



THE STORY

CHRISTMAS

1943

PAPER

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COLLECTOR

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A Merry Christmas, My Readers!
I Would Like To Have You Up
Here In My Office, One By One,
And Shake You By Your Hand,
And Wish You Sincerely . . .

A Merry Christmas

—"The Boys' Friend," Christmas, 1895



: : AN AMATEUR MAGAZINE : :

The First Christmas Number Of "The Boys' Friend"

THERE WAS scarcely any thrill in the days of our youth to compare with that imparted by the arrival of the Christmas Double Number of our favourite weekly story paper. Just which paper depends, of course, upon when was our own particular "purple period" — to borrow an expression from Mr. John Medcraft. In my own case it would be the Christmas, 1910, issue of "The Empire Library," or, alternatively, the double number of "Fun and Fiction" for Christmas, 1912, both of which holds a special place in my memory. Oddly enough, while I knew well both the "Magnet" and the "Gem" Libraries in those days, I have no vivid memories of a Christmas Number of either paper.

For this occasion, however, I am going to turn my attention to a much earlier Christmas Number — one that was produced several years before I made my debut into this vale of

tears: the first Christmas Number of "The Boys' Friend," which was No. 47, dated December 17th, 1895. Unlike the thirty-two page first Christmas Number of "The Boys' Herald" (see "Story Paper Collector" No. 5), sixteen pages were sufficient to form a double number during the first series of "The Boys' Friend," and there were no coloured covers, as became the practice in the early 1900's.

This particular double number has a front page that is not particularly Christmassy in its appearance: there is a line of large plain type across the top, "Christmas Double Number," and the regular title block is used. Below this there is a seasonable design with the words "A Merry Christmas To All My Readers," surrounded by holly. To the left of the title block is printed "This week only—1d.—

Next week usual ½d."

No doubt to avoid the risk of scaring any reader into thinking

: By W. H. G. :

that the price was to be a penny every week. To the right of the title we read "Double Number for 1d. but worth six." That statement may have been open to question at the time, but it wouldn't be hard to sell a copy today for sixpence.

The story that holds pride of place by starting on the first page is "Boys Will Be Boys," Bob Challenge At Littlebury School, by Charles J. Mansford, who was author, so we are told, of "Shafts From An Eastern Quiver." Also on the first page is a large picture illustrating the story; a somewhat indifferent drawing, in my opinion, showing a boy sliding down a rope of knotted sheets, and three others already on the ground. "Boys Will Be Boys," just starting, fills the next two pages, with small sketches of characters, and, on the third page, another large picture. These illustrations are unsigned, as are all the others in this issue. In "A Page Of Old Friends" in No. 167 of "The Boys' Friend" we learn that Mr. Mansford "is at present (April, 1898) the headmaster of a flourishing grammar-school in Derbyshire." According to this write-up, "Boys Will Be Boys"

was later published, presumably in book form, as "Bully, Fag, And Hero."

The fourth page brings us an author well-known to generations of schoolboys who have been the recipients of his books as gifts: R. A. H. Goodyear. His contribution is the first instalment of a four-part serial, "The Football Rivals." This was Mr. Goodyear's first story to appear in "The Boys' Friend." Referring to it the Editor wrote as follows: "The story entitled 'The Football Rivals' is by a reader of 'The Boys' Friend,' Mr. R. A. H. Goodyear. This young gentleman is only seventeen; and he must be complimented on the very clever and bright little story he has written, which gives promise of better work in the future." This promise was made good in later years, for Mr. Goodyear has had published many books for boys.

The fifth page is filled by "Your Editor's Christmas Greeting." In the centre is a portrait of "Your Editor," later revealed to be Mr. R. Hamilton Edwards. The first paragraph of this page reads:

"A Merry Christmas, my readers! I would like to have

you up here in my office, one by one, and shake you by your hand, and wish you sincerely a Merry Christmas! But this is impossible, for my readers are spread over the whole of the United Kingdom, and are to be found even in far-off India, Australia, Canada, and every quarter of the globe; and so, in imagination, I extend the hand of welcome and friendship to every English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh boy and girl who reads this paper, wishing, at the same time, that they may spend a very happy Christmas."

The rest of the Chat Page, after the first few paragraphs, is taken up with answers to readers' letters, a feature that "H. E." seldom neglected. These include one from a youth who objected to the serial story, "The Days Of Dashing Drake," on the grounds that it cast a slur on his religion. This the Editor denied. "W. O. N." was troubled with an ingrowing toe-nail, and was told what to do about it. "Slievenamon," an Irish reader, "sends me an outburst on the treatment which Irishmen receive from their English brethren." "A Constant Reader" asked for advice as to whether

he should join the Volunteers, while "G. L. D." wished to know of a book giving particulars about cricket, and was advised to get "John Wisden's Cricketers' Almanack."

Another reader desired to leave school, but his parents were wisely opposed to his doing so, he being only fourteen years old; "Jack" wished to know if he had to obtain a license in order to use boxing gloves; still another reader was quite irate because his letter had not been answered, and threatened that a number of young fellows would cease to subscribe to the paper "if an answer is not forthcoming in next week's issue." Three times in the columns of the Chat Page a notice is printed to emphasize that, although this week's issue costs one penny, next week's would return to the regular price of one halfpenny.

The sixth and seventh pages are taken up by an instalment of the serial "The Days Of Dashing Drake," by that prince of story tellers Henry St. John. Next there is a one-page Christmas story of the days of Charles II, by the Rev. Oliver Weekes-Wilde, "For The King's Sake,"



followed by another complete yarn, "The Ghost of Highhamp-ton School," by Claud Heathcote.

The rest of the fiction portion of the program is more serials: "Buffalo Bill's Life Story," by Percival Cooke, "Under The Southern Cross" by Reginald Wray, and "A Fatal Choice, or The Road To Ruin," by Claud Heathcote.

The remainder of the Christmas bill of fare consists of two pages of articles on a variety of subjects: How To Make An Electric Battery; Coins And All About Them; How To Grow Manly And Strong, By One Who Has Done It; Our Stamp Corner; Puzzles For Christmas; How I Made My Own Gymnastic Outfit; and Shadowgraphs, or, Making Pictures With Fingers. "How To Grow Manly And Strong" sounds interesting,



Well—not exactly a Merry Christmas, but a good one, with the prospect of a long line of real, old-time Merry Christmasses to follow, is my wish to my widening circle of friends. —W. H. G.



this first Christmas Number: just three. One is for the Christmas issue of "Chips," a comic paper, which was selling at the regular price of one halfpenny for a sixteen-page double number—truly a bargain. Messrs. J. Theobald offer "specialties" in a fairly large two-column announcement: magic lanterns and slides, pistols, etc. The third advertisement was for a deafness remedy.

All in all, a budget of reading that was no doubt greatly appreciated the boys of 1895.



MISCELLANEA

Mainly Items Found During A Search Of The Editor's
"Copy For Future Use" Box

Quotation from "The Union Jack Library," No. 444, April 13, 1912, page 20, col. 2: "For many hours the long express train, which had left Winnipeg that morning, had been thundering on its way to the south across the plains of British Columbia. It had left the snow-line behind, and now, having crossed the American frontier, it was in a mountainous country . . ."

Where's my map of Canada?

☞ ☞ ☞

In his article "Sexton Blake The Eternal" in "S.P.C." No. 12 the author estimated the number of words that had been written about the famous fiction-detective, and then for comparison wrote: "It has been estimated that there are something over three million words in the Bible." His intention had been to write "three million letters," which makes the comparison even more striking.

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In the "Daily Express" for October 24, 1942, there appeared a dispatch from Dublin telling

of a delegation of boys seeing Mr. T. S. O'Kelly, Eire's Deputy Premier and Finance Minister, and protesting against the tax on their favourite British comics. I can sympathize with them and hope their protest was heeded, for I remember when my penny "Boys' Friend" or "Magnet" cost me tuppence-ha'penny.

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"The Headmaster of Greyfriars is Ferrers Locke's uncle."
—"Magnet" No. 407, page 27.

"Ferrers Locke is a cousin of Dr. Locke."—"Magnet" No. 513, "Greyfriars 'Who's Who.'"

Someone should consult Ferrers Locke on this mystery.

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¶ If the reader will kindly insert the word "by" between "appreciated" and "the" in the last line on page 183, it will read better!

19th Century Peepshow

\$1 per year, 10c a copy.

Fred T. Singleton

2000B S. W. Red Road, Coral
Gables, Florida.



WANTED : FOR SALE
: EXCHANGE :

FOR SALE

Runs and volumes of the following post-1900 story papers: Aldine Half Holiday Library, Cheerful Library, O'er Land and Sea Library, Detective Tales, Buffalo Bill Library, True Blue, Claude Duval Library (complete set), Invention Library (Frank Reade), Dick Turpin Library, Garfield Library, Robin Hood Library, Home Library of Powerful Dramatic Tales, Tip Top Tales, Henderson's Wild West Library, Union Jack, Marvel, Boys' Friend 3d Library.

(For complete ad. see last issue)

John Medcraft,

64 Woodlands Road, Ilford,
Essex, England.

**BRITISH BOYS' PAPERS
WANTED**

Gem Library—Nos. 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, first or 1/4d. series. New series Nos. 1-304, 320, 375, 407 (with suppl.), 452, 454, 458, 510, 603, 620, 621, 623-627, 629, 631, 635-637, 630-641, 643-654, 656-698.

See last issue for others wanted.

C. F. F. RICKARD

2026 West 41st Ave., Vancouver,
B. C., Canada.

Wanted—Plucks with St. Jim's stories; red-covered Magnets. E. Fayne, The Modern School, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

Wanted—Joseph Parks' "Collector's Miscellany" for 1935-6: Nos. 14 to 17. Also earlier issues and "Vanity Fair." Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U.S.A.

"The Collector's Guide"—

Canada's Own Journal. \$1 a year, 25c a copy. Established on Vancouver Island in 1929. Cleeve Sculthorpe, 82 Lichfield Road, Coleshill, Warwickshire, England.

**Reckless Ralph's
DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP**

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers of the days when you were a youngster; 8 pages full of fine articles and write-ups. Price 5d. (stamps) a copy, or will accept 4s. worth of "bloods" for one year's sub.

Ralph F. Cummings
Dept. S. P. C., Fisherville, Mass.

WANTED : FOR SALE
: EXCHANGE :

Wanted—English Comics, years 1892-1906. Harris, Caynton, Llanrhos Road, Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno.

Wanted—Magnets and Gems, 1907-33; also Boys' Friend Libraries with stories by Frank Richards and Martin Clifford. Shaw, 6 Colney Hatch Lane, London, N. 10, England.

"The Collector's Miscellany"
—The paper for anyone interested in Old Boys' Books, Type Specimens, Juvenile Theatre, etc. Write J. A. Birkbeck, 52 Craigie Avenue, Dundee, Scotland.

The Geographical Magazine
—Wanted: 3 copies of February, 1942, issue. This is the Geographical published in London, not the National Geographic. W. H. Gander, Transcona, Canada.

Wanted—Aldine 1d. Dick Turpins, early issues of Magnet, Gem, Penny Popular, and Comic Papers, particularly Chuckles. Also interested in old volumes containing coloured plates of wildflowers, butterflies, birds or fishes. Alfred Horsey, 60 Salcombe Rd., Walthamstow, London, E. 17, England.

Magnets—pre-1930, wanted, any numbers. Corbett, 49 Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham, England.

Wanted—1d. Boys' Friend, Realm, Big Budget, Boys' Leaders, 1/2d. Sports Library, early 1d. Nelson Lee Library.—H. Dowler, 86 Hamilton Road, Manchester, 13, England.

WANTED

The Following Story Papers

"Magnet Library"—See Want List, "S.P.C." No. 7, page 76.

"Boys' Friend" (New Series)—See Want List, "S.P.C." No. 8, page 90.

"Greyfriars Herald" (New Series, 1919-22) later "Boys' Herald"—Nos. 9, 15, 30, to end.

"Boys' Friend 3d. Library"
—No. 288, Jan., 1915: "The Boy Without a Name"; and others by Frank Richards.

"The Popular"—Many before No. 512.

"Empire Library"—1st series.

WM. H. GANDER

Transcona, Manitoba, Canada