

THE GOLDEN HOURS

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GOLDEN HOURS MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL

It's messy, messy months since I felt the first drive to produce a small magazine. In Australia we are isolated in that there exists a time lag compared to the bulk of all our old boys back interests - England. It seemed to me that apart from putting Australia on the map with a real, live magazine of it's own, this very fact may be the way to efface that time lag to a large extent.

After to running a small self-served business I soon found that getting down to it was the hardest job of all. Display work at any time is made up and down. I was immediately plunged into an up period which lasted until after Christmas, and it is only since then I have been able to get anything. Then, of course, I started to learn the hard way of what it's all about and I'm afraid this number is your heads affairs rather wildly from my original idea. I think, from what I will learn by signing this issue, I should be able to give more experience to future members. The main thing was to keep faith with the contributors and produce something!

Regarding future numbers, there is no set schedule. I do not wish to tie myself to a definite date of issue, but I am aiming at a quarterly paper, and with the experience gathered from No. 1 I see no reason why this should not be held to.

This is not an all Australian paper. I do not think we could produce one of continuing interest, even quarterly. But if there is an Australian point of view to be emphasized then I hope we can do it, and it is hoped that at least one contributor each issue will be Australian. Apart from that, anyone is very welcome to contribute to the pages of the GOLDEN HOURS magazine.

It will be the editorial policy to obtain articles from people who have first hand knowledge of our well-loved papers and can present fresh facts and original thought to add to the G. H. H. lore. If Roger Ashton will forgive me quoting him: "no article should be merely factual but should contain a criticism of the stories being reviewed, an appraisal of the good parts and a frank recognition of the bad." This should apply also, in my opinion, to the authors, artists etc. whoever are under review for people are human, whether we like it or not, and we are interested in their merits and defects as human beings. These qualities together can teach.

As the Golden Hours Club was formed about the same time as the magazine was thought of, what happier title for the latter than that of our club itself, for which was it kindly and promptly gave permission.

Dud Smith,
No. 1 Brandon Street,
CLOVELLY, N.S.W.



SEXTON BLAKE IN AUSTRALIA

• By Victor Gollip

It would be rather surprising if that confirmed globe-trotter, Sexton Blake, did not, at times during his world-wide investigations, find himself on the sunny shores of our own Australia.

Let us examine some of the documentary evidence of his visits to be found on the pages of the Union Jack, Sexton Blake Library and Sexton Blake Annual.

In that epic story of how Sexton Blake pursued his quarry twice around the world (N. J. 194 dated 1938), we are told that Blake and Tinker at one stage of the pursuit, sailed into Sydney Harbour. What kind of new land this Australia was, Tinker, we are told, could not tell, for, except where Sydney's thousand lights glowed, it lay like something black and still in the night.

The following morning, the chase was taken up to Brisbane by train, and such was Blake's preoccupation with the chase, he spent even less time there, taking up the chase by sea, and ending his brief encounter with Australian shores.

The next document on my shelf is dated 1913/14 Union Jack 118 entitled "Sexton Blake in Australia," and this time we find Blake, Tinker and Pedro in the small seaport town of Maryborough in Queensland having previously lost the trail of the man he sought in Sydney, and followed a slight clue to Queensland by coast steamer.

Blake studied a poster displayed in a window—

"The Clyde Gang Again.

Outrageous plots of violence in the Carrison Downs District.

White country lawless."

"Carrison Downs - oh? Just where I want to go," Blake muttered. "By jove, I thought the reign of bushrangers was over!"

Blake was warned that Capt. Clyde ruled the roost in that area, and every station had become an armed camp.

"Good heavens, what a terrible state of affairs," exclaimed Sexton Blake, apparently horrified. "Who is this dreadful man?"

They followed a heart-rending account of Blake, Tinker and Pedro on the trail of lawless men and frightening stories and subsequent blood from which they barely emerged with their lives.

Blake continued alone, and before emerging triumphant, he was to endure forest fire, being trapped in an old mine shaft in the dark and gloomy scrub, and the attraction, whilst there, of a seven foot Queensland snake snake.

If Boston Blake did not visit Australia much, perhaps the following description of his condition at one stage near the successful completion of the case could be significant!

"When six weeks later Boston Blake staggered into the lodgings in Garrison Square where he had left Tinker, his best friend would not have known him. As an actual fact, Tinker his devoted companion for more than three years, was almost unable to believe that the man who stood voraciously before him the opposite chair was really the smart detective. Blake was shrunken, shrivelled, heavily bearded and looked almost as black as a native. He looked quite ten years older than when Tinker had seen him last.

George Hamilton Town in U. L. 483 [21/1/1913], credited Australia with producing that extremely like-setting character Mademoiselle Yvonne-Carter, but although a vivid description was given of Yvonne's Blinborg sheep station in Victoria, this merely provided a background for her, as her adventures with Boston Blake took place in various other parts of the world.

However, in U. L. 818 "The Mystery of Walla Walla" [21/11/1913], Yvonne is back on a visit to her old home, Blinborg Station, in the middle of a drought period, and finds the present owner, Trelovere, arrested and broken through treachery with marked cards by the owner of the adjacent "Walla Walla" station, a raised named Junction.

Such injustice naturally brought out Yvonne's greatest indignation, a determination to wrest Blinborg from the scoundrel who had cheated to gain possession of it.

About this time Boston Blake made up his mind to shelve professional duties and make a long promised trip to Australia, where he had not been for some time. He made a mental vow that nothing would induce him to touch a case until his return. For a while, Tinker loathingly agreed with his master, and a no more like-looking pair could have been seen around Melbourne than Boston Blake and the assistant with their inseparable companion, Fable.

Fable, however, took a hand, Blake and Tinker being prevailed upon to become guests at the Campbell homestead near the Walla Walla station.

They agreed, but not before Tinker had looked out on Barkie Street and "cast a conspicuous glance at Melbourne's aristocratic Lyons, which seemed to sting to that stinging city like an old man of the sea."

At the Campbell homestead, the recently Jameson, owner of the Walla Walla station, arrived and requested help to find his sheep, some 2,500 head which had been mysteriously scribbled away in batches, and of which he had not been able to find the slightest trace.

At one night however, Yvonne was belted this little about, and in her inevitable way, was fighting the wrong side to Trelovere, the owner of Blinborg.

Back to Yvonne's embarrassment, Tinker stumbled on the hidden galley but Yvonne had need to hide the sheep, and had, perhaps, to be kept captive.

Tinker escaped, and stumbled on to a hidden cache of gold, and shortly afterwards clung over the edge of an abyss and lodged in a tree top.

Meanwhile, Blake in search of Tinker, met, to his surprise the fair Yvonne. This followed some interesting resort, conversations, and the planning of a strategy that revealed Jameson as a cheat and a knave, and forced him to relinquish his rights to the Blinborg Station and property.

As Tinker had still not turned up, a further search was made, and a horse was traced by Blake at the very face of the cliff.

Parting from Yvonne was such sweet sorrow, and for my money ably unnecessary, but unfortunately in the end we had Yvonne stumbling heady back to the house, and Blake, with a down sigh and misery eyes riding slowly away, haunted by the touch of her hair and the look in her eyes.

Blake was back in the same district in a story called "The Great of the Flood" (L.L.T.O. (11/4/1911).

The scene opened with Blake paying a visit to his friend Campbell at the Pasjerra sheep station. During their stay, Blake and Tinker spend much time in the saddle. Shearing was over, but the 40,000 head of sheep ranging over Pasjerra's 100,000 acres was still stirring a good deal of all things about in the Forcing, Newcastle and Melbourne markets, and a good deal of stock work had to be done. Blake and Tinker took a constant part in these activities.

One evening there was an alarm, the outlet gate of the Mulla Mulla irrigation scheme had given way in a sudden fashion, all the water in the reservoir pouring down at a terrific rate. Twenty thousand acres of best fat land was in danger of being flooded, and ten thousand acres more in danger of destruction.

Blake was told that an owner nearer the reservoir had a million bushels of hay about stacked on his property and it would be lost under water by now.

The problem was David's, with a temporary gate across the reservoir outlet, drive the water up to high ground, and in the case of the flooded wheat, erect temporary diaphragms above the flood water, and stretch the sacks along.

We are told that fresh water, when it wets wheat in sacks, causes the kernels to swell and swell until they get sticky as glue, and gradually stick together. The result is that before the water penetrates to any depth, there is a sticky shell inside the sack formed by this wetting wheat. It all depends on how long the water has been around the sacks as to what thickness this shell may be, it might be an eighth of an inch or it might be an inch. The wheat inside this shell remains unsoaked. Where the danger lies in this wet wheat comes if it is left piled close together. There is danger of sweating, then, and the whole lot might be ruined. By spreading the sacks along the diaphragms until it can be later transported to Melbourne to be cleaned, winnowed and rebagged.

Of course the failure of the outlet gate was deliberate, and was the work of Jim Tinker in revenge against the sheep owner, who had ruined Tinker's father back in Canada. Yvonne sided and abetted Jim Tinker, Susan Blake was now gone through the miller, and insisted on compensation, his relations with Yvonne becoming somewhat strained in the process.

In Susan Blake's Library No. 181 published about 1918 Andrew Murray wrote a story called "The Black Out Mine," which took Blake to Inverness and the Northern Territory.

We were told that at Darwin, the authorities after shooting much evidence, finally came to the conclusion that the useful collection of herds in which the Chinese inhabitants of the town lived were well-bred, and had to be destroyed, and the colony of yellow man removed. In more

suitable quarters.

Corvillo was next, however, as the Chinaman apparently wished to live in a filthy structure of thatched-stick and clay walls that go into the gutter by means provided by the government.

The official water had its way at last, and now there were only a few barrels in the place left. Fire and water have done much to remove the plague spot, and superior sanitary arrangements have cleaned the Little District.

Over the door of the most pretentious looking hut that was left in the old quarter, was a Chinese sign, and below it painted in study English characters was the name "Chi." Fresh vegetables supplied.

It was this individual who observed the coming of the ship containing Hiko and Tinker, and who went on in to town to meet them.

We are told that there are not many white people in that part of the Territory, indeed they do not number much more than 1,000 souls, the greater proportion of whom are government officials, patient tending men employed on administration and departmental work.

Being information supplied by Chi, Hiko & Co. set out by track for Pine Creek. Here they hired horses and took the road to Marysville where the tin fields are situated. The road was little more than a cart track with many crossings and deviations over the Katherine River. Striking off from this road and going through scrub, they came to the police post at Tanggala. There was a small native settlement at Tanggala, and one or two rough stores where a half-dead had opened a store. That particular district is fairly favorable for sheep rearing owing to the fact that many wells had been sunk from the stations, and the water supply was plentiful. It lay on the borders of the Macdonald Ranges and according to the map their final destination, Corvillo, was 50 miles further on.

At dusk Hiko & Co. rode out from the settlement, following the track that ran eastward. The great stretches of scrubland, with the growth of short, tough grasses, were of the typical sheep-rustling type, and now and again they would find just a wire-fenced portion and catch a glimpse of a light from some distant settler's home.

Above them glared the wonderful southern sky and the great Cross. It seemed to Tinker as though the stars were almost close enough for him to touch by reaching up his hand.

Came a long slender creature shot out in front of them, almost under their horses' hoofs, and went off in great sweeping bounds, sending a flicker of dust up into their nostrils.

Tinker reined himself in the stirrups and sent out a whoop of delight. "Kangaroo, gallop!" he called.

They heard the heavy thud that told of the great hind legs as the creature shot itself through the warm night.

Now and again the track crossed in a waterhole, here swung across a stream, but for the most part the track was level enough and kept close to the telegraph pole.

So through various types of Australian bush, and experiencing many adventures on the way, the Hiko party continued on to its destination, and there started out the navigators that had been attributed to them, and were

instrumental in righting a great wrong.

Union Jack 1948 dated 18/8/53, was entitled "Shell up!" and as a foreword, carried the following editor's remarks:-

"The Australian bush, mysterious bushrangers, hold-up stage-robbing, adventures and detective work! These are the ingredients which make up this Union Jack story. Many readers - particularly Australians - have asked for a yarn featuring Blake and Tucker 'down under.' This is it. You will enjoy it. So will everyone else who delights in a yarn of 'map' and 'grip' telling about open-air life under Southern skies.

Blake was approached by a rolled bush manager.

"I want you to go to Australia and help the police troopers of Governor Lord to round up Major Stone, one of the blackest hearted, murderous, slaying bushrangers that ever made Australia sleep uncomfortably at night."

Blake and Tucker in response to urgent pleadings journeyed to Queensland, Australia, Brisbane being his port of superintention.

On the stage coach trip to Poitwell, the coach stopped to attend a prone figure on the beach, and whilst thus engaged, a mounted man on a horse, a large revolver in each hand, approached unobtrusively.

"Shell up!" The words came through the sultry air like the crack of a whip, and "whip" was indeed the operative word, as evidenced by the massed man, one of the coach passengers held in his upturned hand the stick of a prodigious whip. His hand moved over so slightly, yet the 14 foot thong of whip recoiled to life, flew with the speed of light towards the bushranger, and struck both men from his hands. Only by a quick spurring of his horse and making a break for the bush, did the hold-up man escape.

When our hero's riding later on in the story, an unfortunately accident befall both Blake and Tucker of their horses. A fellow male like both horse through the bush seemed inevitable, when all of a sudden the Australian bush-bell was heard:- "Cor-ee!" and into sight burst a black-fellow who held a spear in one hand, and a tomahawk in the other. He was naked except for a pair of tattered mackintosh trousers.

"You black-fellow?" he asked "Whose? Whose that can you back home? Which way you belongs come?"

The unexpected service provided in Australia's rough interior was an surprising as it was welcome.

Many adventures beheld the Baker Street pair, with black-tracking, hold-ups, and stabbings well in the fore, until finally Blake discovered that the bushranger, Major Stone, was in reality, a sub-inspector of the Queensland Mounted Police who had actually gone through the motions of assisting Blake in ridding himself of a rival.

We are told that neither Blake nor Tucker waited in Australia longer than was necessary to finish their case. They had not the time.

Union Jack 1148 "The Green Man" by G.H. Ford [1936 October 1932] announced The Star:-

"You was being served on the wide front verandah of Pinhook Somerset - Macdonald's Yvonne's estate in Australia. Grouped about the fireplace in the wire-meshed section at one end of the verandah, were Yvonne, her maid, John Greaves, and her two guests, Mr. Burton Blake of London, and his young assistant Tucker.

Shearing at Blakings was in full swing with shearing going on from one end of the station to the other, and the talk over the tea was naturally of flowers, and the latest prices at the last big wool sale in Melbourne, and the rival merits of merino and crossbred wools.

Like this they were strolled the foreman of the station bearing a cross of a peculiar shade of green. He had found this cross on a bush by a pool. One rose only was green, the other three being a normal shade of pink.

The pool in question was 15 miles to the north of Blakings. Here, a peculiar formation of stone, almost a perfect crescent, rose in the form of a low hill about 100 feet high. At the base of it, in the very centre of the crescent, was the pool, as dark as ink. The pool was 10 feet in diameter and various depths, and was thought to connect to an underground river. The water was brackish.

Opposite the hill, about 2 miles distant, was another pool, this one being all Travers's property.

The natives believed that the pool on Travers's property was a "pool of death," and that at times a green cross would appear on the bush growing at the pool's edge, and would signify that the pool was about to claim a victim.

At this juncture we met Jasper Frisby, the neighbour in whose property was to be found the second pool. He had come for help, his brother having been found drowned in Travers's "Pool of Death."

Blake and Tinker rode out to the pool and saw that its surface was five feet below ground level, with steep sides of perfectly smooth stone. On one side, back with the ground was a stone slab, 18 inches by 4 feet, its length being at right angles to the pool.

Back at the station, Blake told Tinker it was reminiscent of the ceremonial pools of Africa, the flat stone of these being able to start and tip the unsupported victim into the pool. Blake carefully examined the green cross, and chemically classified the green colouring matter, identifying the normal pink of the petals. Evid, concluded Blake, and this to confirm murder with superstitious.

Tinker went back to the pool alone, lay on the slab, and examined it for the possible presence of mechanics, and unsuspecting of another's presence, was dice shot into the pool.

To his horror, an old hag, later revealed as Jasper Frisby's mother, began rubbing Tinker's head under the water with a long pole, Jasper Frisby himself standing by with a gun.

Tinker dived, and did not come up. Satisfied, the evil ones returned home.

Next day Blake, worried over Tinker's long absence and in his subsequent search finding a feather from Tinker's hat floating on the pool, skinned up to the Frisby's station in a great state of anger, and told in full the truth of Jasper Frisby. At the crucial moment, Tinker staggered up, having emerged from the second pool after some amazing experiences in the underground river connecting the two pools.

It became evident that Jasper Frisby's so-called brother had been murdered by the evil pair so as to gain the inheritance due to him. Actually he was not a brother at all.

The evil ones met a richly deserved fate.

Issue Date 1948 (12/11/19) "The Battle of Harding Bay" by Gilbert Chester, Esq., as its setting, the small Australian coastal town of Harding, presumably somewhere south of Perth.

Chief item of interest at Harding was a hotel known as One-Eyed Pete's, the name being a corollary to one drunk stabled by various from pubcomers and small tramp steamers.

Two men arrived from Port Moresby, near the Milneba Gold Fields on lower back, Section Five and Twelve.

It transpired that some gang had been busy smuggling Chinese into Australia, and the Australian Government had commissioned Mike to investigate.

Against a background of a skeleton chained to a ship's steering wheel, a drifting plane by air, a charging line of Catalina's held at bay by hurled sticks of dynamite, and by the effective assistance of good old One-Eyed Pete himself, the story goes at a great pace.

The surrender of the Chinese, and the arrest of the smugglers takes place in due course, One-Eyed Pete explaining "Most of the Chinks are smuggled in to reach a boat into the Northern Territory or Queensland. Their own people who have settled there take 'em over. But the Government's out for a White Australia. It's been keeping a pretty keen watch on these lately, so they've simplified the papers down here though its not an inconvenience for their illegal traffic.

Thanks to Mike, Tucker and One-Eyed Pete it became not only inconvenient, but downright impossible!

Section Five in Australia - A tale of Chinese smuggling in Melbourne. This was the introduction of Union Jack 1948 dated 1/1/1948 "The Call of the Dragon" by Arthur J. Park, aka, so we were told was a native-born Australian.

Against a background of Melbourne, Fitzroy, Hager Street, Russell St, Police Station, Bourke Street, and a collection of very tough characters, and operations such as "Jones" "Wicks", "It that thick comes interfering with us he'll get a heavier dose of alcohol, asterisk" we find Section Mike pitting his wits with crooks having the impressive names of One Goat, Larry the Rat, King Dooling, Section Naylor, and the salient One King, of one One-Eyed Pete himself stretched on a sacrificial stone at the mercy of the worshippers in the Temple of the Three Dragons. But he still was able to forestall an attempt to smuggle 300 Chinese into Australia, and to expose the Police Inspector as an unscrupulous crook!

John G. Brennan was responsible for "The Red Boomerang" N. S. S. 2nd series 400 (12/1/19).

His eyes of Section Mike "His intimate knowledge of most of the known portions of the work, enabled him to concentrate chiefly upon nearly every part of the great Southern Commonwealth. To Melbourne men he could talk about Bourke and Bennett Streets, Collins Street and the Block as freely as to Sydney-actors he could chat about George Street or the Domain or any part of the harbour from Little Howe Bay out to the works of Broad and Congee. He was no less familiar with Adelaide - the city of churches - than he was with Perth or Brisbane.

On page 58, Section Mike arrived in Sydney and visited the Hotel

Australia, that "timeless, untranslatable and untranslatable of wealthy squatters and managed people generally."

Blake talked familiarly of the "Sydney Morning Herald," Darlinghurst, and Circular Quay.

During his stay in Sydney, Blake took a boat to Anthony Meadows in order to shake off a possible shadow.

He returned for Nyngan on the Coburg line, and eventually returned to Sydney.

As a result of his going to and fro, he was able to satisfactorily solve a very serious bank matter, and in the process to further familiarize himself with this fair land of ours.

"The Melbourne Mystery" 2, 3, 4. See series 295 (1/18/1897) also by John G. Stanton, Strata Section Blake and the Hon. R. S. S. P. to Melbourne in connection with the murder in England of a Lady Daleydale, and the theft of her Japanese Sabres.

Police of the World had been alerted to watch for the appearance of any of the stones, and information came from the Australian Police to the effect that a respectable peddler in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, had been offered an unusual ruby for sale. It proved to be one of the missing stones. The stone led to Melbourne's Chinese quarter.

Parade spoke to Widgey his conversation.

"We'd slip along to Bourke Street, Widgey, that's about the Flower-dilly Circus of the town. From there you can slip into the Chinese Quarter."

"Do they have lotteries and gambling places just the same as in our London?"

"None y'r heart you, Widgey, exactly the same. We'll head along and mark a ticket or two. That's if I can find my way to the spot from this angle. Little Bourke Street it's called."

During his stay in the city, Blake went for a stroll with R. S. S. P. at that gate which almost faces the Great Melbourne and of the Fitzroy Gardens, Blake entered that large enclosure which is perhaps better known in preference to the greater part of the Empire than possibly any part of Australia except Sydney Harbour. In it, to the north end, and passing almost up to the railway line, stands the famous M. C. C. cricket ground. "The place," Blake remarked, "to which we come to recover 'matter'."

"When we're busy" R. S. S. P. said tersely "As often as not, old pig, we come out and loose them here for the time being, at my rate."

"Now the point we've got to make for is that direction, towards Richmond," Blake remarked, pointing over a rise.

As the story proceeded however the mention was made of such locations etc. as South Yarra, Paul Road, Prince's Bridge, Collfield, Flinders Wharf, Sussex Street, Collingwood, Mottahard, Wilson's Promontory, Sandy Hill Beach and Cape Howe, before the scene shifted finally to Sydney.

Here, such familiar places as Sydney House, Watson's Point, Coal Island, Circular Quay and the Hotel Australia played their part in the unfolding phase of this story, and in the successful conclusion of the case.

In the last issue Blake Journal, published around about 1944, a story featured Blake and Widgey first in Melbourne, then in Sydney.

Dick Bernard, a character in the story, searched the city for

one Andrew McCabe, and in the process, went from the Domain to Circular Quay and through to Darling Harbour. Some vigorous action followed, and a retreat to Spring Bridge.

After discussion of the problem with Sirion Blake, the scene moved to Blue Ridge, Queensland, where yet another case was brought to a similar factory conclusion on Australian soil.

Blake's logs contributed a very interesting Spring yarn. "The Mystery of the Engraved Skull" N. S. L. 3rd 208.

These unusual Navy friends Joe Hanson and Mike O'Flynn were much in evidence. Their naval launch was anchored in Mowson Bay under the lee of Cromwell Point. They were in Sydney on loan to the Royal Australian Navy.

They received an airmail letter from Singapore from Blake indicating that he and Tinker would arrive at Mascot Airport, Sydney, the next day. Once again the Baker Street pair were in the trial of a stolen robe.

On the way from the aerodrome to the city, Blake, Tinker and the Navy Chums sped along James Farquah. The car swept into William Street towards King's Cross. On they went through the correspondence Centre and finished in Rastbender's Bay. Leaving the Navy pair here, Blake and Tinker continued on to a residence at Point Piper.

After an excellent meal of "Blue Waters," Point Piper, Blake and Tinker having a notion of their dinner destined in a drive round the southern side of the harbour to Wallace's Bay, thence to Coogee, but Blake wanted to go to Woodhouseby first of all.

At the Kings Cross intersection they turned down Mackay Street towards the docks. Looking ahead, Sirion Blake recognized the slope descended by the National Art Gallery that led to the Domain and Botanical Gardens.

Crinkled in a following car attempted to run Blake and Tinker, and nearly succeeded, Tinker holding up in the harbour. Starting loose dragged out and reconnected, the European waterworks worker gave a comforting grin "We'll not crack, Mr. Blake," he asserted "but the salt water out of his system, and a substance of lower rate it, and he'll be as right as you."

Arrived back at Point Piper, Blake received a message to meet someone on the pier half a mile north of Marsden Beach.

Blake and Tinker obeyed the summons, and were soon trudging slowly along the narrow path leading gradually higher to the grass hills of Malabar, north-west of the Long Bay Penitentiary.

Some striking adventures befell Blake and Tinker in this area, including the finding of a dead body, and its subsequent recovery by the Civil Service Squad led by the famous Sergeant Ware to whom Jack's Blake and Tinker were introduced.

Not only did Blake succeed in recovering the missing robe, but found it in a shell on the harbour's floor containing secret ingredients. With the help of the Navy pair, Blake recovered the shell and discovered as a result, the whereabouts of a hidden cache of gold.

"Flashpoint for Treason" by Desmond Field, N. S. L. 3rd 210
April 1951, commenced with the gassing down of a man in William Street near Kings Cross, then continued with a party at Kings Cross, and Tinker

concessions in an alley not far from Circular Quay.

The Sydney G. I. B. and a hotel in George Street were next featured, and then the various characters commenced to converge on the Woollahr Market Range, where secrets of national importance were stolen.

The drama of Woollahr was followed by an exciting incident in which Blake and Tinker, abandoned boat board and four in a runaway place.

Blake and Tinker freed themselves and crash landed the plane in the South Australian wheat belt, and raced Melbourneward through the old gold town of Bendigo, through the hills to Kangaroo Flat, then on the world-famous highway heading south to Kilmore, Glabbeon, Giggars' Nest, Koolah, Terntown, North Kananook then Bourke Street and Exhibition Street, Melbourne, in a frantic bid to stop the crook getting away with the secrets.

The pursuit ended with the shooting down of the crook in the middle of Collins Street, Melbourne, and the recovery from him, of the vital Market Range plans.

And as we come to the very latest Boston Blake story with an Australian background. This is U. S. L. 374 444 "Showdown in Sydney" by Diamond Field, published July 1939.

The story opens at Kings Cross, Sydney, with "moss" Nixon starting at the racing page of the "Mirror" and waiting apprehensively for trouble.

But wait his hours untroubled, as shortly afterwards he made an unforced trip to "The Gap," and ably assisted by two friends whom he had duck-crowded, to make the one way trip to the rugged rocks and boiling sea below.

His partner in the duck-crowd, had, meanwhile, met his death at the hands of a stranger at Ballarat, Victoria, his abandoned body being thrown down an old mine shaft.

Blake and Tinker was at Ballarat with friends after winning up a state at Woollahr. He had accepted an invitation to have tea days in Queensland and the Northern Territory as a crocodile hunt, after which he intended to return home.

However, he discovered the body while receiving a dog from a lodge on the mine shaft, and a combination of interest and a book of matches bearing the name of a Kings Cross, Sydney, night club, took him to Sydney instead.

The story veered around places made by the Germans during the war for the production of perfect American dollar bills. The planes had been in the possession of a collector of odd items, until recently, when one gang had stolen them, and a second gang had hi-jacked them from the first gang. An American was in the market for the planes, and the American money was endangered.

Blake and Tinker took up residence at the Blue Hotel in Macleay Street, Kings Cross, and were soon on the track of the missing planes.

They visited the "Club Moose" which stood at the end of a cul-de-sac named Winesap Court, a shabby and grimy little business on the boundary of Kings Cross and Woolloomooloo, and got the cat amongst the pigeons.

The finding of "moss" Nixon's body in the bay near Bondi, caused Blake and Tinker to travel with the police by launch from Watsons Bay.

through the heads and down the coast to Honolulu.

"Some interesting observations were made about 'The Gap' before the return to the harbors.

Paula Dore had an visit with a postman on a block of State District station above the street at Hignettville on the north side of New South Road Road. Here the famous three: Blake, Tucker and Paula congregated and discussed the case and made their plans.

One plan was for Paula, through the "Club House" to visit gang leader Henry Smith's flat at Kawa Bay, alongside the Flying Boat Dock. Paula acquitted herself well on this assignment.

Panoburrah Lane, a side-cho-see near the Woolloomooloo docks was the scene of shooting, death, and the recovery of the plates.

Using them as bait, Blake picked up the American lawyer at the entrance to St. James Station, George Square, and having observed the car through the mirror of the Park into Elizabeth Street and turned into William Street, he headed for the Blue Bay flat of the now defunct Smith, and here the final drama was played out, with further shooting, the arrest of the remaining criminals, and the handing of the plates over to the police.

Blake was then able to give thought once again to the delayed chronological hunting trip to many Queensland.

Let us hope his stay there will be productive of further adventures, and will result in yet another Australian story appearing in the pages of the Boston Blake Library.

* By Victor Cully.

SOUTH ISLAND

To Anthony Blake went the honor of creating the most colorful "character" character in the Boston Blake saga, the South was an affair.

A. B. L. and B. L. resumed up his relations with Blake as follows: "Boston Blake, the private investigator of Baker Street, and his assistant Tucker were as well acquainted with Monsieur Death as anybody in the world. His red-lined eyes, his snow-white hair, and his restless glimmering smile were all partially familiar to them.

Between Boston Blake and the albino there existed a curious rapport. Although it was the ambition of Boston Blake's life to secure the coronation of Monsieur Death in a charge which would keep him out of mischief for a long time, and it was what the albino considered a necessity that Boston Blake should be prevented by some means, say a bullet - from taking too close an interest in his mysterious affairs, the two - each great in his way - had formed for each other something approaching friendship.

Death had a code. He played his crooked game according to laws which he had created for his own use. There were things which he did not do. He was a thief, but he was not a liar. He had killed, but none of the albino's enemies had been found with a bullet in his back. He was capable of murder, but he was not treacherous. He considered himself to be at war with society, and the laws which society had created meant nothing to him."

Foreword.

When Syd Smith first asked me some months ago to contribute an article for the "Golden Hours Magazine" he set me rather a problem. What could I write about that was fresh to the Australian collector and which would be sure cater for all tastes? Later, when Syd suggested that if I wrote on Indian facts and information, it would be of great interest to the Australian readers, I was assured the obvious solution.

Having the desire to know personally more Editors, Authors and Artists, connected with the papers than myself, and of those being in the fortunate position to get real Indian information, I resolved that I would reveal for the very first time quite a lot of this data to the Australian collectors, be whether you be a "Gem," "Magpie," "Native Kludge," "Western Love," "Comet" or any other enthusiast I hope that you will find something in the following article of interest.

All the information has been most carefully checked, and I do claim it to be 100% authentic.

HAMILTONIAN INFORMATION.

The "Magpie" was not the first paper of that title to be published in England, in fact an earlier publication of that name appeared as far back as 1840, but this was not a boy's paper. This incidentally was the same year in which "The Boys and Girls Pencil Magazine" appeared, which in recollections of early juvenile literature was the very first weekly magazine to be published which catered for boys and girls.

"A General Repository of Literature, Philosophy, Science, Fine Arts, etc." was how this first "Magpie" was described in the sub-title, and it had the very rare distinction of being with several other magazines in only having one issue published!

It is however very interesting to record the opening line of verses which appeared in this paper, and how very apt it seems in relation to the very famous "Magpie" which we know so well, and accordingly like the old wine, improves with age.

"Come hither, come hither, by night and by day"

"No Hager is pleased that never are good"

"Like words of the summer, go out then away"

"Another so sweet and so striking comes on."

Billy Baxter, Tom Merry, and Jimmy Silver, were also not the first school boy characters of that name to appear in juvenile literature. The first Tom Merry was featured in the "British Boys Paper" in 1898 - a Jimmy Silver also appeared in the "Boys of England" in the 1870's - whilst the famous name of Billy Baxter was used by another author a year before the "Magpie" appeared in 1896. This other Billy Baxter featured in a series of school tales in the Crossed Business boys paper entitled "The Vanguard" 1895 when he attended Macmillan's School. Some years ago now, an elderly author once told me that Charles Hamilton also wrote these tales under the name of "H. Phillipot Wright" but this he doubts, but it is indeed strange that Hamilton

was admitted writing a large capital for the Troops Helms firm at this period. As this firm ceased to exist over 40 years ago, and no records are available I doubt very much if this mystery will ever be solved.

The first Editor of the "Magpie" and "Tom" was a Percy Griffin, a real Bohemian if ever there was one. He was only in office for about two or three years when he left England suddenly for Canada. One can read quite a lot about him in Frank Richards' autobiography, and read further about him in Chapter X where he is referred to as V. C. I understand that he died many years ago now, forgotten by almost all, though the papers he created are remembered by countless thousands of old readers all over the world.

H. A. Hinton, the second Editor, is probably better known to us as the man who translated the large paper "School and Sport" in 1905, but he was also the well-known writer "Froger Howard" who wrote such splendid school tales of Gordon Clay & Co. of Yorkshire Grammar School in the "Empire Library" and comic "Whiskies." Most of these tales, were, I'm afraid to say, retouched and copying of things which had appeared in other boys' papers, chiefly the "Magpie" and "Tom." That is one of the reasons why at times many readers have assumed the Hinton must have written the tales. The dialogues had not even been altered in certain chapters.

Hinton returned from war service after serving as a Captain in the Coldstream Guards, and resumed as Editor. He acquired a very knowledgeable able "Magpie" reader as an office boy, whose head of Greyfriars here was prominent and who also kept a complete file of "Magpies." The weekly "Magpie" story was a rub, and the office boy thought he'd read it before somewhere. Told to check on it, he did. Sure enough, it had been read before, except for a few early chapters which were changed. Hinton, who had left for a holiday in Scotland was, as Editor, recalled. The ultimate thing was that H. A. Hinton severed his connection with Amal passed Frost. He formed the "School and Sport" shortly afterwards, which was a failure and also a failure to Charles Hamilton the main writer who never received the penny price for his work, neither did the following author N. E. Hunt-Dall.

Like the colonial life that he led, H. A. Hinton's death seems like something in a story book. Editor of "Dalton's Weekly" (an advertisement type of paper) in 1914, he was on a train homeward bound during the Blitzkrieg when the train stopped just outside his station by the red signal. Hinton, who thought that he was at the station, opened the carriage door, stepped out and fell to his death, a most tragic end for any man.

From 1921 until the end of the "Magpie" in 1945, the two papers were in charge of C. M. Drew, a very likable and pleasant man. During the War years it is worth mentioning that the two papers were under the control of John Mac Partridge, a writer in his own right, and an authority on the game of cricket. "Tom" as he was called, had the mere distinction of being a member of three county cricket clubs - which is some achievement. Editor of "Cricketeer" a well-known magazine, and writer of books on Test Cricket, "Tom" could claim to be the most knowledgeable writer of cricket than anyone.

"Tom," who was practically stone deaf, was a very kindly man. Many an author and editor I have met have spoken well of him and in many cases, owe a lot to the help and encouragement he gave them in their early years. Editor of the pink "Boys' Review" for a time in the 1930s, he died so long ago in 1958.

One of the most interesting subjects connected with the "Magnum" and "Gem" concerns the many substitute writers who wrote tales of Greyfriars and St. Jim's when the real "Frank Richards" copy was not forthcoming. I have dealt with this subject many times before in other collecting papers, and it is not my intention to repeat much of that here.

Really the most informative collector that I have had the pleasure of meeting, is John Shaw of England. Informative I mean, in regard to the substitute stories published in the two already mentioned papers. John did study the most valuable research ever conducted with Hamiltonians during the last war, when, with the collaboration at times with Charles Hamilton (by getting titles, etc.) he succeeded in working out which tales were written by the other writers, and a list had been published in several other collecting papers of the time. Now, I must point out however, that these lists are not official, and although I personally would accept at least 85% of them as accurate, a slight element of doubt must remain in some until official information is forthcoming.

But obviously the reader may say, Charles Hamilton must know his own stories, but here again I am sorry to have to record that some writers of other Greyfriars and St. Jim's stories were not above lifting certain parts of genuine Hamilton stories so as to get a real 100% plot incorporated in their "Gem" or "Magnum" story. Hamilton may conclude that he wrote it by reading parts of his own dialogues, and with years at times a genuine Hamilton story being altered by an over zealous sub-editor, one can realize the difficulties encountered in trying to solve the identity of the real author.

I have been told that there was in the "Magnum" a black record book giving details of all the stories and authors written by other writers. This book disappeared some years ago, and would be I imagine worth a small fortune to an ardent collector or researcher on this subject.

In a recent article in the Canadian S. P. C. I stated quite a few of these substitute writers, and also some time ago in an issue of the "Collectors Digest." Since those dates however quite a bit more information has come to light, and it is worth recording up to date all the authors that I know of who have either written St. Jim's, Greyfriars and Rockwood.

Ernest Bickel's was not the first of the substitute writers as freely believed. The actual first was H. Charles Hook, son of the famous S. Charles Hook of Park, Sun & Pete fame, who wrote Gem No. 31 entitled "Harvey Hince's Gem," and it is quite possible that he wrote earlier stories before this date. "Gem" No. 71 was in fact written originally by Ernest Bickel as reported in Frank Richards' Autobiography, so it seems that the Amsterdam Press, or rather the editor of the "Magnum" and "Gem" at that time, Percy DeWitt, had been using another writer to pose St. Jim's years without Charles Hamilton's knowledge.

- H. Charles Hook** - School writer under the name of "Harvey" and son of the famous creator of Sun, Sun & Pete.
- Ernest Bickel** - whose war dispatches from the various war fields made his name almost a household word.
- E. A. Hinton** - Editor at one time of "Magnum" "Gem," "School and Sport" "Boys Friend" etc.

- Boyd Wood-Smith** - Sub-Editor on "Magnum" and "Gem" one period, also writer "Norman Taylor".
- Frank Gordon Cook** - Boys writer under many names - on staff of "Chronicle" and "News" publications.
- George De Souza** - On editorial of the "Magnum" and "Gem" at one time wrote most of the Greyfriars Herald material - easily the most knowledgeable of all sub-writers.
- Reginald A. Kirkham
R. "Bert" Todd** - Boys and Girls writer under many names. Better known as "Michael Poole" and "Anthony Thomas" boys writer.
- L. Rowler Shephard** - Former Features Editor of the "People" a leading Sunday English newspaper - feature critic and travel expert.
- Leslie Austin
L. S. Thomas** - Editor of "Value Jack", "Detective Weekly" and several other papers - started in the "Magnum" office.
- L. S. Warren Bell** - Features editor of the "Capital" where he was known as the "Old Fog".
- L. A. Smith** - Creator of the famous school St. Francis - and writer of Nelson Lee.
- Leslie Gray** - Former Editor of the weekly "Chuckles" and well known writer - had correspondence school in this country some years ago.
- Leslie O'Hara** - Former sub-editor on the "Magnum" and "Gem." Later Editor of "Kangaroo", "Play", and several other papers. Also "Victory Scott" and "Captain Robert Baxter" writers of many stories.
- John Mc.Paterson** - Editor of "Magnum" and "Gem" during war years - later Editor of "Boys Review." Author in his own right - by many pen-names.
- Will Gibson** - Winner of a prize in the Greyfriars Story Competition 1915 - and later writer for Chronicle and Telegraph.
- Robert Langley
L. S. Macdonald** - Winner of the Greyfriars Competition 1916 script.
- Donald Fleming
Graham Stewart** - Boys and Girls writer.
- W. L. Hutchings** - B. S. C. script writer and publisher of juvenile papers some years ago.
- W. L. Hutchings** - One of the prize winners in the Greyfriars Cup competition 1915. Wrote "Magnum" and "Gem" verse.
- H. Jeffy** - Wrote the prounged last "Magnum" substitute story - "Sandy Colton".
- C. Maurice Drew** - Editor of "Magnum" "Gem," "S. C. S." 1931-1940.

NOTE. Some readers may wonder why John W. Weyway's name is not included as it was in the B. S. C. 1915. The reason being that I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Weyway many times since that date, and he assures me that he never wrote any. His name was given to me in good faith but confused with the Francis Bunker subject.

This is not claimed to be a complete list by any means - if that black book were to come to light, I'm sure that quite a few more literary unknown names, or even famous names, would be revealed.

Maurice Dowd? The reader may say - I never knew that he wrote poems - but he did and I've since one, "Tom, Jerry & Co. in the Sky" a story dealing with roller-skating - quite comic, and he had the distinction of the character's without plagiarism. This was published in the "Gem" 1884.

Hulley O'Hood always maintained that he was actually responsible for the famous Boston Court notice in the "Magpie" and although Charles Hamilton wrote the tale, the idea was first thought of by O'Hood, whose other duties in the "Magpie" office was to supply ideas and plots to ensure a flow of fresh situations to the "Magpie" and "Gem" readers.

Fred Gordon-Cook, one of the prolific writers of other St. John's and Greyfriars poems, told me of an amusing story of how he remarked to a friend in the vicinity that he had written a large number of poems for the "Magpie" and did not know what would result by this remark. That evening a large number of boys were peering through his windows and gathered outside his house, waiting to see the famous "Freaky Situations." With an amount of explaining would they go away until he had autographed their copies of the "Magpie."

Boston letters in the "Magpie" were answered by Clive R. Foss, son of George Manville Foss, the famous Victorian-Edwardian boys writer who, under John Hix Postville, spent five and a half days a week answering up to 18000 letters a day. Many people have concluded that he may have had a hand in the substitute stories, but in an interview just by myself he denied it some years ago.

Lastly in this jotted data on Hamiltoniana I have had many queries from readers for information on Charles Hamilton's early life. As readers know, it was a general opinion of most collectors that the autobiography published some years ago was very poor material indeed - that is to people who wanted to know which school he attended, etc. "Freaky Situations at Seventeen" was certainly a disappointing way to start his life story, and it would be very difficult, if one could find out his early life, to publish it, when he obviously does not wish it to be made public.

Charles H. John Hamilton I have been told, went to Cambridge. His father, who owned a large business, was quite a good poet. References to having a name by him will give the clue that his family were well-to-do other than this. Information is scarce, but one day perhaps the whole story will be told, for the great interval of 44 years of these great schools "Greyfriars," "St. John's" and "Rockwood."

SELWYN BLAKE INFORMATION

I was told from a most reliable source that Charles Hamilton actually sold the copyright of his famous substitute characters to the Amalgamated Press for £1,000. This gave them the right to commission other writers to write tales about his famous schools. Dr. H. M. Sandford - or better known to us as Maxwell Scott, the creator of Nelson Lee, confesses in his diary, that when the Nelson Lee Library started in 1913, he sold the copyright of this detective for an 8000 or 400.

SEXTON BLAKE, really the greatest non-fictionist the new named Five-day Publications has ever had, and who obviously took a great part in holding up this mighty publishing firm, was bought for only \$5, 000! And this included the payment for the first story as well!

It was my privilege to meet Mr. Harry Byth, the son of the creator of Sexton Blake a few years ago, and glimpse the real inside story of how this famous detective character was created. His father who had died as far back as 1899, wrote the first story of Blake in 1903 and so did not, unfortunately, live very long to see how really famous his creation became.

Harry Byth Junior [I call him that though with due respect I still alive, he would be in his rights!] seemed rather peeved at the time I met him, that there was never any acknowledgment anywhere to the actual creator of a detective whose name was a household word but this has certainly been rectified in recent years. Especially so, in the modern Sexton Blake Library, where the very first Blake yarn was reprinted.

I have always been interested as to whether there has ever been a Tom given with the name of Sexton Blake, Blake is quite a common surname in England, but never to my knowledge has the name of Sexton been used as a Christian name. A few years ago however, it was reported in a local British paper, that a man of the name of Sexton Blake had been brought to court and charged with speeding. After being found guilty, and fined, the Judge remarked rather dryly to the defendant "It is a great pity that you don't live up to the reputation of your nameplate." Also about the same period a reader wrote to the English "Daily Telegraph" when correspondence was on the popularity of Sherlock Holmes and Sexton Blake, to the fact that there was once a man who had the latter name working as a chief collector of taxes in the London area. Despite a search by request in the records of that period, I could find no trace of any such person of that name, so this reader's letter must be taken with a pinch of salt.

In closing my remarks on this subject, I feel that it is worth reporting a very amusing story related to me by the son of Charles Henry St. John Cooper some time ago. Henry St. John the name under which he wrote for a great number of years in the early days of boys fiction, etc. In fact, wrote a large number of Sexton Blake stories for the pink Uncle Jack. This was in the period when, for some reason or other, no authors names were given to the stories. So this confirms a theory that Henry St. John did write a number of tales as suggested by Walter White in the "Collectors Digest."

W.H. Stash, the then editor of the U. I. (about 1920) used to send Henry St. John an illustration of some incident which was to be used on the front cover. St. John then had to write a Sexton Blake story incorporating the portrayed incident in his yarn. One day the son, who related this story to me, went with his father to a parish church not far from where they lived to attend a christening. (The son was only a small boy at this time). The minister was of the very funny type, who fully believed in calling all his church members and congregation by their respective occupational names, instead of Christian names followed by their surnames. "I want you to meet Farmer Brown, - "Meet the Engineer Smith" - he would say as examples to the reader. After several introductions by Harry St. John of church members attending the christening, he came to the house of the Greengrocer, and used to St. John

"I want you to meet Captain Blake!" Young St. John nearly fell down with astonishment when he heard this. Knowing that his father wrote about the character, he never dreamed that he would meet the great Captain Blake in person. For the rest of the proceedings young St. John looked on the Jewels with awe, until afterwards his father was able to explain that just by chance chosen the Jewels's name happened to be Blake.

Two of the greatest Blake writers of all time were G. H. Ford and Cypri Evans. If ever any of you Australian enthusiasts visit England, and wish to pay homage to them at their graves, I'm afraid that you are in for a big disappointment. Their graves do not exist for the simple reason that both were cremated, strangely enough both around the same time.

Both had very good family backgrounds - Ford's family owned a big sawmills concern, and he actually went to the famous McGill University in Canada. Ford was given about 25,000 in 1910 to make his own way in the World. He went to Australia and started a sheep station. Unfortunately for him, there was a big drought that year, and he lost everything. A chance meeting with the widow of Michael Storm on the boat coming over to England set him up as one of the greatest Blake writers.

Cypri Evans also came from a most well-to-do family. His father, who was a priest, was a great friend of the famous Lloyd George (later to become Prime Minister of England) and Lloyd George used his great influence to give Cypri every chance in life, which for some reason he declined, and though a successful Blake writer died penniless at an early age in 1918.

It is practically impossible for me to give an authentic account of the early life of Tucker as there were so many variations by different authors, but I can certainly give an authentic account of how Tucker came to be called Edward Carter - from a very good friend of mine, John Hunter - the well known Blake writer.

Here is Mr. Hunter's statement in full - "Regarding our Mr. Carter I originally used the name as a non-de-scriptive to cover Tucker's identity when staying at hotels in "swamy territory." The original Tucker was what, in those days, was called a street archer - a ragged 1880s boy with no shoes and stockings. Hence the name. But these aren't swamps of hatched-out ragged children running our streets these days, as there were half a century ago - and thus the original Tucker would be a grotesque anomaly in those days. Tucker has become a snappy young man with intelligence and good set & sports car, and while he still can be called Tucker as a term of intimacy and affection, you can't visualize him registering at a hotel badly as "Tucker" or meeting folk and being introduced under that name. Keeping up to date, I thought it might as well have a name."

There have been three Australian Blake writers - the best known, Cedric Belfrage - real name St. Curtis Archer - who also wrote at times as Edith Whalley. Two others as yet have never been revealed, but both have written under the editorial pen-name of Desmond East - Nelson McArthur, who originally wrote "Playground for Troopers", whilst the other is Ron Selwyn who hails from Sydney.

In closing I feel I ought to pay some tribute to the very popular editor of the British Blake Library - William Edward Baker. It is almost impossible for me to compute the help and assistance given to me at times by him.

In collecting old authors, editors in quest for information on the old papers. He has certainly made a very good job in keeping the B. B. L. alive when all seemed lost in 1954, and the present situation is very healthy indeed.

What of the present day authors? How do they compare with those of yesterday? With different types of writing a job to kill, but popularity of them I would rate as follows:-

- 1. Peter Mason (W. Howard Baker).
- 2. Jack Trevor Story.
- 3. Arthur Marston.
- 4. James Hogg.
- 5. Arthur Kipling (who incidentally has only one name and still types his stories).
- 6. Thomas Hardy.
- 7. Edwin Harcourt.
- 8. Ben Dolphie.
- 9. Jonathan Swift.

Ken Harcourt stories are not included, as they are rehashes of old yarns and not original, much to the dismay of other readers who expected fresh stories of Africa from his pen.

NELSON LEE DATA.

WALTON CANTON, BRIDGEHEAD, WALS.

Colonel Grey has received the Royal Highness Prince Albert's command to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Nelson Lee's letters... His Royal Highness has commanded to accept his work entitled "The Life of a Fairy" and has directed Colonel Grey to return Mr. Nelson Lee his thanks, and the thanks of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

The above extract is taken from a manuscript I saw recently in the British Museum, and gives the fact that there was another famous Nelson Lee, this time a writer, long before the one we know so well appeared first in 1914. Another famous Nelson Lee was an Indian Scout, who was mentioned in history for his bravery out in the far West. Even not so long ago in London's famous Pall Mall Lane market, I bought books of the "Nelson Lee Bookshop," which I have been told was actually the name of the owner.

Maxwell Scott however, the creator of the famous detective Nelson Lee, has stated in the past that the names were taken from two patients of his and no connection with any one person, but it is a fact, that the name of Nelson Lee is quite common in England.

Strangely enough today, apart from a few isolated collectors of the old Maxwell Scott stories of Lee, nearly all the interest in contrast to the writings of a Westmore, Ebenezer Scourie Brooks, who wrote of his adventures of Lee at the school of St. Francis in the "Nelson Lee Library." The first title of this Library was a Mr. Harold May, a former newspaper reporter of great merit, quiet and unassuming he was, one could say, too thin, and obviously let Brooks have a free hand in anything, and things worked out very well. However in 1927 things began to slide a bit, and the situation began to slip with some slowness. In 1930 Harold May retired and a new editor was brought in to try and save the lot. This was Alfred Edgar, a man with big ideas, and, whereas before Brooks had had a free hand, he found in Edgar a different sort of person altogether, and a man who really believed in being editor of a paper.

K. S. Brooks has stated in the past "that he was flogging a dead horse" but the same could be said for Alfred Edgar - in despite his efforts and labor that of Jimmy Goodland - (later editor of "Modern Western" and "Mystery Magazine Weekly") the literary finished.

Readers who have only read of Brooks' version of the affair may be interested to know that Edgar was always considered to have been a far cleverer man than Brooks, and proof of this is shown today, where Edgar living in Hollywood under the name of "Barry Lyndon" gets more for writing one film script than Brooks can earn in a year. Surprisingly enough Brooks today does not want to talk or hear of any of his old St. Francis stories, which obviously brought him a lot of fame. Yet in many cases he still uses the old dialogues and other themes which were at times in his old Nelson Lee stories for his modern "Marked Gray" stories.

There has been much speculation in the last few years as to who actually wrote the "St. Francis" stories in the Pink "Mystery Reader" in the 1920's - which K. S. Brooks has claimed that he did not write. George Raymond Langways and Leonard Brooks (K. S.'s brother) have been suggested but I can recall for the very first time in the pages of the "Golden West Magazine" that they were written by A. T. Ross - former editor of the "School Friend," "Champion," "Triumph" and others in the twenties.

Maybe readers will recollect myself writing about him in the N. P. C. some time ago.

In closing these few notes on Nelson Lee, I would stress that it is extremely difficult for one to write anything fresh about this character really, I think, because he was written about by only one author, and in, I think to say, in the most popular writings of the School of St. Francis, featuring that great detective Nelson Lee.

THE END

A MAGNET PILE

Ernie Carter is the great possessor of the First Volume of the Magnet in mint condition and nicely bound. As a frequent visitor to his home I've often pecked it out of his shelves and looked through it. One thing about the volume has always intrigued me. No. 1 was printed at 14 - the 14 sign being, obviously, the top part of the 14 sign. This is understandable as the old books were slightly clearer in Australia. However, at No. 14 the full 14 sign was above and added to the top of the pages was the phrase "Supplement to The Butterfly." This continued for some time but I do not know the stop date. Many are the questions that arise. Were the English Magazines similar. If so, what reason? Was the Magnet in Australia doing so badly that it had to be given away in the pages of "The Butterfly"? However trivial if this was so, why increase the price spent to double the money? Probably no one now can answer this after the lapse of time except perhaps the master himself, Charles Hamilton. If any collector can supply the answers to these queries Ernie Carter and I will be grateful.

STRANGE BARRING OF CONTRASTS
Wentworth and Reed

At first it may seem an odd proceeding to link the names of F. G. Wentworth and Talbot Baines Reed. No two writers of school stories were more dissimilar in style, outlook and way of life. Yet the constant bond of good writing unites them. In the work of both we find that satisfying quality, credibility, the thing that makes us say "These characters were real. I've known boys like them." From both writers we accept the situations, the events and the characters. Both are readable in the sense that there is a constant flow of narrative, with an inducement in every chapter for the reader to continue. It is a quality, common to all good fiction from Dickens to Hemingway, and none have it in greater measure, if school stories be your choice, than Talbot Baines Reed and Feltzes G. Wentworth.

The most marked contrast in their works is in the matter of approach. Reed, despite his very narrative style, Reed was always conscious and tried to be so to the reader. Throughout his tales there is an emphasis on moral values. He did not leave his points, as did the content Dean Farrer in "Sic", and three other rightly spotted tales. If he does fill the role of "father" to his readers, T. B. was big brother, wiser than you but not so stern as Dad, a kind of balance between you and Authority. "He must look up, old man. Yes, the kid is rather hard, but he's right, you know, and we must all pull together." He did it with charm, at least, that is how I see it. And he never made the error of over emphasizing his precepts.

No doubt, the times in which he wrote had an influence. It was in 1875 that his first effort appeared, in a magazine "The Morning of Life," published in America by Thomas Nelson & Sons. In those times all writers for young people underlined the moral values. Publishers advised this policy, no doubt. They may have demanded it. And we do know that "The Boys' Own Paper," in which practically all of Reed's stories appeared, from 1875 onwards, was dedicated to the promulgation of moral precepts. Yet, his times apart, the instincts of leader and protector were within the man. The story of his life tells us so, and we are inclined to believe it, though John Simon biography is a sentimental work particularly to our eyes in those glorious years of the silver bond. But I have seen a photograph of Talbot Baines Reed. And if goodness and courage and compassion did not shine out of that face, I am no judge of such things, or the printers made a bad reproduction.

Now for the other side of the picture. You will search in vain for any direct expression of life's governing principle in the work of F. G. Wentworth. He leaves the exposition of ideas to his characters. They think out loud, and we draw our own conclusions. And the signs are unmistakable. Dooney traces his own path, throughout the tales, and while there are few really warty types in the whole array, they inevitably meet a just fate before the end. The values are stated, though the author does not underline them.

No. We simply cannot have F. G. as paternalistic, or other brother to the reader. At most he is a very junior uncle, affable, "warty," knowing his way about town and assuming that you are equally wise. He was probably the first writer of school stories, who did not "talk down" to his readers.

Understatement shows everywhere, but it is most evident in places where understatement is involved. In "The New Field," one of the later phases of the Miles Jackson saga, the understating and rather unprofitable Miles is working in a bank. He discovers that Mr. Waller, the auditor, is threatened with dismissal. "I shall lose my place. Mr. Dickenslyde has wanted to get rid of me for a long time. He never liked me. I shall be dismissed. What can I do? I am an old man. I can't make another start. I am good for nothing. Nobody will take an old man like me." His voice died away. There was a silence. Miles sat staring miserably in front of him. Then quite suddenly an idea came to him. The whole pressure of the atmosphere seemed to lift. He rose a way out. It was a curious, crooked way, but at that moment it stretched clear and broad before him. He felt light hearted and satisfied, as if he were watching the development of some interesting play at the theatre.... He got up, smiling. The auditor did not notice the movement. Someone had come in to make a cheque, and he was working mechanically. Miles walked up the stairs to Mr. Dickenslyde's room, and went in. The manager was in his chair, at the big table. Opposite him, facing slightly sideways, was a small round, very red faced man. Mr. Dickenslyde was speaking, as Miles entered. "I am anxious you, Mr. John" he was saying. He looked up as the door opened. "Well, Mr. Jackson?"... Miles almost laughed. The situation was killing him. "Mr. Waller has told me" he began. "I have already seen Mr. Waller." "I know. He told me about the cheque. I came to explain." "Explain?" "Yes, he didn't cash it, at all"... "I don't understand you Mr. Jackson"... "I was at the counter when it was brought in," said Miles. "I cashed it."

With this triumph of understatement compare the passage from T. S. Eliot's "Sargasso Sea," of the stage where Lene, the little street vendor, who had tended Reginald in the dark days of his secretaryship of the bogus "United Agency Corporation," is lying moribundly ill with amebiasis. Presently, at six or ten in the morning, he thought, the hard breathing ceased, and a hush of the head on the pillow told him the sleeper was awake. "Darling, you there?" whispered the boy. "Yes, old fellow." "No dear, I'm most obliged." Reginald lay as he had beside him, and put an arm round him. The boy became more easy after this, and seemed to settle himself more more to sleep. But the breathing was shorter and more laboured, and the little brow that rested against the window's slats grew cold and damp. For an hour more the feeble flame of life flickered on, every breath coming by to Reginald as he lay there motionless, scarcely daring to breathe his own will, like the boy. Then the boy moved suddenly to rouse himself and lifted his head. "Darling - that gelling - I'm getting it - I hear them catter' - come there too, get 'em." And the head sank back on the pillow, and Reginald, as he turned his lips to the forehead, knew that the valiant little soul had fought his way into the beautiful palace of last, and was already hearing the moan of those voices within, as they welcomed him to his hero's room.

Yes, old boy. Awful, isn't it? So was Dickens' treatment of the death scenes, respectively, of Paul Dombey and Little Nell. And he was the greatest English novelist. Over monumental writing does not seem to have effected his disposition to remain immersed. In we cannot diminish Lord on the strength of a few basal passages.

However, when humour is the subject under survey, neither Ford comes into his own. All his stories, from the short sketches of Parkhurst School, to "The Willoughby Captains" considered, in some quarters, his best) are rich in humourous content. "The Fifth Form of St. Dominic's" had its impressive features, "Tobacco Pigs and Tadpoles." The Master of the Hall" gave us Arthur Baragosh, whose form master was a prospective brother-in-law, and his friend, Sir Digby Oakehart. "They attempted to keep a pet bull dog in their study, claiming 'piled up' on the strength of Arthur's connection with the master. Two young pigs called Tolson and Parsons, sustain the fun in "The Willoughby Captains," narrated by Barker, but apt of stupid schoolboys. He kept a diary. Here are two extracts "May 25, The height of May. I wake at 3.30 and get up at 5.45. My motive is to see the boats. It was a beautiful and fine morning. The early birds were singing gladly were my favourites for running along with the boat." Barker was a little shaky occasionally in his penetration, which will explain my apparent incoherence in the above and following sentences. "I sang as I dressed except while washing The Mired Pops. Started out at 8.2 - met Parsons in the Big. Parsons thinks too much of himself." "Sharp chop, Decker," said King. "I'll get his nose, when I see him, said Parsons, who however, did not appear very deeply offended at all. The rowing continued "Parson ran on and left me alone. Now that I am alone let me think on my past life and hope it will be better only the school house boat was out. I think they've cut our boat with you. Also seeing them, you Oakes catches a crab. Entered chapel at 1 to 8 King was there sitting rather...." "At breakfast all opening Tolson. No one vulgar. Thus should not talk with thy mouth full Tolson I petition."

We had a prime example of the Naval humour near the opening of "The Cook House at Aglaphartha." It was the custom on that night of terms to have "Lore's" singing from each new boy. Most of the victims sang conventional songs, whereof their audience laughed. Fisher II, not to be outdone, chose a more hell song, a very poorly item with a repeating line "Oh, No."

It demonstrated him to see how seriously everybody settled down to listen, and how and his brother's face turned as he took a look and among the seniors. Never mind! What will they heard his song. That would finish them. He had carefully studied not only the song, but the appropriate action. So to know perfectly well, there is one inevitable attitude for a comic song. The head must be tilted a little to one side. One eyebrow must be raised, and the opposite corner of the mouth turned down. One hand should be slightly bent, the first finger and thumb of one hand should rest gracefully in the waistcoat pocket, and the other hand should be free for gestures. All these points Fisher II attended to now as carefully as his incoherence would permit and full light ceased at the thought of how comic the fellows must think him. "Do you?" he began. But at this point Ranger unobtrusively interrupted, and put the vocalist completely out. "Did you say 'Oh no' or 'How now'?" "Oh no!" repeated the singer "You mean how now?" "Oh no, it's not now." "Thanks. Sorry to interrupt. First song." Fisher tried to get himself back into attitude, and began in a thin treble voice:

"Do you think I'm just as green as grass?"

Oh no.

Do you take me for a silly man

(Chorus)

Do you think I don't know I'm from NY?

Do you think I can't tell he from what?

Do you think I swallow all I see?

(Chorus - not me)

He was bewildered by the consistency of his audience. No one uttered a murmur except Whelan who was apparently wiping away a tear. Was the song too deep for them, or perhaps he did not sing the words distinctly, or perhaps they had laughed and he had not noticed? At any rate he would try the next verse, which was certain to amuse them. He looked as dead as he could, and by way of highlighting the effect, stuck his feet down into the cushions of his seat, and wagged his hands in time with the song.

Do you think I lie about all day?

(Chorus)

Do you guess I stink on the in they?

(Chorus)

Do you think I can't tell what is what?

Do you think I don't know paper's hot?

Do whatev'ers my Pa to do?

(Chorus, what roll)

As he concluded Fisher II summoned up enough resolution to shake his head, and lay one finger to his nose in the most approved style of comedy, and then finished the result. Whelan apparently did not take in that the song was of an end, for they neither cheered nor walked. So Fisher II made an elaborate bow to show it was all over. The result was the same. A gloomy silence prevailed, in the midst of which the singer, never more perturbed in his life, descended from the table and proceeded to look out for the computer pattern of his audience. "Beautiful song," said Wally, and mopping his face. "I never thought I could be so touched with anything. We generally get comic songs on that night."

In "Eighteen hours with a Kid," one of Bond's early sketches, he told us in the words of the principal character, Gus Cutaway, what happened when an uncles relative thrust a four year old child into the care of a junior school-boy, on a train just before the departure for London. Gus was to deliver the child to "daddy" (no name given) at Waterloo Station. Gus entered unaided before us that journey. The boy was a tyro, a torpedo in ball-forn who gave him no rest through the entire journey. When they arrived at Waterloo there was no "daddy" to meet the child. So Gus had to take him along to the hotel where he had previously booked a room for himself for that night, prior to continuing his journey home.

After a time the hotel chap came and said we were to have a double bedded room, and he should charge half extra for the kid, and if we wanted dinner we'd better look sharp, as it was just beginning. So we went up and washed - at least I had to wash the kid's sticky hands and face for him, and then came down to table d'hôte. I was in a regular funk but out of our pillows, or any one I knew, should see me. We got separated in between a lady in grand evening dress and a professor chap in spectacles; and as they were both attending to their neighbors, I hoped we might scrape through

without a sense. . . . You should have seen that kid look in! I really suggest
 as I'd better not have any more further soap, but he began to get up again
 by a bowl and a ball, as I gave it up. . . . He said it was ugly stuff, but for
 all that he polished off a plate of it, and then washed into salmon. After that
 he had a bit of roast pork and apple sauce, and after that a calico pudding
 and some *Compagnie's* cheese. He was very anxious to have some beer, like
 the professor, or some wine, like the lady; but I put my foot down there,
 and let him have some tomatoe instead. You should have seen people
 stare at him. The professor gazed, as if he was a rare animal. . . . "Your
 brother?" said he. "Not exactly," said I. . . . "Excuse me, wouldn't you
 mind telling me in the morning what sort of night he had? I don't
 care to know." The lady glared too, chiefly because the kid had
 sprinkled her with dress with melted butter and pork gravy and tomatoe.
 He caught her eye again, and said out loud to her "Our cat's called Pussy!
 What's yours called?" The lady turned away, whereas the kid began his
 about again. "That lady," said he to me and the company at large, "has got
 a nice dress and a nasty face. I like nice faces best - do you?"

For a piece written for boys *Everyday's* points up this matter along
 with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Compare it with other juvenile tales of the own day.
 Here is food of his heart, warm and entertaining, and thoroughly consonant
 with what goes on inside a fourteen year old antidote. There is a Dickens
 quality in this kind of writing. Just as the great master, local effective
 with the sentimental phrase, played with incomparable warmth when he told
 the writer who helped David Copperfield eat his dinner, and of Mr. Guppy
 ("Charlie in the human form") in his hopeless passion for Esther, so did
 T. A. Boyd rise to his peak when he was the order of the day.

"Papa" Webster, too, had all the qualities of a great laughter
 maker. But he wrote in a different style. The tale of the funny things that
 happened to him with more vivacity. His stories of school are almost as
 bright as the later ones of Jerome and Mr. Malver. Never does the author
 laugh loudly with his reader. He sticks to his, and comments in the manner
 of his own creation, *Parody*. Here are a few examples:

"Papa," who regarded him through his spectacles with a look in which
 pity and censure were nearly blended. ["The New York"]

"Edward was Mr. Webster's son. He was ten years old, wore a very
 tight blue suit, and had the peculiarly [pathetic] expression which a such
 some sometimes gives to the young. ["The New York"]

I mention this because I should not want for you to go away with the
 idea that a waist coat marked with the name of Bradshaw must of necessity
 cover a scholastic heart. It may be noticed, however, that a good many
 members of the Bradshaw family possess a keen and rather sinister sense of
 humour, inherited, doubtless, from their great ancestor, the wag who wrote
 that immortal of quiet drivelery, "Bradshaw's Railway Guide." ["Tales of
 St. Austin"]

Well he was our town mayor, and once a town a famous colored life
 itself. He brooded silently apart from the wedding dress. He wandered
 through dry places meeting roof, and at intervals he would make calls, and
 put down a note on the back of an envelope. These notes, collected and
 printed slowly on the ribbed paper, made up the matrimonial questions.
 ["Tales of St. Austin"]

"It was not the actual presence of the lady that revolted the Duke,"¹⁸ for that was possibly enough. It was her conversation that killed. She refused to let the Duke alone. She was intensely interested herself, and seemed to take a morbid delight in dissecting his ignorance, and showing everybody the places. Also, she persisted in calling him Mr. MacArthur in a way that seemed somehow to point out and emphasize his youthfulness. She added it to her remarks as a gem of after thought or echo.

"Do you read Browning, Mr. MacArthur?" she would say suddenly, having apparently waited carefully until she saw that his mouth was full. The Duke would swallow contentedly, choke, blush and finally say "No, not much." "Ah!" This is a time of play, not entangled with earnest. "What do you say 'Not much,' Mr. MacArthur, what exactly do you mean? Have you read any of his poems?" "Oh, yes, one or two, ..." "And have you read 'Pippa Passes'?" "... No, I think not." "Hardly you must know, Mr. MacArthur, whether you have or not, have you read 'Titans at the Fair'?" "... No..." "Have you read 'Woodstock'?" "... No..." "What brings you round, Mr. MacArthur?" Brought to bay in this fashion, he would have to admit that he had read "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," and not a syllable more, and Miss Agnessey would look at him, and sigh softly. [Taken of *St. Anthony's*].

Clearly, here is the stuff from which *Burdie Woodcock* was to be fashioned in later years.

There are numerous narratives of sport in U. S. Reed's books, and they read well, the school versus the County Match in "The Fifth Form," the rugby in "The Wiltshire Captains," the football match with its sporting consequences at the commencement of "A Dog with a Bad Name." But it is doubtful if Reed the man was as deeply preoccupied with school sport as R. G. Woodhouse, who was such a loyal son of his own *Deerfield College* ("Wynian School" in the series of that name) that for many years after his return there he made annual returns to report the college's activities in each cricket season. His account of the Public Schools boxing contest at Aldershot is one of his tales but is in the ring of truth. The story is taken out whole or find in the pages of "The Captain" (April - September 1912) [entire] entitled as public school boxing.

It there is such a thing as "exploitation" in stories of school, Woodhouse gave us the prime example. His approach was more subtle than Reed's, but there is in a Reed story more of that intrusive excitement which delights a boy. So that either of these authors wrote the melodramatic "Deerlers" as much in evidence over the years. Tales that derived their very breath of life from melodrama were outside R. G.'s territory. Witness his own account of the occasion when he was commissioned to write a story for "Chums." The typical Woodhouse story, whimsical and kindly finished, was outside the editorial policy of "Chums." So R. G. got to work with his tinkering brains, William Trenton, and they concocted a tale of a stolen kid's gun, proving villains and two schoolboy heroes in the very thick of the struggle. It was called "The Lustrine," and appeared in the 1908 volume of "Chums" under the authorship of "Mont Wynemere." It bears little resemblance to the usual Woodhouse product, but there are a few flashes of fun of standard quality, and the tale moves smoothly and fast to a great climax.

So there is the situation. Strange harmony of contrasts indeed! Oh, the one had a forthright Christian goodness - do I hear that word "square?" writing in his cheerful unassuming way the delightful adventures of fellows who were always read, though sometimes a little "good" on the other a gentle but knowledgeable man, on a rather different plane of life, who created in his school takes the very real world of his own school days.

Incidentally, Winkelman was honored by the London University with a Doctorate of Literature. Misses Linton cited him, in 1894, as the best writer of English, then alive.

Talbot Baines Reed, greatest of his day, and Pelham G. Winkelman, greatest of his!

Long may their works delight us,

"Secondly Arrived" - "Times"

Strange Harmony of Contrasts.

Stanley Nichols.

November 1898.

CONTENTS FOR GOLDEN HOUR.

NO. 1

The star attractions for No. 1 are articles from two now on the Spot. Articles you will want to read, as all material is guaranteed fresh and of great interest to all G. N. B. subscribers.

Mr. G. W. Somers has consented to write "Memories of the Magnet Office" and Mr. H. W. Teyssie is at work on an unusual effort about the interests of the G. N. Office.

It is hoped the Australian contributor will be Betty Fata, whose writing has drawn praise from Mr. Teyssie. It is hoped No. 2 will be lucky enough to have further facts and information from W. G. G. Latta.

The cover drawings for No. 1 will be an entirely original sketch of Mr. H. W. Teyssie by Elsie Parker.

An absent writer in Australia is Jack Marlagh who is also a notified hypnotist. So Jack is working on a natural - an article tying up all the references to this and he may come across in the G. N. B. Jack will really let us know if the several authors knew what they were writing about!

Jack has only two more Nelsons. Look to complete his active run and I'm sure he will let you know the numbers if anyone can help with these rare items.

WILLIAMS is always on the lookout for those rarest "Young Folks Titles." Will will pay your price or exchange. His address is 40 Walter Road, Northcote, N. S. W.

"THE SCHOOL FOR SLACKERS"
(With apologies to Charles Hamilton for taking
all the descriptions verbatim from his stories.)

The Collector's Digest No. 11 dated December, 1903 contained an article by Roger Jutting on his visit to Charles Hamilton at Stone Loam. When the conversation turned to fiction, Roger asked if Charles Hamilton ever entered this to be his most polished creation. The reply was that although the Redwood stories always maintained a consistently high standard, which the Greyfriars and St. Jim's ones did not, the school which Charles Hamilton thought qualified for the title of the most polished creation was High Coombe.

High Coombe first saw the light of day early in 1904 in Modern Boy XII and continued for ten weeks. A short break to coincide with the school holidays and the second series of ten pages commenced in Modern Boy 124. These stories were reprinted three years later in Schoolboys' Own Library nos 129 and 130. The title of the first Modern Boy story and that of S. G. L. 129 gave an indication of the type of school story the readers were going to get - they were both entitled "The School for Slackers."

High Coombe is a picturesque old building in Devonshire with its old buildings, its ivy covered towers, the well-tended windows of the library and its small old oaks, all of which are very pleasant to the eye. It is a solid old building with stone walls and great oak floors. In the winding old stairs there are sufficient passages that seem to lead nowhere in particular. There does not appear to be any secret passages but there is a space of about 5 feet between the ancient oak floors and the equally ancient stone paving on the earth below. By stooping his head, even a tall fellow could walk under the floors with ease. This place could be entered by prising up a loose floorboard in the 5th Form Room and was known to the Fifth Formers as the Clary Hole.

The ancient walls of the school were overgrown with ivy which made them most convenient to the brethren of beauty, who usually left the House from a back passage which opened on to the Sixth Form Green. The narrow precinct of the Sixth Form Green was surrounded by a chain to keep off the various mortals. All these have been slackness steadily settling in at High Coombe during the 30 years benevolence of Dr. Chabrode and in the better years the school has drifted into a state of decay. Dr. Chabrode was called Top Van Whield by the distinguished parents and even members of the staff and boys seem to refer to him as an old doberman.

Beyond the Sixth Form Green can be caught a glimpse of the rolling cliffs, the narrow coombes and the Atlantic Ocean in the distance. Coombe Green is the most dangerous cove and when the tide comes in round Westward Point quite suddenly at times, the whole cove is flooded. It was said that bits of old Spanish galleons left over from the Armada had been picked up in that cove.

About a mile from the school down Coombe Lane is the little town of Okeham. Hardly indeed and about five miles distant are the rugged slopes of High Tor and round it stretches the lonely Chusam Moor, in its other moor, steep and solitary.

If we take a look at Chatham before we return to the school we find the Chatham Theatre Royal, often used by the High Coombes, the Chatham Arms and the sports shop.

The Chatham Arms is the home of Joe Garger, a particularly clever stalla bookmaker who had been caught the nighting with a policeman in Chatham. Joe Garger was nicely decorated with his hot red fans, his red nose reflecting heat the sun rays, and he trembled as words of aprita and tobacco. To these little details were added his crimson hair stained watercolor, his red spotted tie, his velvet gold ring, his baggy trousers and his leather belt & buckle on one side. A typical Hamilton bookie.

Moving a few yards up the High Street we find the building next to the Chatham Arms is the sports shop of Dandy High. Dandy - his our friend Garger has spent a considerable part of his life in prison. Dandy was not a nice character by any means. He had been a boxer but had retired with a broken nose, but his teeth set an unimpeachable threat. He lived in Chatham, did something in the line of betting local horses and something in the line of setting sporting vacancies in his little dark shop. Dandy was still able to put up quite a hefty strap, as he proved sometimes on a Saturday night, in consequence of which the bookie of Chatham good was not unknown to him.

To move on now to more congenial surroundings we walk up Combe Lane, past the house of Mr. Bullock, the games master, and on to the School gates where we find Old Joe the school porter.

Across the road and under the school clock tower are the old parallel rooms of the Fifth Form Master - Peter Clark.

Master Clark known to the High Coombes as Books' Cried is the path that runs down from the Head's garden to the Green Cloony. It is a quiet, secluded path, shadowed by great trees which casts in a dark shadowed spot, overhung by trees where the stream ripples down to the combe.

Inside the school is Big Study, a large, handsome room with tall windows that look out on the quadrangle, across the Sixth Form Green. It was handsomely furnished, like all rooms of High Combe School, and the fellows who lodged in it were, as in a park, handsomely furnished with. They were very careful about their clothes at High Combe. Virgil of old song "Arms and the Man" but had Virgil belonged to High Combe he certainly would have made it "Clothes and the Man."

They were not quite so careful about other matters. In football and cricket, for instance, High Combe's record was deplorable. But they did not deplore it. If Oswald beat them at football, they, at least, were satisfied better not trousers than any man at Chatham. If there were no silver pots on the sideboards in the Hall, there were perfectly cut clothes round the Prefects' table that might have made any get-trouser sigh with striking awe.

High Combe was perfectly well satisfied with itself.

Properly speaking, only First Eleven Men and Prefects should have used Big Study. Trollope, the captain of High Combe, should have seen to that. But Trollope never bothered about that, or anything else, which accounted for the fact that Fifth and Sixth formers usually congregated there.

Carrying on round the school we call in Great Hall and standing on the side on the upper end of the Hall see the summer sunlight glancing through the stained glass windows.

In the dining room we find High Table where the prefects sit.

Adjoining, but at a lower level, is the first of the Halls. Three long oak tables accommodate the First, the Sixth and the Fourth. Forms below the Fourth had long since disappeared from High Coombe.

The junior fraternity belonged to the Barrow. The Barrow was the resort of all the lower boys of the school. Fourth Form and Sixth. It was called the Barrow because large windows in it like ribbons. It was a large room, the length of a long passage from Big Study - but long as the passage was, the row in the Barrow was sometimes heard in Big Study, and a prefect would come down the passage with a cane and distribute impartial whitties. It was noticeable that the Lower Forms had not fully developed the fine art of sneaking as their elders and betters. They were younger, and had not been in the crowdy atmosphere of High Coombe so long. Some of them came from prep schools that were not at all slack, and had not yet forgotten that nice people were expected to look as if they were strict.

There were men in the Fourth who would have got handsome into games, given half the chance. There were even some who had the earlier ordinary idea - extraordinary at High Coombe - that fellows came to school to learn things. No more, in the course of time, under the genial influence of High Coombe, they would get over all this, and realize that graceful snatching and well-avoided treasures were the beginning and end of all things.

Returning now to the seniors, the Sixth and Fifth form studies became bedrooms at night and one of the most comfortable studies at High Coombe was No. 3 in the Fifth. Study No. 3 became, at night, Dorm. No. 3. After prep that useful creature, the boys' maid - of which species there were many at High Coombe - wrought night changes. Beds appeared from nowhere, and a luxurious study became a handsome and well-appointed bedroom for three. In the morning, during the first school, a similar night change was wrought, and the bedrooms became a study again.

After the round of the school may we take a look at some of its inhabitants - starting with the new Headmaster - James McCann, M. A. who to his time had played for the M. C. C. and captained Charles Headmaster's well known County - Gloucesters. James McCann might have been taken for many things - cricketer, footballer, boxer, rowing man - but few would have spotted him, at first sight, for a Headmaster - especially a headmaster of a snobbing school like High Coombe. On his arrival at the school he wore a bowler hat, not the latest thing in bowlers and it was worn tilted just a little to one side of his head. It revealed hair that had a rather ginger tinge - the fighting colour. It was really silver hair, close cropped and glossy, but there was a spot of ginger in it. In Mr. McCann himself there was more than a spot of ginger. His eyes were grey, hard and steely. He walked with a quick, springy stride. His teeth were silver. He was young, but that of course was a fault that there would correct. But at the moment there was no doubt that James McCann was very young for such a position as he had come to take up at High Coombe. His manner was quiet, yet there was an air of life and vigour about him which seemed strangely out of place in the school.

for Masters.

This young man had been appointed to succeed Dr. Chabrows whom we have met before, and he had a long uphill task on his hands. He knew all about the School for Masters. He knew why the chairman of the governing body had insisted upon his appointment as headmaster, overruling many other claims. He knew the task that lay ahead of him at Highcombe. He knew too that he would be able to handle it. Jimmy McCann was blowing in like an invigorating sea breeze.

There was only one power greater than McCann - the Board of Governors and Colonel Crompton - Fifth Formers Astley Crompton's father - was a very prominent and influential member of that body. The Colonel was an old boy of Highcombe and the old school and the old traditions were dear to him. After the Colonel had been impressed by the boys in relation to the Head the Colonel left, asserting and insisting that the school needed a strong man to pull it together - his only doubt being whether James McCann was sufficiently strong.

Dr. Chabrows presented McCann to the School in Great Hall and then left. Masters and boys were sorry to see him go. They discovered quickly and unobtrusively that they were really fond of the Reverend Doctor. They had never realized it before.

Only Mr. Chard had been really satisfied with him, because Mr. aggressive Chard practically ran him and the school, and expected to step into his shoes when he retired. Even he had wondered why it had never dawned on the school authorities that his resignation was overdue. But he was gone now, with his silver hair and his wavy eyes, and the new man reigned in his place - a new man whose hair was not silver, but ginger, and whose eyes, so far from being wavy, were frightfully keen and wary and penetrating. The fellows hardly knew what to expect. Before McCann arrived, life had been so jolly under Big Van Winkle. Especially in the Fifth they had been a happy family. In the back benches of the Fifth Form Room it was like a house of fun. Fellows arrived there like weary motorists getting into port, with a happy consciousness that they need work to move so long as they were at Highcombe. Chard never made a man work. Chard was a gentleman. But this new fighter - what was he. He was already nicknamed the Fighter. There was one comfort though. The whole school and the whole staff were against him. He would plough a lonely furrow at Highcombe. Only one voice was raised in his favour - that of Bob Darroff of the Fifth who believed in giving a new man a chance and who thought McCann's coming would be a good thing for the school. The Fifth Formers shared the opinion of the Old Boy in the song -

"A man doesn't come up to Darroff to loose,

But because his first paper has money to loose."

The Fifth were not there to loose, if they could help it. The real trouble was that they couldn't - now that McCann was in the game.

The Sixth were against him to a man. McCann himself took the Sixth Form to slings - rush to their slaps and slings. Cleverest knowledge in the Sixth was at a low ebb. Under the late Head they had developed in contented slouchness. Now most of them had got into the Sixth at all would have been a mystery to anyone who did not know the ways of Highcombe.

Capas in the Fourth taught Fifts, Fungs in the Sixth, long Chard in the Fifth next to nothing, and in the Sixth they took a long anthology book. A delightful state of affairs, which Jimmy McCann was going to alter very considerably.

Like roll was taken at 8 p.m., and this was now called by McCann. It was probably the first occasion for many terms on which every letter of High Coombe answered to his name of colligative. Even at roll, shabness had always prevailed. Somehow or other the High Coombes had decided all to be present when McCann called their names, and a certain amount of bristleness in answering was stable. Follows did not, as previously, stand in study groups and draw "Them" carelessly out their shoulders when they heard their names. If they regarded roll as a useless bore, and the Master in the Hall as a shabby ass for bothering them, they did not at all openly express that opinion in their looks.

Peter Chard, for 18 years the Fifth Form Master, was one of Charlie Hamilton's best characterizations. Chard, regarding being passed over for the headmastership led the strong passive resistance from the Staff.

Chard who was commonly known as Popularity Peter was aggressive looking, loud voiced and did not look like a teacher. It was related that once upon a time as a new master he had been energetic. Perhaps the atmosphere of the place had caught him. Moreover, he liked to be liked, and the only way of High Coombe for a master to be liked was to let the fellows do as they pleased. Popularity was on the breath of his nostrils, and he did not suspect that in Big Study he was nicknamed Popularity Peter.

When Chard got going, his voice was not unlike the trumpeting of an elephant in the jungle. When he was offended, he was as stout and majestic that he looked rather like a Spanish Colosseum taken down by a sudden gale.

He was not the man to make his Form work. Chard, from long habit, walked off in second school. His morning breakfast made that little way almost a necessity to him and under the Reverend Desk his cap had never once been interrupted.

Being sure papers passed round the Form, and the Fifth made a pretence of giving them some attention, Mr. Chard settled down to student ESCROW.

His eyes were the eyes of High Coombe. If a man in the Fifth wanted to work, Chard helped him, without undue exertion. If a man did not want to work, Chard left him alone. He would have said that he treated his boys, not they treated him.

Even Chard, however, might have stared a little at the papers at the end of the class if he had looked at them. Had they had a wonderful system in the Fifth Form at High Coombe, established from time immemorial. Marks were given by the head boy of the form. Being a sportsman, he handed them out, when he collected the papers, with generous impartiality. This was all the better because he did not even look at the papers before he marked them.

Chard, never looking under the surface, and perhaps not caring to do so, was satisfied with the general level of attachments in the Form. Really, it was true, brought some surprises. But most of the Fifth were far from keen on a review. The very few High Coombes who wanted to get on passed through the lumpy Fifth like the wild fishes through a calm lagoon. B

was very pleasant in the well-warmed Fifth Form Room.

Chard took matters very easily. He would roll in a quarter of an hour late, but he was never the latest comer. Fellows who wandered in half through the lesson usually accused themselves to Regularity Peter. And fellows who sat a while behind desks or never found themselves brought to book. If Chard ever gave out lines it was very seldom. Indeed that he remem-bered to ask for them to be shown up. It would have endangered his popu-larity. Also it would have given him trouble and he did not like trouble. In the easy going atmosphere of High Combe, Chard relaxed fat and lazy. Even his Study door stood wide open. He encouraged Fifth Form men to wander into his quarters for a talk now and then. He would treat them handsomely. Chard, like all the High Combe Staff had a good money. He also had private means. Everything and nearly everybody at High Combe was ready.

At night, one of Chard's duties was to make a round of the school dormitories. He did this in his usual way by leaning his portly form on a massive column several feet at the foot of the stairs, and a few minutes with some of his Form, and benignly at one of Carter's little jokes, and then his duty was done, and he would roll off to his rooms not wove, by any means, that all the Fifth were in their forms, but sure, at least, of popularity in his Form.

With the arrival of the new Headmaster, though, it appeared that all this was coming to an end.

Some of the other High Combe masters were so well written as Mr. Chard.

Dropping down to the Sixth Form we find Mr. Fragg in charge. Fragg did not speak much but he appeared to like a smoke. Shortly after the arrival of McCann when he was calling the roll in Hall - all the masters were present - Fragg, master of the Sixth, with a half-smoked pipe, half hidden in the hollow of his hand, which he had brought into Hall with him. What because of that half of a Nicotina was a mystery. It shortly vanished after Mr. McCann's eyes had dwelt on Mr. Fragg for a flashing fraction of a second. Poor old Fragg got smug again soon afterwards as he threw away a cigarette when he saw Jimmy McCann and tried to look as if he had not been smoking to good.

Mr. Coggs was the master of the Fourth. Coggs was the youngest master on the staff and he rather played the part of a boy among boys. He called Sixth Form men by their names and talked schoolboy slang - not knowing that this was considered in Big Study as "growing".

Mr. Coggs was the Master Master whom we know very little.

Master Moxon was the Fourth Master and he was inevitably nick-named the Sheep. His classroom, No. 10 was immediately above the Headmaster's Study.

Mr. Moss of the cracked and squeaky voice was the septagenarian history master. Moss was a gentleness in the High Combe definition of that word. He was a tall, thin old gentleman, with gold rimmed glasses on a long, sharp nose, and white hair - what there was of it. He delivered slowly about the School and had never been known to keep an appointment in the usual time, so long as the present generation of High Combers had

known him. Also if Miss ever loved him with a fellow's work it was at long ago; that even the oldest inhabitant could not recall it.

The third member of the Staff was "Tuffy" Bullock the Games Master who lived outside the School down Corvick Lane. Bullock was portly, with a red face and biting eyes of a light blue. He seemed as energetic as the rest of the school. It follows did not choose to turn up in compulsory games practice. Bullock never ragged them, even if he teased them. As for sleeping men who did games, that would be more best reserved to Bullock than to Tredgner, the School captain.

Although Tredgner was the school captain he was not a prefect. It was, however, his duty to give any man who attacked at games, but he mentioned before, it never occurred to him. Carlson was the Head Prefect and he had as prefects under him, Kenneth, Collins, Lucy, Wall and Corvick.

It is the Fifth Formers, however, who led the operation in the new regime and the man really in charge is Aubrey Clouston. Aubrey was the ghost of habitus and the mould of form in the school for decades. Although he was a scholar and a fairly Clouston was not wanting in courage. His two study mates in Study I are John Darvall and Teddy Seymour. John Darvall in my opinion is a Fifth Form; Bob Cherry, however, ragged, a keen footballer and cricketer, he was the only man in the school who was a supporter of the new head. His gentle and trimmers though, were eye across to his oldest class. The other occupant, Teddy Seymour could never make up his own mind and he usually yielded to the stronger will of the oldest Aubrey.

Other members of the Fifth were Markie (the best boy), Ferrill, Raymond, Burgess, Warren, Hobbie and the homosexual and artist Edward Carter - a most different character or to Jason Hobbie's composition.

The Sixth Form seemed to consist solely of Haptee though no doubt there were many others behind the scenes.

The Fourth Formers were more numerous. John Andrew Ferguson from North of the Border, who had a spot of ginger in his hair and in his nature was pleased to call himself Captain of the Fourth. He was Aubrey Clouston's big. Puffy Fye was Teddy Seymour's big and Double the killer of the Form usually called the Donkey was John Darvall's big. Two others mentioned were Leon and Ben.

Two other members of the school staff were Rogers the House Butler who was in attendance on Mr. McCann in the dining room, and Lighter the House Porter who rang the rising bell and seemed to close up all the body traps.

According to Eric Payne's Article "The Development of the Modern Boy and the part that Charles Hamilton played in it" in the G. D. Annual for 1954 the High Corvick series were fascinating school stories of an unusual type. Perhaps the only criticism that can be offered of them is that the new Headmaster never really asserted in his task. No doubt this lack of accomplishment on his part was due to the wish, by the Author or the Editor, to keep the series open for further years of a similar type to be written. But somehow, one is left with the impression that this Eric who Headmaster was specifically inefficient and apathetic in his inability to deal permanently with slanting schoolboys and with an antagonistic colleague, Mr. Clark. I feel that the Clouston should have been more authoritatively handled in a series which

would have worked up to an exciting climax. With that wild criticism out of my system, I regard the "School for Slackers" as a very fine set of school stories - alike, amusing and exciting, on its original theme.

The glorious list of McCann's hardly rewarding efforts to stir up a new spirit in the school for slackers.

A very brief resume may give an idea of the excellent series.

To begin with the whole of High County is against the new Head.

Open rebellion in the Fifth Form when the Head is thrown out of the Form Room. The Head issues his challenge to the Fifth, "Kneel under - or get out!" The rebellious Fifth see the signs to beat the new Headmaster and by mistake by mistake by mistake by mistake for the Fifth. Aubrey Compton sets a lonely trap for McCann but unfortunately for Mr. Chad, he is the man to catch it on his back. Study No. 3 breaks bounds to visit the Oldman Thorne's Chapel and so on he is caught and is horribly chastised when Mr. McCann is waiting for them outside the Theatre when the show begins. A tea table walk near the moors for them all is McCann's answer instead of the walk.

Intending to improve the Head, on Compton's orders, the boys make a bad mistake and implicate Colonel Gwynne. The next step is the first series which the protests and would go wrong was to get McCann's head in a sack and tie him up. But it did go wrong and poor old Compton spent the night tied to the legs of a desk with a bag fastened over his head.

The second series covered the cricket season, not having had a year of success in looking the slackers up at home the Head tries to do it with games. He is humiliated though by seeing the most exciting game of cricket ever played. High County's first innings alone without score. St. Chad's in their innings declare as a hundred for no wickets and High County's second innings was a repetition of the first. As a desperate measure the Head appoints Ferguson of the Fourth as cricket captain. With this goes the privilege of whipping and Ferguson makes the most of this. When the protests multiply by whipping Ferguson out of games against St. Chad's Ferguson gets his own back by having the slackers out for cricket practice at four o'clock in the morning.

Compton adopts gangster methods in his letter feud with the Head but it is Bob Darrell who gets beaten up by Lester Migh.

Still on the warpath the Fifth arrange for Tar and Feathers for Jimmy McCann but this time the French Master got the lot. Up for a public flogging during recess from the school and falls into a deep pit in the moor. Rescued by McCann, Aubrey slowly begins to change his mind about him and when McCann asks Trevogin, an captain of cricket agent, if he will join he is referring his team to great Oldman, a new and respected friend of mind begins to run through High County and finally High County beats Oldman at cricket and the Head has succeeded. But how for? Was it going to beat Jimmy McCann, perhaps wondered.

Aubrey there was so much to be good, and there was no doubt that the young men with the ginger hair had wonderfully improved High County - hardly recognizable to anyone that great day as a School for Slackers.

Two further stories have appeared in the T. M. C. and B. E. C. series in which Aubrey is still carrying on his feud with McCann. In one of them Aubrey's life along with those of his two pals, Darrell and Seymour, are

saved by McCann in Coombe Cove and in the other poor old Penderbury Peter manages to get in the way of still another lovely trap. However, all ends well.

I wonder if Charles Hamilton could be persuaded to write a novel, length years of High Combe to show us how James McCann finally succeeded in his uphill task, as no one can have any doubt.

These series would then make a grand trio and I think would compare most favourably with any other stories written by this most wonderful author.

Am I being too optimistic?

Only time will tell.

WITH THE POOR EDITOR by somebody!

When the "School Friend" started in 1888 it proved very popular judging by the correspondence page. This grew, in a few weeks, to well over a page in some issues. Here are some typical answers to readers' letters:

"No, Barbara Bellars is not related to the boy you mention."
 "Margerie Hamilton has a brother at the school you mention."
 "Benato Foster's brothers are at a school near Cliff House."
 "Some wealthy Benato's relatives brought into the stories. Many were the questions about Miss Richards - a typical answer - "You are not correct in your assumption concerning Miss Richards" or "I cannot promise to publish a portrait of Miss Richards." One extremely late-writing item came to light. One reader enquired whether Benato's home was the same as the Foster Court in a street near in London. No it did exist!

I remember reading elsewhere that Grayfriars and its characters were never mentioned in a Cliff House yarn. This could be true of all after No 4, but Hamilton himself certainly mentioned them in his stories. Grayfriars is mentioned at least twice in No. 4, Sammy and Billy Foster getting a mention or two also. Probably in Nos. 2 and 3 further references to Grayfriars were made. Many new features were introduced in the first two years to keep up the interest - greater plots of school scenes depicting different parts of Cliff House with descriptions, and portrait galleries (also getting names mixed in reports as did the St. James galleries when reported in the Holiday Annals). The Cliff House Weekly was started in 1888 taking the full centre pages. This pushed the stories right out, the Cliff House story taking the rest of the space.

A companion paper, "The Schoolgirl's Own" was started on 16th February 1891 to satisfy public demand for two School Friends. This was illustrated by Leonard Skidde whose attractive and naturally shaped girls showed up G. M. Dolgen's semi-caricatures. However, Dolgen was reminiscent of Arthur Jones in so much as he mixed very good work with very bad. The other artists connected with the early years was W. Baker Bell and his attractive drawings illustrated the Julia Stone stories.

REVIEW PAGE

* by V. E. COLBY.

SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY - CURRENT ISSUES
Report No. 1 - Issues for 1958(204-421 to 441)

Authors Featured: Peter Saxon (2 stories), Rex Hartings (1),
Edith Harriman (1), D. Harcourt Hyde (1), Martin Thomas (2), Rex Scipion (1),
Jesse Stagg (1), Jack Thorne Story (2), W. Howard Hubert (1), Desmond Nevill (1)
and Arthur Maclean (1).

The Authors and Their Offerings - Rex Hartings. It was great to welcome
back this grand old-timer to the pages of the S. B. L.

Peter Saxon will long be remembered for his classic story of "Blatant and
Murder in Berlin - Time Cyprus (S. B. L. 407 The Violent Chase). A grim story
but realistic and believable. A Cyprus of lawless, hatred, and other dangers
for human life. A high adventure of suspense pace for Sexton Blake.

D. Harcourt Hyde's first and only appearance (S. B. L. 404 Dressed to Kill) was
in the best Blake tradition, and awaits the return of this author. How
about it, Mr. Editor?

"Shades" of a Gun" S. B. L. 416 was Martin Thomas' first for the year. This
author is interesting. His stories are well constructed, charged with sus-
pense and excitement, and imbued with excellent characterization. The
feature which appeals to me most is his splendid sense of humor. This
humor is never labored, but is spontaneous and light-hearted. On page 50
the armed criminal was alarmed - "Suddenly his head dove into a pocket -
and out for small change."

Mr. Thomas features a very human Yorker. The girl is the real lovelace
climb to him "she had her beautiful gleaming porcelain complexion under
pink under the heat." (page 25).

His usually intimate style is really delightful. His high standard was under-
lined in S. B. L. 419 (Cabin a Tiger), S. B. L. 420 (Fear is my Shadow) a very
short but extremely satisfying detective mystery and S. B. L. 422 (Cold
Night for Murder) a special Christmas week story, with a man's skeletal
figure squashed in the snow, a woman's Christmas stocking clutched in its
fingers (page 2).

Rex Scipion contributed a splendid first effort in S. B. L. 428 "Rope From
Mombasa," and writing with all the verve of a veteran, followed up this
volume with "Walk in the Shadows" S. B. L. 427, a splendid story featuring
a Television Factory in which corruption, seduction and murder had behind
the heads of an imposing hunting.

A successful mingling of the white magic of Christmas and the black magic of
crime was produced by Rex Scipion in his Christmas Eve story of 1958,
S. B. L. 441 "Gaily Party." The time-honored country mansion was made in
reference and provided the perfect setting for Christmas mystery and festivity.

James Hagg wrote only one story this year, *S. N. 1, 411*, but it was a remarkable one, featuring the tale of Wight. On page 42 commenced the portrayal of a court case which had surpassed any other that I can recall. Glad you will be back in 1960, Mr. Hagg.

Jack Trevor Story is usually very good and artificial, writes with his tongue in his cheek, and uses caricatures instead of characters. This year, however, his work is much more restrained, and although still favoring the horror, he has turned in three very good mass books.

Arthur Meehan wrote only the one story, and this with a science fiction twist. It was logical, believable and heartily gripping. This was one book I could not put down until the end. Named "Book of the Year" *S. N. 1, 412*, it represents a new (and interesting) phase in the development of the Science Fiction story.

Christmas Numbers. Congratulations to editor W. H. Baker on two very fine Christmas Numbers. Each had a distinct Christmas flavor, each covered the Editor's annual's greetings, and he really made these issues a delight of Christmas, not of hazy remembered days of yore, which was greeted with a report never to that great old Science Fiction writer of all time: Eric S. Parker. Thank you Mr. Baker for an splendidly interesting late 1959 December issue, all the obsequies of Christmas past and present.



When the new *John O' London* was started, Australia related out completely on the No. 1 and No. 2. Any copies of these two items would be probably received by members here. It is also known that Ned Gardner badly needs a copy of No. 2. So here's a chance for friends to repay Bill slightly for the beautifully printed *S. N. 1*.



VE COLBY, 8 Harvard Avenue, Beverly Hills, N. S. W., would like your copy of *THE SIXTON BLAKE THRILLER*, NELSON LEE Series. HIGH PRICE PAID.



BRUCE FORBES, 18 Old Prospect Road, Westworthville, N. S. W., digital price offered for *MAGNET NO. 88A*.



ERIN CARTER, 1 Cooper Street, Glasgow, N. S. W., wishes to hear from anyone who is to sell or exchange per No. 180 Old Series Nelson Lee.



The vignette on the front cover are by JACK WARRER. Lettering and design by BOB ECKO. The title on the Green Jack reproduced on the cover is *NOVA/1959*.