

COLLECTOR'S MISCELLANY

A PAPER FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN OLD BOYS' BOOKS,
TYPE SPECIMENS, JUVENILE THEATRE, CHAPBOOKS, DYING
SPEECHES, STREET BALLADS, TRANSPORTATION TICKETS
BROADSIDES, AND OTHER PRINTED EPHEMERA

FOUNDED IN 1917 BY JOSEPH PARKS

BARRY ONO

AN APPRECIATION BY HIS FRIEND, JOHN MEDCRAFT.

THE recent sad death of Frederick Valentine Harrison, better known as Barry Ono, at the comparatively early age of 68, came as a shock to his many friends. Although apparently in good health at the time, he had a severe heart attack at 11 p.m. on Wednesday, February 5, 1941, and died from angina pectoris four hours later. An able and talented man, Barry Ono had the ability to shine in more than one profession, but his activities and interests were many, and his life too full to permit just that little extra effort necessary to reach the top. An ex-councillor of Camberwell, he was also an active member of the Water Rats, the well-known music-hall charitable organisation. Music-hall audiences will remember his dual act with Maud Walsh, billed as Barry and Walsh, and afterwards as a solo turn in 'An Old-Time Music-Hall in 12 Minutes,' which heralded a boom in the old songs about ten years ago. Latterly, he had retired from the Halls and devoted more of his time to the old Bloods and Dreadfuls he loved and with which his name will ever be associated. Known to the book trade as the 'Penny Dreadful King,' and to collectors and sentimentalists as the high priest of the cult of the penny dreadful, Barry Ono was proud of having attracted many new collectors to the hobby. His fine collection contained many extremely rare items, some of which were probably unique, and was a never-failing source of wonder, admiration, and good-natured envy to those who were privileged to view it. Barry Ono retired to Barnstaple in September, 1940, but keenly felt the severance from his old friends and the haunts and interests of a lifetime. His collection is stored for the duration of the war, and will probably be handed over to the British Museum at the end of hostilities. Wartime railway restrictions denied Barry Ono a last resting-place in his beloved London, and he was buried at Barnstaple, on February 10, 1941.

I have received various copies of the following amateur magazines and collectors' papers and wish to thank publishers for same. I regret lack of space precludes individual reviews. Dime Novel Mart, Our Empire, Story Paper Collector, Library News, Belle Lettuce, Dime Novel News, Collector, Dime Novel Round-Up, Floyd's Label Review, British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild Bulletin, Collector's Guide, Boy's Herald, and 'An Approach to Marionettes' (by Miles Lee).

About Webb's Plays

By CHARLES D. WILLIAMS

THREE plays that do not appear upon Webb's later lists are the slave plays *Union Jack* or *The Sailor & the Settler's Daughter* [1848] which with *Pollock's Mistletoe Bough* were dramatised respectively in 1842 and 1834 by Charles A. Somerset; and *Dred* or *The Freeman of the Dismal Swamp*, 1856, based upon the Stowe novel by W. E. Suter; and the military spectacle *The Battle of Alma* [1854—the year of West's death], perhaps by Samuel Lover.

His best plays are considered to be *The Smuggler* and *The Miller & His Men*, the latter written piratically by Isaac Pocock and first stage-produced in 1813.

Skelt's plates are responsible for his *Maid & Magpie*, based on L. C. Caigniez, first stage-produced in 1815; and his *Aladdin*—evidently the *Aladdin & His Cloud Palace* or *The Dumb Slave & the Sorcerer*—of 1830.

Bluebeard or *Female Curiosity*, the earliest stage play which he adapted, being George Colman's, 1798, who got it from Perrault, was taken from Green's plates.

All his plays other than these plays are said to be original adaptations.

His pantomimes are *Harlequin Dame Crump & the Silver Penny* or *Pig Won't Get Over the Style To-night*, of the Standard Theatre, Shoreditch, 1854; *Harlequin Little Red Riding Hood* or *Prince Love-the-Day & the Fiend Wolf* [1858];

COPYRIGHT BY C.D.W.

and Harlequin Jack & the Beanstalk or The Pranks of the Good Little Fairies, which resembles Blanchard's Pantomime 1854.

He has another military spectacle in The Battles of Balaclava and Inkerman, about 1855.

The Rifle Volunteers or Riflemen Form [1861-2] —his shortest play — is also Webb's only comedy.

Scott's Ivanhoe, published in 1819, provided his Robin Hood & the Merry Men of Sherwood Forest, evidently, 1853; and Richard I or The Lion-Hearted King, 1856, figures Blondel.

Further slave plays are Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin [1852] and Three-Fingered Jack, 1850, first stage-produced 1800, being based on the story of Dr Mosely's Treatise on Sugar.

A treachery play is his Brigand's Son, 1863, first stage-produced in 1836 as Matteo Falcone and by William Oxberry.

Probably Ainsworth instigated his Guy Fawkes, 1855, of which there are many stage versions, and Lytton's Paul Clifford, dramatised by Fitzball in 1835, became his in 1856.

Webb's first play was The Forest of Bondy [1847], founded on Pixérécourt's Dog of Montargis by William Barrymore in 1814. Even Ralph Thomas did not know the derivation of this play.

The Forest of Bondy has been done by several publishers, including West, Skelt, and Green.

His last original play was The Hunter of the Alps, said to have been published in 1880.

Webb published 22 plays in all. The dates given in brackets are those of Dr Francis Eagle. All other dates are approximate. The dates of stage production should not be confused with publishing date.

Old Boys' Books

'The Boys of England,' 1866-1899

By J. MEDCRAFT

WITH the publication of the first number of the 'Boys of England' on 24th November, 1866, the Newsagents Publishing Company, in which Edwin J. Brett held a controlling interest, inaugurated a new and attractive phase of boys' literature which was an unqualified success. Prior to this, monthly magazines of a staid or semi-religious nature were the only periodicals available for boys. No wonder that the new venture flourished, for what boy could resist a weekly journal of 16 large pages, finely illustrated, and packed with romance and thrills dear to his heart—and all for the modest sum of one penny?

Inevitably, rivals and imitators were attracted to this new and fruitful field and met with varying success, but only the Emmett brothers offered serious challenge to Brett. Furthermore, one and all slavishly copied the new journal, and adopted the same format and size—demy 4to—and this became the accepted standard for boys' journals, with a few exceptions, for over thirty years.

Why Brett ceased publication of the Newsagents Publishing Company's romances and embarked upon the Boys of England is not definitely known. Certain knowledgeable folk contend that the publication of Red Ralph, Dance of Death, Wild Boys of London, Roving Jack, and other dubious highwaymen and crime-lauding romances, although popular with the

lower classes, provoked official disapproval and the stigma of pernicious literature, and this influenced Brett to discontinue them and concentrate upon the journals.

Certain colour is lent to this contention by the absence of highwayman romances from Brett's journals, but he slipped up in reissuing *Roving Jack* in 1881, while no such embargo was placed upon pirate stories, which seems inconsistent. Others believe that the *Wild Boys of London* provided the initial inspiration. I incline to the simple but unromantic theory that Brett, a keen business man, realised the money-making potentialities of the journals and decided to concentrate upon them.

For the first 11 numbers the *Boys of England* was edited by Charles Stevens, who also wrote the leading serial, 'Alone in the Pirate's Lair'; but from No. 12 onwards until his death in 1895, Brett conducted the journal himself. Volume I bore the name of the Newsagents Publishing Company on the title-page, but from Volume II onwards Brett was sole proprietor.

Hebblethwaite was the principal illustrator for many years, maintaining a consistently high standard of excellence throughout, and for his work alone the journal is worth collecting.

Early authors included Capt. Mayne Reid, Percy B. St. John, J. C. Stagg (who later edited *Young Men of Great Britain*), Stephens Hayward, Vane St. John (a most versatile writer), and James Greenwood (known as the 'Amateur Casual,' on account of a voluntary sojourn in an institution in order to study conditions and the inmates).

In No. 249, Volume X, the first instalment of

the famous Jack Harkaway's Schooldays, by Bracebridge Hemyng, appeared, followed by other Harkaway serials in the succeeding volumes, ending with Young Jack Harkaway & His Boy Tinker in Volume XIX.

After a lapse of many years, Hemyng returned to write further Harkaway serials for Brett, two of which, *The Brigands of Taragona* and *The Slave Dealer's Revenge*, appeared in or around Volumes LX and LXI.

Mention can only be made of a few of the many fine stories which appeared in the *Boys of England*, the majority of which were never reissued in penny numbers and complete volumes.

Pantomime Joe was a great favourite, *Wildcap Will*, *Jack Cade the Rebel of London*, *The Captain of the School*, *Left-Handed Jack*, *The Miser's Son*—a Story of the Plague, *Jack o' the Cudgel*, and countless others.

Stirring historical tales were frequent, first by Vane St. John and Charles Stevens and later by Justin Lambe.

The Christmas number was a thing of seasonable joy ; a mysterious castle, a lonely manor, or a snow-bound inn—a belated traveller—a murder or two, and the inevitable ghosts. All explained in the last chapter, and ending happily for the majority of the characters.

From Volume LVII, 1894, onwards, an 8-page novelette was given away with each number in an attempt to keep pace with the rising tide of opposition.

On April 20, 1874, the *Boys of England* reissue commenced, and ran for twenty volumes. Apart

from dates, advertisement and topical pages, the re-issue was identical with the original issue. In America, also, the journal had a good run under the title of 'The Boys of England and America,' in every other respect the same as the original issue but published a week or two later.

The Boys of England ended its long run at No. 1702, Volume LXVI, June 30, 1899, and its place was filled by Up-to-Date Boys, in which the final Harkaway serials, Jack Harkaway in the Transvaal and Jack Harkaway's War Scouts appeared.

Brett died on December 30, 1895, a wealthy man. His collection of ancient arms and armour alone realised £30,000, and each member of his family inherited over £50,000.

A shrewd man of business, Brett was also an excellent judge of character. On returning from

A Pollock Toy Theatre for £4 4s.

ONE of the most interesting catalogues we have seen, No. 37 from Mr David Low, 17 Cecil Court, London, W.C., came our way recently. Here are a few of the items, picked at random: Three beautifully engraved and coloured tickets of admission to the Abbey for the coronation of George IV, also for the procession, 1821, and a ticket of admission to the coronation of William IV and Queen Adelaide, 1831, the four for 10s. 6d. Three early Victorian china dolls, all charmingly dressed, with two and three petticoats, bombazine, satin, and muslin dresses, cloaks, and bonnets, 4, 5, and 7 in. tall, ca. 1845, £1 1s. each.

A Cooks' Tour poster of about 1846, £1 10s. The Islington Taylor, or The Steam Goose, a Comic Song, by J. Bird (about 1840), two pages, folio, with engraved cover, 4s. 6d. Penny coloured juvenile sheets, about 1830, set of four 'On the Farm,' 7s. 6d. A collection of ten items bought at the dispersal sale of the Caslon Letter Foundry, including two pastel portraits of H. W. Caslon and his wife, £6 6s. A type specimen sheet by J. Johnson (author of *Typographia*) composed of type and brass rule containing upwards of 60,000 movable pieces of metal and above 150 different patterns of flowers, Apollo Press, 1828, folio, 23 by 19 in., £2 2s. A four-page prospectus of Johnson's *Typographia*, 6s.

One of Pollock's original toy theatres, with full coloured proscenium, wings, footlights, etc., measuring when set 17 in. high by 17 in. deep, with the complete set of characters and scenery for *The Miller and His Men*, cut out and wired, £4 4s. *Stower's Printer's Grammar*, 21s. *New Song on the Opening of Newcastle & Shields Railway*, single sheet, with vignette of a locomotive, 1839, 5s.

lunch one day he saw a lad named Hilton wandering aimlessly about, and noticed his clever face. Brett asked him to call at the office, and finding that the lad was a homeless orphan provided him with a home and education. Hilton fully justified Brett's judgment and became editor of the Boys of England for ten years.

After Brett's death, his family turned the business into a limited liability company and removed to Harkaway House, West Harding Street, a short distance away from the old premises in Fleet Street.

Up-to-Date Boys, printed on green paper, ran for two years, and The Boys of the Empire reissue which followed for a further six years. Most of the stories in these two journals were reprinted from earlier Brett journals. The Boys of the Empire ended at No. 311, and contained the following notice:—

TELL YOUR FATHERS, BOYS, THAT No. 1 OF THE NEW BOYS OF ENGLAND, OUT NEXT FRIDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER, 1906, WILL CONTAIN THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF A GRAND NEW SERIAL BY BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG, THE CELEBRATED AUTHOR OF THE FAMOUS JACK HARKAWAY STORIES THAT THEY READ WITH SUCH DELIGHT WHEN THEY WERE BOYS . . .

and so on for two pages. But the new venture lasted only until the unlucky No. 13, and with it the firm of Edwin J. Brett Limited.

Could Brett have carried on successfully had he been alive and at the helm? Personally, I doubt it. Journals were still good for another decade or so, but not the old type which had outlived their day. Only drastic modernisation could have effected their survival to compete with the newer publications.

So ended the famous Boys of England after a successful run of 33 years.

100 ALL-DIFFERENT MATCH LABELS 4/- ONLY

COLLECTORS should read my MONTHLY Label Review, six issues for 4/-. Many collectors contribute valuable data to this periodical, which touches on all aspects of the hobby.

FLOYD, SEVERN VIEW FARM, THORNBURY, BRISTOL

OLD BOY'S BOOKS, Penny Dreadfuls, Bloods, for sale. State wants. Enclose stamp for replies.—Meredith, 35 Station Road, Folkestone, Kent.

FOR SALE, also wanted, old boys' papers, early Magnets, Union Jacks, Dick Turpins, etc.—Bottomley, 48 Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, N17.

ALWAYS WANTED—Penny dreadfuls, bloods, and old boys' journals published by Lloyd, Newsagents' Publishing Co., Fox, Harrison, Vickers, Lea, Emmett, Henderson, Temple Publishing Co., Aldine Co., etc. Single items to whole collections purchased.—J. Medcraft, 64 Woodlands Road, Ilford, Essex.

MAGNETS and Gems, 1912-1919. Alfred Horsey, 60 Salcombe Road, London, E17, would like to get in touch with anyone with copies for disposal.

WANTED—Early numbers penny Boy's Friends, Realms, Big Budgets, and similar papers, 1895-1918. Odd numbers welcome. Large number for exchange.—H. Dowler, 86 Hamilton Road, Manchester, 13.

RECKLESS RALPH'S DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collection, preservation, and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers. Published by:—

Ralph F. Cummings

Box 75, Fisherville, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Price one dollar a year, or ten cents a copy.

MATCHLABEL NOTES & NEWS

'Jesus Christ Safety Matches'

A blue label with the above words and an illustration of a crucifix exists. Mr R. Rodgeron, of North Shields, states he was given it by a sailor who was in Archangel after the Great War. He is positive, however, by the make of the box that it was not Russian but Indian. This label was illustrated in 'C.M.' for October, 1936, with the information that only a few copies of this label were ever printed as the design was almost immediately suppressed.

The author of an article in the News-Chronicle for September 22 has some interesting light to shed on this label. He says, 'One box design caused trouble in 1932. Some matches found their way on to the market called "Jesus Christ Safety Matches," and on

Hints for Beginners

A FEW hints for beginners might be timely, as the hobby is becoming increasingly popular. First soak the matchbox top in hot water till the label comes away easily, next lay the label face downwards on blotting paper to dry, and later press the label between books to get it smooth and flat. Mount the labels in an album with stamp hinges, classifying them under country of manufacture.

Care should be taken on soaking labels where red is the predominant colour. Red is practically the only colour that tends to 'run.'

Booklet match covers should be kept separately from the labels, as they comprise an offshoot from label collecting.

Just one word on booklets. Never cut them at all. Remove the staple holding the match stubs and then press the cover flat.

Don't use scissors on labels; wrapper labels that cover a box completely must be kept whole, including the friction surfaces.

G.F.

the box was a representation of Christ on the Cross.' He continues, 'It was eventually established that the design had been made at the request of some Indian Christians who wanted their religion to be honoured. Certain Hindu deities appeared on the labels of boxes, so why not their own God? they reasoned.'

The above, which appeared in Floyd's Label Review (October, 1941) will particularly interest those readers of 'C.M.' who remember our cover illustration for January-February, 1932. In an article in the same issue Mr Parks said, 'One thing is certain—these labels will become scarce. A London correspondent assured me that the matches were never sold in London, but were produced by the Krishna Match Company, of India, who also issue a Buddha Match and others featuring various Indian Religions. I am inclined to favour this statement, as the box in question, said to have been bought in the New Cut, may easily have been brought from India by some seaman.'

* *

G.F.'s Notes

At the time of writing a new Swan Vestas is on the market, with the words 'Use Matches Sparingly' in a circle on the left side of the label.

Brymay brand, too, bears the above three words as an overprint in red. There are already three varieties, with variations in position, etc., of this overprinting.

Correspondence

The article on the juvenile theatre greatly interested me, as my mother is a daughter of W. G. Webb. The name and business of Webb were well-known and respected throughout the city, and I strongly refute Mr Williams's statement that he was bad-tempered and cantankerous. The opposite was the case. He was liked and respected by everyone who met him. It may interest you to know that Winston Churchill, when a boy, was a frequent visitor to the shop in Old Street.—F. Bottomley, London, N17.

British Puppet & Model Theatre Guild

Five shillings yearly puts you in touch with puppetry and model theatre work throughout the English-speaking world.

● Library ● Sales section ● Periodical Bulletin

Full particulars from 81 Bromyard Road, Worcester

WANTED PENNY DREADFULS OLD BOYS' PAPERS

Good prices paid for such items as Boy's Champion Journal, Boy's Standard, Boy's Leisure Hour, Varney, Tom King, May Turpin, Skeleton Horseman, Moonlight Jack, Sixteen-String Jack, etc., etc.

BROOKS BROS, 15 Ipsley St., Redditch

FOR SALE, old penny dreadfuls—Steele, 204 High Street, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex.

WANTED, comic papers published 1900-05—Harris, Caynton, Llanrhos Road, Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno.

Story Paper Collector

An amateur paper devoted to old boys' books and sent free to anyone interested by the editor

W. H. GANDER

P.O. BOX 60, TRANSCONA, MANITOBA
CANADA

NOTICES.

As this is an amateur paper we prefer NOT to be noticed in the professional press. Thank you!
Readers are warned not to attempt to send money, however small the amount, out of the country, without consulting a banker.

Printed and published occasionally for private circulation at the amateur Press [established 1919] of J. A. Birkbeck. Address communications: J. A. BIRKBECK, 52 CRAIGIE AVENUE, DUNDEE, SCOTLAND.
Please enclose a stamped envelope if immediate reply is required.