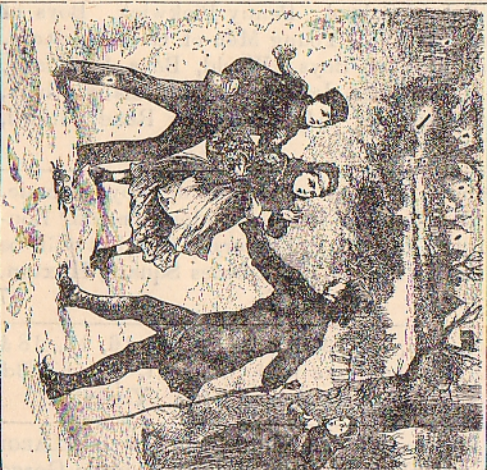


# The Collector's Miscellany

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

No. 20 (New Series)

September, 1951



**THE BOYS' SUNDAY-READER**  
MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE LITERATURE

NO. 1, 1911  
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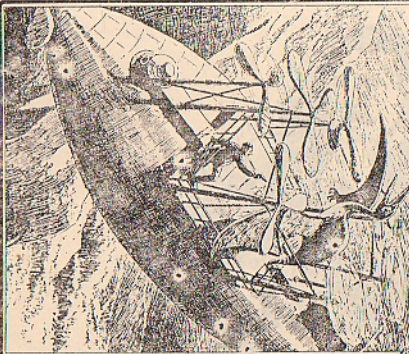
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## THE MUCH ABUSED PENNY DREADFUL

BY HENRY STEELE



THE name Penny Dreadful has always been distasteful to me, an unwholesome, objectionable name for our beloved literature. When I recall those intensely thrilling and romantic tales in which I used to revel when the world was young (or young to me), I can also remember how hurt I felt on hearing them stigmatised in this manner. In those far-off days there was a strong feeling against journals and stories for boys. They were often condemned by people who had never even read them. It was a case of 'give a dog a bad name and hang it.'

Many of the boys' stories were based on the classics, no one would have presumed to call Dumas' 'Three Musketeers' a Penny Dreadful (or a shilling one), but 'The Sword of Fate' in the Boys of the Empire would be considered to come in that category. Who would have been bold enough to cast aspersions on Scott's 'Fortunes of Nigel'? but because it happened to be 'Jack o' Clubs' in The Boys Champion Journal it was of course taboo. If a boy in those days were to say 'I am reading 'The Outlaw of the Highlands' in the Boys Standard' he would have been sternly reprov'd and advised to read Lytton or Scott. Yet, strange to say, 'The Outlaw of the Highlands' was obviously inspired by Sir Walter Scott's 'Rob Roy.' To get the Victorian boy enthusiastic over 'Rob Roy' was not an easy matter. I have myself at various periods started reading it and it was not until the third time that I was able to get through it.

The highwayman story came in for a particular amount of abuse, yet no one seemed to object to Lytton's 'Paul Clifford.' I could never understand why a highwayman should be any worse than a pirate, but that seemed to be the general opinion. There were of course a number of publications which have been described as fierce and their moral tone was low. These fell into the hands of boys and may (or may not) have had a bad influence, but of course a lot depended upon the boy himself.

We must give Edwin J. Brett the credit of trying to raise the standard of boys' journals. He even went so far as to issue one called *The Boys Sunday Reader* in 1879, which was of a semi-religious character.

“When I was but a simple lad,  
They told me it was very bad,  
To read about highwaymen bold,  
A lecture then they would unfold,  
They said if I read ‘Tyburn Dick,’  
Okum I should have to pick.  
To read ‘Black Bess’ was even worse,  
I’d sure to pick some lady’s purse.  
For which I’d get a stretch of time,  
And start my downward path of crime.  
But now that I am of age mature,  
No harm its done to me I’m sure.  
I’ve never on the North Road gone,  
And robbed a traveller all forlorn.  
Or waited in a lonely inn,  
To do some rich old fogey in.  
I really think those gloomy prophets,  
Just helped to swell newsagents’ profits.  
Just tell a boy he must not fight,  
He’ll go and do the opposite.”

## BROTHERS OF THE BLOOD

BY J. P. QUAINÉ



WITH a pang of regret I must admit that the good old Cult of the Blooddrinkers is now but a memory! Most of the stalwarts who laughingly agreed when I suggested the gory title have been added to the bag of the biggest collector of all—Death! The passing of my old friend Barry Ono in 1940 was the beginning of the end. A new school has arisen. The Old Boys of today are the lads who read Magnets and Gems, Plucks and Union Jacks, and they have little in common with the few old fogies worshipping at the shrine of Jack Harkaway and Sweeney Todd. Nevertheless the modern Old Boy has established his cult on efficient lines undreamed of by the pioneer blood collectors. We certainly used Joseph Parks' Collector's Miscellany (published in Yorks.) as our official organ but even the redoubtable Joe has gone over to the new old uns. References to our ancient loved ones in that periodical are paltry compared with paeans of praise sung for the antics of Billy Bunter.

They have a president and an executive committee, a digest and an annual Who's Who, and a coat of arms. This is divided into four quarters: one with a book, a cricket cap and an inkpot; another with a pipe and magnifying glass; the third has a pistol and a mask and the fourth a slouch hat, bandolier and revolver. The motto is *Puer Manebit*—the boy shall remain. So, while we old codgers are dying off, these boys who will never grow up, with the exception of a few octogenarians, range from men in their forties to boys in their teens. The British Pontiff of this organisation is a very energetic Bunterite named Herbert Leckenby. In Manitoba, Canada, William Gander (old enough to cling affectionately to the early bloods) publisher of the Red River Rambler, de-

votes another little journal, *Story Paper Collector*, entirely to dreadfuls. And right through the English speaking portion of the American continent, from the Red River to the Rio Grande, there are numerous groups, mostly Dime Novel collectors, who also hanker after the British Bloods. They, too, issue publications devoted to their hobby; to my way of thinking, the most important of these is *The Dime Novel Round-up* issued by Reckless Ralph Cummings, the Sleuth of the Sierras, at Fisherville, Mass., U.S.A. Ellery Queen, writer of detective thrillers, and Bragin, the well-known collector of bygone Yankee Bloods, formed a company some years back for the purpose of reprinting some of the rarer items in facsimile. They are sold to brother collectors at a dollar each. I have seen a couple and they were certainly masterpieces.

The practice of collecting and retailing old and rare penny weeklies began in England when George R. Sims, the playwright and novelist, introduced the hobby, though a bookseller named John Jeffery had dabbled in the old publications as far back as 1890. But the real giant was Frederick Harrison, better known as Barry Ono, the vaudeville artiste who pioneered the revival of old-time hits on the variety stage. He started his collection in 1906, when such oddments could be secured at moderate prices. His greatest competitor was a man named Frank Jay, who afterwards sold his lot at brigand's prices whilst the going was good. Ono, however, hung on to his collection until he had 6,000 well-bound volumes. For fifteen years we corresponded with each other and swapped, wrangled and exchanged Rabelaisian insults. I had the pleasure of entertaining him for a fortnight when he visited Melbourne in 1939 during a world tour. The following year he died of a heart attack brought on by the blitzing of Britain. His collection now reposes in that great book-mausoleum, the British Museum Library.

Continued.

## JACK HARKAWAY—A Pioneer.

BY PATRICK MULHALL

Continued from page 4



THEREUPON Leslie got moving to see that he got an adequate return for his ten thousand dollars a year job. His journals had a big circulation in the States. Wherever they went they carried the news that 'Jack Harkaway was coming,' and further, there were circus-style posters all over the place bearing the slogan 'Watch for Jack Harkaway under the Stars and Stripes.' The stage was set for the advent of Jack, and then when Hemyng landed in New York there was a band to meet him as he came down the gangway, flags were waving, and thousands of cheerings boys lined the pier to give him such a reception as in these days is reserved for the most brilliant stars of the movie firmament.

That was in 1873 with war pending in the boys' world. The campaign was opened with the commencement of the story 'Jack Harkaway in America' in the Boys and Girls Weekly in January 1874 and in the pages of the Young Englishman, which was run by George Emmett, a business rival of Bretts. Provoked by the move Bretts brought out an American edition of the Boys of England (and America) in which he stated that the Harkaway serials now running in the Boys and Girls Weekly were not by the genuine author of the original series, and that Mr. Hemyng's only connection with them had been to receive instructions from Mr. Brett as to plot, incidents and characters for the forthcoming numbers. In a word only to string them together in narrative form (as simple as that). He followed this by starting a serial dealing with Jack Harkaway's adventures in America in the Boys of England and written by an unknown member of the staff, but the readers were given to understand that it was the work of the original author.

The next move was from Hemyng who made a sworn declaration before a public notary in New York that he was the sole author of the original Harkaway series, and that the story at present running in the Boys of England was only an imitation of his Harkaway.

He followed this with a letter to the readers of the Emmett journals warning them not to be taken in by Brett's tricks.

Well, the boy readers of Harkaway in the two English journals did not worry as to who wrote them, and it was likewise on the other side of the Atlantic where Brett's new Harkaways were being pirated by other publishers than Leslie. And so the war dragged on, the boys swapping journals in their eagerness to know how Jack was doing in each others papers, and getting mixed up as to where they had left him last week. The result being that after about seven years Jack had to retire and take a rest.

He needed it indeed, so did his chronicler. Hemyng had lived up to the last penny of his salary, after the manner of those dear old confreres whom he had left behind him in Fleet Street. The Boys and Girls Weekly was losing ground, being crowded out by the new and far more vigorous and attractive papers which were now well established in the field and which were solely for boys. There were new immortals to bow before, such as, Buffalo Bill, Old Sleuth and Joe Phoenix the detectives, and Jack's reign was over.

Hemyng's efforts to form new connections met with meagre financial results. He had written scores of boys' stories other than Harkaways for the American papers, but they were really only stop gaps while Jack was away on his travels. He was in a groove in which he had to stay, and so the time came when he had to make up his mind to return to England and begin life again. Back to his old haunts he found it diffi-



cult to get going again as his place on the old papers was taken up by new writers. Gone were the days when at times he was in such request that at one period he was running six serials simultaneously.

He had been called to the Bar in his very early days, but had never practiced, having a bent for a literary career. From this it can be understood why he had not much success when he attempted to take up Law again as a career. He had no connections formed and he was late in the day.

And so preforce, he had to return to Brett for employment and to join the Dark Brotherhood of anonymous authors who wrote for the Boys of England and other of Brett's papers. (Brett had never published an author's name from the time of Hemyng's defection).

From then onward he wrote many serials for the Brett papers, among them a revival of the Harkaway stories, this time dealing with the adventures of 'Harkaway the Third,' the original Jack's grandson, and he was writing boys' stories to the end of his life.

Strange to say his memory is held in high regard in the United States, where his books never ran out of print until the years when paper got scarce, while he seems to be completely forgotten in his native England.

After his return to England he lived a quiet and contented life, glad to be able to make a living, with no longings to return to the scene of his hectic six or seven years, and in 1901 at the age of 61 years, fifty years ago he went to his eternal rest. R.I.P.

Perhaps a quotation from a poem written by an old admirer of Jack Harkaway about forty years ago (John Ludlow in the New York Herald) may not be out of place here :-

Jack Harkaway! Jack Harkaway!  
 The author's heart lies still  
 And voiceless now this many a year  
 His gallant English quill  
 And nowhere on the starry peaks  
 And pinnacles of fame  
 Has time a proud memorial raised  
 To Bracebridge Hemyngh's name  
 But could each boy that he endeared  
 To that lone grave repair  
 In fond remembrance piously  
 To drop one blossom there  
 A mountain beautiful and grand  
 Of flowers would hide the clay  
 Where moulders in the dust the hand  
 That wrote Jack Harkaway.

## THE "BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY"

Compiled by H. LECKENBY

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371	The King of Scouts	.....	.....	.....	.....	W Murray Graydon
372	The Armoured Raiders (J.S. & Pete)	.....	.....	.....	.....	S. Clarke Hook
373	A Scrap of Paper	.....	.....	.....	.....	Maxwell Scott
374	Disaster Pit	.....	.....	.....	.....	Andrew Gray
375	The Boy Ventriloquist	.....	.....	.....	.....	Reginald Wray
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377	Muscle and Grit	.....	.....	.....	.....	Geoffrey Murray
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381	The Land of Terror	.....	.....	.....	.....	Duncan Storm
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## THE JESTER AND WONDER

BY A. HARRIS



I HELD the opinion as a youth that the Jester and Wonder was the best comic paper published, but it isn't always that the opinion of your early days holds as you get older and one sums up all those that were issued. But in this case I still maintain now, years after and studying all the comics in my collection, that it undoubtably deserves to be acclaimed the best comic paper.

No. 1 started (strictly speaking it re-started a new series, the forerunners being nothing out of the ordinary) on November 16th. 1901 and was then named The Wonder. It added The Jester to its title with No. 26, May 10th. 1902 and No. 28 bore the statement that it had 'the largest circulation — 1d. comic in the world' so it must have been popular.

It was, however, in January 1903 that I first became one of its readers and immediately the picture characters proved an undoubted delight. There were the Bunsey boys—with Happy Ike; Cholly and Gawge; Mr. Hubbub; Bob the Navy and Dotty David, were regular features, some with very long weekly runs.

The stories included 'Step by Step' by Colin-Collins—a detective story dealing with the Great Pink Diamond. 'Thou Shalt not Kill' had been running some time and featured a doctor by the name of Fang. 'Twice Round the Globe' was a comic story of a man-hunt and was written by Sidney Drew. 'The King's Highway,' a story of the adventures and escapes of Richard Turpin and Hal Lacey, soldiers of fortune and knights of the road. This was by Henry St. John who followed later with another serial called 'His Dad's Good Name,' in which Bobby Redfern and Captain Hankey, a soldier with a humorous temperament, Sir Roger Clavering,

a hot-tempered old gentleman and Audrey Glen, Bobby's governess, make up a very good story. Morton Pike followed with a story called 'The Fight for Canada.' This was a thrilling story of the adventures of the early settlers in Canada when the Briton had deadly foes to contend with. Then Henry St. John gave us a sequel to 'The King's Highway' in a story called 'Stand and Deliver' being another story of the daring exploits of Richard Turpin—knight of the road. Then 'The Master of Mystery,' by Stanhope Sprigs, a story of Brandon Judd—the Master of Mystery. 'Sowing the Wind,' by Ramond Lee concluded the year's serials. Truly a wonderful array, and winding up the year there was a pleasing coloured Christmas Number.

If any old Jesterites read this I trust it will revive happy memories of a paper that was, I'm sure they will agree, worthy of being called 'the best.'

## THE SEA COOK

BY JOHN MEDCRAFT



OF the many boys ranging from 7 to 70 years of age who have seen and enjoyed the film of Robert Louis Stevenson's famous story 'Treasure Island' I wonder how many know this story had an earlier origin than as a school prize or Christmas present for deserving youth? It first appeared serially in Vols. 19/20 of *Young Folks* published by James Henderson of Red Lion House, Red Lion Court, London in 1881-2.

Stevenson was introduced to Dr. Yapp editor of *Good Words* and it was arranged that he should write a story of adventure for Hendersons. He accordingly wrote 'The Sea Cook' under the name of Captain George North but before publication James Henderson altered the title to 'Treasure Island.' For this story he was paid at the rate of 12/6 per

column and Young Folks of that period was a large sized paper.

Stevenson also wrote 'Kidnapped ; or, the Lad with the Silver Button' and 'The Black Arrow, a tale of Tunstall Forest' both of which appeared in later volumes of Young Folks.

In connection with the latter story an amusing incident is recalled. The proof reader pointed out that there were four arrows in the story intended for deadly use but it had been completed with only three accounted for. 'There is no indication of the fate of Sir Oliver Oates for whom the fourth arrow is evidently intended' said the reader. Stevenson replied that the story had changed and run away from him during the course of writing and the dread fate intended for Sir Oliver had become impossible. 'I blush to say I had clean forgotten him, thanks to you, sir, he shall die the death.' Accordingly Stevenson altered the story.

## THE CAPTAIN

BY A. CLARK



THE Captain was one of the early ventures of Sir George Newnes who also created the Strand Magazine and Tit-Bits. The editor throughout was R. S. Warren-Bell under the non-de-plume of 'The Old Fag.' He also wrote an excellent series of stories about Greyhouse School. The sporting editor was C. B. Fry the famous all-rounder (athlete, cricketer and footballer) then at the height of his fame. Other writers included P. G. Wodehouse, Dr. Gordon Stables, Fred Wishaw, etc.

One of the artists was Gordon Browne R.I., whose work also appeared in the Strand. Some of his best drawings were in 'The Long-Un' by Warren-Bell. The cover of the Captain altered very little. The background was white with a drawing on the left side and an advertisement, usually for Van Houten's Cocoa on the right. The drawing gave the paper

its title. It was of a football captain in the dress of the 90's. Long tight trousers, sweater, big stocking cap and boots with the ball at his feet. He was a fine tall man, and made a splendid cover design.

The Captain appeared monthly, price 6d. Each part contained 100 pages, well printed on glossy type paper and bound. There were about 20 pages at each end (separate from the reading matter) containing advertisements, mainly for stamps, guns, games, etc. These were to prove fatal in later years. The six monthly parts were bound up in a volume of 600 pages, running from October to March, and from April to September. The volume cover was always in dark brown with the cover design of the football captain in gold which was very striking. The volume sold at 6/6d.

From about 1902 onwards there appeared some school and cricket serials by P. G. Wodehouse. The first was 'The Gold Bat' followed by 'The Head of Kays,' 'Mike' and several others. These all showed the early promise of an author who is now world famous for his humorous novels and the immortal Jeeves. There were several Interviews with Famous Men on the lines of the Strand Magazine series. The Captain only just survived World War 1, closing down in 1918. According to C. B. Fry (in his autobiography 'Life Worth Living') the decline of the Captain was due to its advertisements. He said that Sir George Newnes thought that advertisements for soap were not suitable for a boys' paper. This during the Edwardian boom in commercial advertising was gradually fatal and the Captain eventually lost financially, and failed to survive 1918. It was not perhaps within the reach of every boy of pre 1914 days at a cost of 6d. per month, but it is worth collecting on account of the quality of its serials, artists, paper and printing alone.

## THE "BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY"

Compiled by H. LECKENBY

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390	Champion of the Wheel	....	....	—
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393	The Fourth Form at Franklingham	....	....	Richard Randolph
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401	Foes of Fortune	....	....	Peter Bayne
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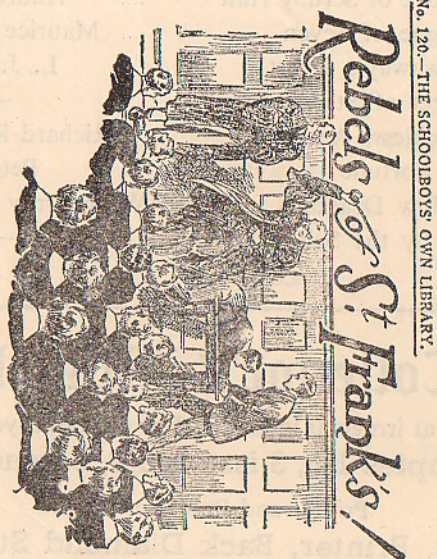
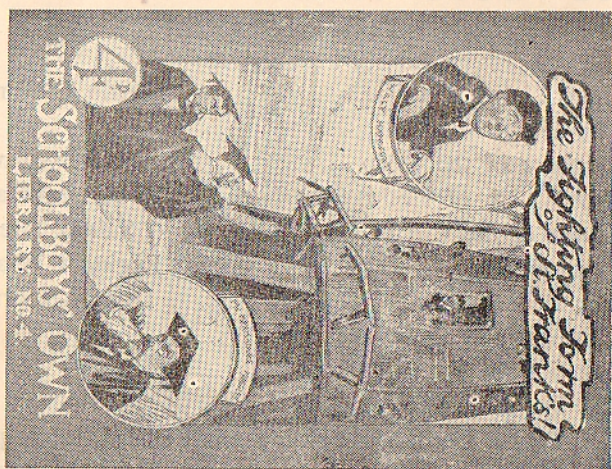
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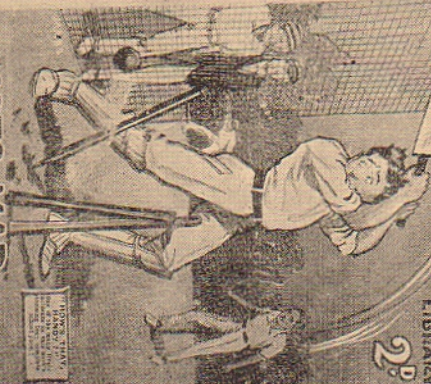
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