launched with an announcement familiar to Victorian youth but now obsolete and almost forgotten—"No. 2 given away with No. 1 in coloured wrapper, price one penny." In effect this meant that, no matter how long the story ran, whether for a brief 10 numbers or a prosperous 100 numbers the solitary cover presented with No. 1 had to suffice for the whole. No wonder so few of these earlier coloured covers survive or at the attraction they have for collectors today.

The practice of issuing coloured wrappers at the commencement of a serial romance probably originated in 1837 with Edward Lloyd when he began publishing piracies of the early works of Charles Dickens in a similar format, usually 4 or 5 penny weekly numbers in a slavish copy of the original Dickens' wrappers and issued as a monthly part. "The Sketch Book" was the first to be so published, followed by "The Penny Pickwick," "Oliver Twiss," "Nickelas Nickelbery," "Mister Humfrey's Clock," "Barnaby Budge" and "Pickwick in America." As a result of these monthly issues the green, pink and yellow wrappers of the Dickens' piracies were fairly plentiful and numerous specimens exist today. All other romances of this period were limited to the solitary wrapper presented with No. 1 and are now exceedingly scarce but enough have survived to show that the lead given by Lloyd was generally followed by all contemporary publishers of penny number fiction and so "No. 2 given away with No. 1 in coloured wrapper" had come to stay.



In the years that followed, the coloured wrappers increased in fierceness or attractiveness but were no more numerous until Edwin J. Brett, the Emmett brothers and Charles Fox launched "Boys of England," "Sons of Britannia," "Boys' Standard" and the many other fine boys' journals that were published from 1866 onwards. The best serials from these journals were first issued in penny weekly numbers and later complete in volume form again with a coloured wrapper. Moreover, the longer stories ran to 2, 3, 4 and sometimes 5 volumes each with its wrapper now printed in several colours and often with several folding coloured plates presented gratis, so the youth of 1866 to 1890 had far more brightness than the lads of the previous 30 years. Many colourful stories were published during the former period, "The Blue Dwarf" in 3 volumes written by P. B. St John contained 18 large folding plates of which 15 were highly coloured portrayals of the deeds of Dick Turpin and his comrades while Harrison's five year story "Black Bess" lavished even more coloured plates extolling the adventures of the same motley band. From Charles Fox came the well known "Sweeney Todd" in 4 volumes with a highly sensational folding plate showing the mythical chair and trap in operation; "Spring Heeled Jack" in 4 volumes, "Turnpike Dick" in 5 volumes, "Three Fingered Jack" and the rest of Fox's band of fictional heroes, while Ritchie's "New Newgate Calendar" ran to 5 volumes each carrying a highly coloured illustration on both front and back covers. Yes, the youth of 1866—1890 had much to dazzle their eyes and stimulate adventurous cravings.

And so on to 1886 when the Aldine Publishing Company entered the field by taking over Ralph Rollington's "New Boys' Paper" and in October of the same year they launched the first of the many popular complete libraries for which they are primarily known. This was the "Garfield Library" named after an American president and containing, appropriately, reprints of American dime and half-dime libraries. How the lads of 1886 enjoyed them, a long complete thrilling story in coloured wrapper for threepence, surely they were too good to last. But no, the "Garfields" flourished and in 1887 were joined by the "Boys' First Rate Pocket Library" 32 pages in coloured picture cover, price one penny, containing English stories at first but after No. 30 approx. exclusively American reprints featuring Deadwood Dick prominently. Shortly afterwards came the "O'er Land and Sea Library" 64 pages price twopence, "Detective Tales" and "Tip Top Tales" all alluringly titled American reprints in vividly coloured covers. The complete libraries were in the ascendant and the old penny number romance was on the wane.



To stem the tide, certain publishers issued their penny parts in separate coloured wrappers, "Dashing Duke" in mauve wrappers was a representative example while the Aldine Co. probably as an experiment, published Harcourt Burrage's last two outstanding stories, the famous "Lambs of Littlecote" in 39 penny numbers and the "Island School" in 38 penny numbers, each number consisting of 24 pages of text in a multicoloured picture wrapper, the majority of which were drawn by Robert Prowse. Other penny number publishers turned their attention to complete libraries with varying results, Fox's "Champion Library" and Lucas' "Sensational Library" did not last long but Brett was more fortunate with the "Halfpenny Surprise" 16 pages in pink covers which ran for over 600 numbers.

To hasten the rout of the old penny number romances in 1894 came the Harmsworth brothers in the van of the powerful Amalgamated Press when they launched three libraries destined to become famous—the "Halfpenny Marvel" in green covers, "Union Jack" in mauve covers and "Pluck" in yellow covers. At the turn of the century, the Aldine Co. had many complete libraries running strongly including the rare and attractive "Invention, Travel and Adventure" (Frank Reade) and amongst others due to follow was the popular "Dick Turpin Library." Hendersons, the best of the older publishers, also issued their quota of complete stories with the "Wild West" and "Nugget Library" outstanding. Apart from the journals, "Boys' Friend," "Boys' Realm" etc. and comic papers, which, possibly on account of their large size were not furnished with separate covers, I can recall only two libraries published since 1900 which lacked covers, the first series of "Penny Popular" and "Greyfriars Herald," both of which were properly attired when revived in 1920.

Brett ceased publication of penny number romances around 1900 but continued to issue the stories in complete volumes with coloured wrapper, price sixpence. When the firm closed down in 1906, the stock was dispersed by remainder buyers one of whom, having gained possession of many of the original blocks and moulds, published further supplies on his own initiative but got covers and titles mixed with the result that "The Young Apprentice" had a Ching-Ching cover illustration; "Dark Deeds of Old London" featured a couple of fighting schoolboys and numerous other amusing mix-ups occurred. Although irritating at the time these misprints are of considerable interest today.



In one respect modern publishers have lagged woefully behind their Victorian predecessors and there is no hope that they will ever see the light. After each volume of the old Victorian boys' journals had run its weekly and monthly course it was reissued complete in handsome embossed publisher's cloth or in stiff picture boards while many of the best complete stories were also reissued in original cloth. As a result, far more of these fine old books have survived in first class condition than would otherwise have been the case. What a chance to preserve their many fine boys' papers in worthy form has been missed by the Amalgamated Press.

Today, despite war and its consequences, all boys' papers, so numerous before 1940 but now sadly depleted, have coloured covers as a matter of course. And it is certain that when the easing of paper restrictions permit the launching of new boys' papers they will all be suitably attired in bright coloured covers.

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#### ADVERTISEMENTS

**Approx. 10,000** old boys' magazines for sale. Send s.a.e. for list stating requirements. Martin, 93 Hillside, London, N.W. 10. 15

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## THE COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY

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YORKS., ENG.



## MURDER MOST FOUL—in Weekly Numbers

*continued from page 230—*

time. An accomplished writer could weave a vivid tapestry around Burke and Hare, the brutal and callous bodysnatchers of Edinburgh—their history has too often been told by slovenly scribblers who missed the real drama of their grim lives through not knowing how to make it thrilling.

Because in many cases the motives for these real murders were understandable though deplorable; because they would undeniably serve as a deterrent to any would-be assassin who might imagine he could take the life of a human being in secrecy and security without ever drawing the faintest suspicion upon himself, I would give the stories the widest possible publicity in book form and know that I was thereby vouchsafing my readers a deeper insight into the human mind and at the same time supplying them with an engrossing yarn of genuine lurid drama, which had all the make-believe, “who-dun-it” novels of the fiction writers beaten to a frazzle.

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## New Member to the Circle

ONE immutable thing about us all is that each is born to his own generation. The articles by Messrs. Medcraft and Goodyear are read by me with interest and their opinions held in great respect for the obvious, loving labours put in to their hobby by both of them—but the pity of it is that so little about which they write can arouse a chord in me. I am forty-two so how can it be? But when it comes to Messrs. Leckenby and Bond and Jenkins—what long-forgotten memories do their words conjure up!

When a boy I collected as I read — “Union Jack,” Sexton Blake Library,” “Gem,” “Boys’ Friend” and the “Holiday Annals. In 1929 a zealous parent destroyed the lot (complete and spotless from 1915 onwards!) during my absence in the U.S.A. In 1931 I started again. The Luftwaffe saw to the next lot (including the “Detective Weekly” from No. 1) and I packed it up. Then I read “Boys will be Boys” and heard of Joseph Parks. Two weeks later pure chance took me to Saltburn and I called at Back Diamond Street to obtain a set of back numbers. Now I feel that I shall just have to start that third collection.



One day perhaps I shall meet a fellow enthusiast, I had no idea that others had made such a good thing of what I thought was my private hobby. It would be fun to sit with a pipe and a pint in some quiet inn and work out just what were the feelings entertained by Sexton Blake for Mademoiselle Yvonne ; just how Charles Hamilton created three entirely different atmospheres in the three schools and all those other unsolved problems.

And in my ignorance may I pose an elementary question? Who was Duncan Storm? Surely not Hamilton again? How I used to love those yarns of what appealed to me as the finest school of them all—The Bombay Castle.

Thank you, Mr. Turner—and you, Mr. Parks—and all your contributors. I feel I have met some new friends and am not anything like so lonely now!



The "Jester" which commenced as the "Wonder" on Nov. 16th, 1901 was a continuation (as a new series) of "The Funny Wonder" which first appeared July 30th, 1892. The "Jester's" foremost characters in the comic section were Happy Ike and the Bunsey Boys. Happy Ike and Gloomy Gus appeared in the "Big Budget."

A subscriber writes us as follows: "I suggest that a series of articles be published giving full information about the famous schools of the past, i.e. Greyfriars, St. Jims and Rookwood in that order, including possibly as well, St. Franks. Such information to give the full names of the headmaster, masters servants and scholars, with forms and study numbers, then the locale of the school, and information as to rival schools mentioned in the stories such as Highcliffe with Courtenay & Co., in the case of Greyfriars. This would be of great interest to those like myself, now getting on in years, but who in their youth revelled in the exploits of Harry Wharton, Tom Merry, Jimmy Silver and Nipper & Co."



## THE BOYS' REALM

BY HERBERT LECKENBY

*(continued from page 222)*

THE first editor of the new series was John N. Pentelow, that versatile author who wrote under many pen names. Besides editing this and other papers he found time to write many articles on Test cricket, the very best of their kind, for he was a great authority on the game. The stories included "Carden of Cardenshire," "Smith of Rocklandshire" and "Young Yardley" (prophetic name that).

Other authors who wrote many serials were C. Malcolm Hincks, Alfred Edgar, Robert Murray and John Gabriel.

A curiosity in the early numbers was "Henry St John's Schooldays" in which the author became a fag at St. Basils the school about which he had written many serials, the first being in the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. "Boys' Friend" some 20 years earlier.

Later on, Jack, Sam & Pete, the famous characters created by S. Clarke Hook, appeared in a series of long complete stories but here they appeared under the name of Gordon Maxwell. Who he was I have no idea. The stories had a fair run, but I don't think they were as popular as the originals.

"The Boys' Realm's" second edition ran on in the same fashion for just over eight years, then came a great change. On July 23rd, 1927 it started again at No. 1, in size the same as the "Magnet" and the majority of the papers of the day, and with a coloured cover. This might have been all right for the "Magnet" and "Union Jack" but to those who had known it from the beginning it wasn't the "Boys' Realm." An attempt was made to provide a link by the publishing of a series concerning the Blue Crusaders but written by E. S. Brooks. To me who had fond memories of the first great story, these were very poor stuff but maybe I was prejudiced. Anyway in its new form it was a complete failure for with No. 80, Jan. 26th, 1929, it reached its end. It is true there was an attempt to continue it as "The Boys' Realm of Fun and Fiction" with the gradual dropping of "The Boys' Realm," but all the same it was dead with that No. 80—and before for that matter.



Well in all it had a run of nearly 21 years, thus being high in the list of boys journals, and in its hey-day it was certainly one of the best.

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## THE "BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY"

1st. SERIES, SEPT. 1905—MAY 1925

COMPILED BY HERBERT LECKENBY

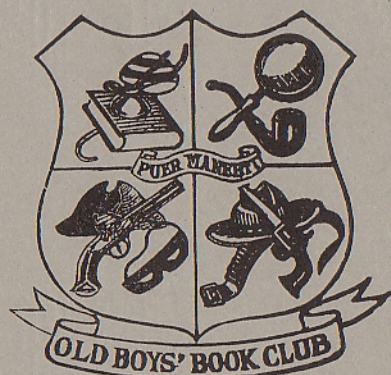
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276—Through Thick and Thin	...	Martin Clifford
277—Pride of the Prairie	... ..	Claude Custer
278—Buffalo Bill's Circus	... ..	Claude Custer
279—Pete's Circus	... ..	S. Clarke Hook
280—Bootboy of St. Barts	... ..	Robert Murray
281—Sealed Orders	... ..	David Goodwin
282—Nelson Lee in the Navy	... ..	Maxwell Scott
283—Fag of Study Three	... ..	David Goodwin
284—His Younger Brother	... ..	Mark Darran
285—The Legions of the Kaiser	... ..	John Tregellis
286—The Fags of St. Simeons	... ..	David Goodwin
287—All the Winners	... ..	Andrew Gray
288—The Boy Without a Name	... ..	Frank Richards
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293—Pete's Prisoners	... ..	S. Clarke Hook
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295—The Mailed Fist	... ..	John Tregellis
296—The Tenderfoot	... ..	Cecil Hayter
297—He would go to School	... ..	Robert Murray
298—The Film Detective	... ..	Maxwell Scott
299—Hounded from School	... ..	Robert Murray
300—With the Allies' Flay	... ..	John Tregellis

(continued)



## THE LONDON OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB



THE O.B.B.C. was formed on 29th Feb. 1948, jointly between Robert Blythe, Len Packman and Robert Whiter, the first meetings being held at Len Packman's home in Dulwich and Rob. Whiter's home in Wood Green. It had long been felt among collectors the need of such a club to promote good fellowship and straight dealing and enable members to meet each other, whereas all previous connections had been mainly through the post. After several meetings it was decided to form a committee and for members to subscribe monthly in order to pay for the costs of refreshments etc. incurred by the collector at whose home the meeting was held. The present committee consists of L. Packman (Chairman), R. Whiter (Treas.), B. Whiter (Sec.) and our worthy Frank Richards as President. Meetings are held every month when all manner of discussions take place. The club has been fortunate in having such celebrities as Messrs. E. Searles Brooks, Keneth Brooks, Eric Parker and Miss E. Flinders at the meetings at times. The club has in its ranks men and women from all walks of life from various parts of the Empire, the latter of course as postal members. Collectors wishing to join should write to the Club Secretary, Mr B. Whiter, 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22. As collectors will see from our badge that we cater for all all classes, whether the collector collects Aldines, Dick Turpins, Magnets, Gems, Nelson Lees, Buffalo Bills or any other type of old boys' books. And last but not least, our motto is "Puer Manchit" which being translated means "Boyhood is Everlasting."

ROBERT H. WHITER.



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# FRANK READE'S LIBRARY

No. 1. (Continued) Published by the Publisher of the Standard Book Co., Ltd., 21, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

**FRANK READE, JR.,** AND HIS NEW STEAM MAN;  
OR, THE  
**YOUNG INVENTOR'S TRIP TO THE FAR WEST.**  
By "NONAMO."



No. 3 of these Grand New Adventure Books

## THE INVENTION

### LIBRARY

**1<sup>st</sup>**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>**



FRANK READE  
IN THE  
**WILDS OF MEXICO**

Frank took a quick aim and fired at the huge monster's head.

A BELEGGED COMPLETE NOVEL.