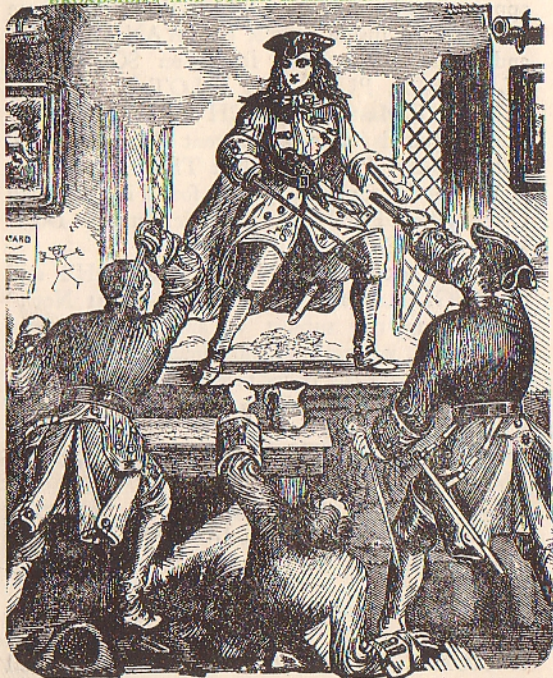


JULY 1942

# 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 EPHEMERAL PRINTING



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## MATCHLABEL NOTES & NEWS

### G.F.'s Notes

**M**ANY British labels now carry a slogan emphasising the need for economy in the use of matches. The slogan 'Use Matches Sparingly' appears as a heading on BRYMAY, and the same words appear inside a circle on SWAN VESTAS, and inside a triangular frame on SCOTTISH BLUEBELL, PUCK, and PILOT.

Messrs J. Masters's PUNCH and ARMY AND NAVY brands carry a different slogan, namely, 'Matches Are Precious—Make Them Last!'

Yet another example is to be found in the North Country brand of NEMCO, which states, 'Don't Waste—Do Economise!'

Another slogan, printed on STARLIGHT and on ANGLIA, reads, 'Waste Not—Want Not!'

Changing the subject to another feature of these times, we get the phenomenon of wrapper labels pasted on the boxes face downwards.

Examples of this curiosity are as follows :—

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and CRYSELLA.

☒ ☒

**F**ROM the far-off Orkneys, Mr J. Finlayson, 24 St Catherine's Place, Kirkwall, sent a number of HORSE HEAD varieties which I intended to illustrate in this issue. Unfortunately, I have had to hold them over meantime. B.

# Collector's Miscellany

Fourth Series, No. 4

Threepence, post free

## THE PRINTER TO THE READER



FRIEND has been complaining that I don't reply to letters quickly enough. Although I endeavour to answer letters as promptly as possible, my friend must remember that the letter rate is now 2½d. (and an envelope!) and there is often no point in replying, apart from politeness.

There is also the reader who threatens all sorts of dire things because he hasn't 'had a C.M. for weeks.' Please remember that C.M. is (and practically always has been) only published occasionally when circumstances allow.

There is, on the other hand, the gentleman in America who sent me two dollars and has never grumbled yet!

Readers will note contributions in this issue from our old friends Ben Winskill and R. A. H. Goodyear.

I have also on hand contributions from other writers. These will all be printed as soon as space is available.

Cover illustration is the wrapper of the rare STARLIGHT NELL, issued by The Temple Publishing Co. in 46 parts. [Collection of J. Medcraft, Esq.]

## Juvenile Theatre

### *Some Matthew Revivals*

BY C. D. WILLIAMS

THE chief interest in Matthews, who starting business in 1886 appears to have reached his zenith at the end of the century, must rest in the toy theatre revivals which he made.

He had 18 plays, having apparently from time to time acquired the copyright of all of them.

Of Park, he adapted *Red Rover*, 1903, from *The Mutiny of the Dolphin*, by Fitzball, 1829 (Cooper's novel). This was a juvenile drama favourite, being done by all the publishers.

Of Skelt, he adapted *Sailor George* [1888] from *The Miller's Maid*, by Faucit, 1821; *Prisoner of Rochelle* [1886] from Pitt, 1834, a sophisticated comedy, in which the stage is divided in two; *Norwegian Wreckers* [1887] from *The Floating Beacon* by Fitzball, 1824; *Robinson Crusoe* [1886] from *The Bold Buccaneers* by Pocock, 1817, with the inevitable female; and his only pantomime, *Little King Pippin*, which appears to be derived from *Harlequin Fortunatus* & *the Wishing Cap* by Blanchard, 1865.

Of Green, he abbreviated: *State Secrets*, or the *Tailor of Tamworth* to *Secret Despatches* [n.d.] from *Jack o' Newbury* by Hook, 1795, an amusing comedy; *Blackbeard the Pirate* [1895] (of which Pollock had only published a few sheets) from the *Genoese Pirate*, by Cross, 1798, and *Robert M'caire* [1898] from *The Exploits of a Gentleman at Large*, by Selly, 1835, about a plucky and

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amusing rogue. Hicks and Irving both starred in this play.

In addition to these nine, he reproduced nine plays which had already been published in one form or another by Webb and Pollock. Rifle Volunteers, The Waterman, and The Silver Palace, were rechristened Cheer, Boys, Cheer! [1896], Tom Tug [1893], and King of the Burning Mountain [1902]. The others were Three-Fingered Jack [1898], Bluejacket, Brigand's Son, Cinderella, and The Miller and His Men.

In the abbreviated plays, the words were printed upon the same uncut, folded, big sheet of thin and even rough paper; in the adapted plays, the book of the words was separate. The abbreviations were not particularly well done, but were makeshift, with misprints. Some of his sheets were quite well-coloured, others were not.

He endeavoured to publish a cheaper product, while attempting to keep to the traditions of the craft, at a price it may be said roughly half that of the old publishers.

It seems natural to conclude that he failed, though he must have made tremendous efforts and used much capital.

He said (at least in 1898) that he was the last of the publishers of 'the good old English juvenile drama'; had performed every available play when a boy; was able to offer a play on the old lines at a low rate; that there were no other names connected with the trade but Skelt, Webb, Redington, and his own (ignoring Pollock!); and that he had in his possession most of the plays of his predecessors and was able to reproduce them.

# *The Aldine Publishing Company*

1888-1933

BY J. MEDCRAFT

**T**O the Aldine Publishing Co. the mournful honour of being the last of the publishers of the Penny Dreadful era. Yet they were the pioneers in this country of modern boys' literature, and few of their publications were of the type that had satisfied the soul of Victorian youth for fifty years. Possibly the company realised that the popularity of the serial romance was waning, for very few of these—and only two journals—were issued, the greater part of their output being of the complete library order which originated in U.S.A. At first, the American element predominated, and stories were almost exclusively reprints from Dime and Half-Dime Novels, but, later, English yarns became more prominent, and from 1900 onwards were in the ascendancy, the American stories from this date being reprints from earlier libraries.

By 1910 the competition of the powerful Amalgamated Press was having adverse effect, and reprints became steadily more numerous, until little original stuff was being issued. This could have only one end, and the wonder is that the Aldine Co. lasted as long as 1933. But to revert to happier times.

Their first venture was the *British Boys' Paper*, a continuation of *Ralph Rollington's New Boys' Paper*, in February, 1888. This was an old style journal containing *Monkey Mat* and *Roving Dick* by E. Harcourt Burrage, and others reprinted from earlier journals. For an unknown reason the Aldine Co. did not persevere with this fine journal, and from No. 46, January, 1889, it was taken over by the *Popular Publishing Co.*, controlled by Dacre Clark (Guy Rayner).

Then the Aldine Co. turned their attention to complete libraries, of which the *Boys' First Rate Pocket Library* and *O'er Land and Sea Library* were the forerunners. Both were the same size, 8½ by 6

inches, with breath-taking covers, the former having thirty-two pages, price one penny, and the latter sixty-four pages, price twopence.

The First Rates started off with English tales, but these were soon ousted by the American reprints, and at No. 34 we were entranced by the appearance of the world famous Deadwood Dick, the Outlaw of the Black Hills, the first of a series which dominated the library. After about No. 300 the early Deadwood Dick stories were reprinted under a new cover, with the title and sub-title transposed. The flaming coloured covers, occasionally inaccurate or subtly misleading (but never dull), acted as a magnet to the youth of the period. No. 84 carried a cover picture of the Ghouls of Galveston in their grotesque animal headed masks; while on the cover of Deadwood Dick's Head Off a decapitated head is seen falling from a moving vehicle—a suggestive combination of cover and title not bourne out in the story.

The equally sensational O'er Land and Sea Library included many pirate yarns of the most extravagant type. No. 106 was entitled The Pirate Priest, and in the following number a sequel, Cutlas and Cross or

Continued on next page

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## 'DAGONET' ON PENNY DREADFULS

THE late George R. Sims ('Dagonet' of 'Mustard and Cress' fame) was the author of many melodramatic successes, and he never hesitated to use strong meat in the concoction of his theatrical fare. It is, therefore, mildly amusing to read his severe criticism of the lurid literature of his youth. He wrote thus of it in his delightful book, 'My Life':

"The 'penny dreadful' of my youth was far more dreadful than the periodicals which earned the title in later days. The windows of newspaper shops of a certain class were filled with publications as objectionable in every way as the old vulgar valentines, which for years made February 14th a byword and a reproach.

"There were some dreadful stories published in penny numbers for the reading of the young, who were permitted to choose their own literature. Two of the worst that I remember were Charley Wag and The Woman with the Yellow Hair. These publications would to-day have been seized by the police within an hour of their appearance.

"Stories for boys were of the bluggest order. I remember The Blue Dwarf, and Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood, and Spring-Heeled Jack (popularly supposed to have been an eccentric Marquess of Waterford) was as great a hero as Dick Turpin. George Barnwell and Moll Cutpurse were, of course, classics."

R. A. H. GOODYEAR.

the Ghouls of the Sea, No. 139 The Phantom Pirate or the Water Wolves of the Bahamas, No. 143 The Giant Buccaneer or the Wrecker Witch of Death Island: just the stories for a dull Sunday—if one escaped detection! No. 1 was Buffalo Bill—His Life and Adventures in the Far West, and further stories of this famous character appeared frequently.

We who knew these books in the old days can still recall the thrills of surreptitious readings, but to-day the story is secondary to the fantastic titles and flamboyant covers—I can conceive a very satisfactory collection of covers only, if that were possible,

Both the First Rates and O'er Land and Seas had long runs and each finished around No. 450.

Next came the fondly remembered Invention, Travel & Adventure Library, popularly known as 'Frank Reades.' The remarkable exploits of the young inventor, Frank Reade, had thrilled American youth years before when the stories first appeared in the Boys of New York, and this pleasure was extended to British youth when the Boys of London & New York was published over here.

The Inventions were identical to First Rates in size and format. No. 1 was entitled Frank Reade Jr. and His New Steam Man or the Young Inventor's Trip to the Far West, and the next five numbers were variations on this theme. No. 7 was Frank Reade Jr. and His New Steam Horse or the Search for a Million Dollars, and then followed a spate of world wide

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adventures in amazingly-conceived machines for travelling on land, on sea and under it, and in the air.

From No. 170, stories of Jack Wright, another inventive genius of American conception, were introduced, and ran concurrently with the Frank Reades, but failed to achieve the same measure of popularity. After No. 180 the early Frank Reade stories were reprinted in their original coloured covers, and the library finally ended at No. 268.

A few years later, around 1906, a new edition of the Invention Library was issued in modernised covers, but it failed to meet with the success of the original edition. In 1910 a final attempt was made to revive the Frank Reades in a cheaper form, printed on green tinted paper and without covers, price one halfpenny. This was an even greater failure than its predecessor and ran to only 32 numbers.

The Garfield Library, smaller size than Invention, contained 192 pages in the usual coloured cover, price threepence, and ran to 84 numbers. Many English stories appeared therein including several by Burrage, but the majority were American. Compared with the First Rates and O'er Land and Seas the titles of the Garfields seem distinctly tame, but the stories were none the worse for that. In 1901, this library was reissued in a larger size, containing 80 pages, price twopence; I am uncertain of the duration, but think the reissue had a very short run.

The Garfield Boys' Journal, No. 1 dated September 20, 1894, was the Aldine Co.'s second and final venture in the sphere of boys' journals. Printed on good paper, each number consisted of 24 pages, large size, with many really interesting articles and fine serials. These included Adrian the Swordsman (by Ernest Brent, illustrated by W. Boucher, the Henderson artist), The Last Cruise of the Berengaria, and Burrage's Monkey Mat and Roving Dick (reprinted from the British Boys' Paper).

Despite many advantages, it failed to last, and ended at No. 45, Vol. 3, July 31, 1895, being incorporated the following week with No. 1 of the new series of the Cheerful Library. (To be continued.)

## Publishing Offices of the Old Boys' Papers That Are Gone

BEN WINSKILL

**T**HE bombing of London has obliterated the few remaining buildings from which our old favourites of early boyhood were issued. That fine old brick building at the corner of Harp Alley in Farringdon Street, from which Guy Rayner sent out the Boy's Popular, is just a heap of ruins. Dr Johnson's Old House, in Gough Square, whence came Ching-Ching's Own, is damaged almost beyond repair.

Hogarth House, recently incorporated into the buildings of the News of the World, has since been rased to the ground.

It is not so long ago that the old house from which Blueskin and Black Bess came was taken down and a new office building constructed. That, too, is damaged considerably.

The house in Shoe Lane which housed Turnpike Dick and all Chas. Fox's happy band of heroes was taken down to allow the Daily Express to function. It was discovered to have been built on an ancient Roman graveyard.

Edwin J. Brett's office in Fleet Street had to make way for a newspaper building, as did the office of the Boys of London, and the later office of Chas. Fox in Red Lion Court.

I am unable to say whether Red Lion House still stands, but just before the blitz the old name on a large shield proudly flanked the doorway.

Ritchie's in the same court is gone, but the firm moved just round the corner.

I fear 'The Sloperies' at 99 Shoe Lane is gone, but I could not get over the rubbish to see!

[Passed for publication]

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

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