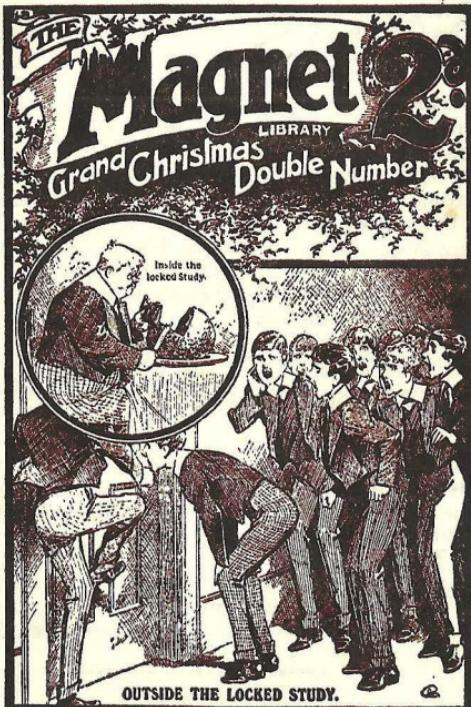


STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

JANUARY
1951

Number 41
Volume 2

THE MERRY CHRISTMAS NUMBER.



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3rd Christmas Issue, The Magnet, No. 148, December 10, 1910

The Story Paper Collector

WHO'S WHO

No. 14:
LEONARD PACKMAN

LEONARD PACKMAN, who lives in London, England, has been a reader-collector of "old boys' books" for thirty-five years, and read practically all available juvenile literature, including comics, from the very start. He has had several nice collections through the years but parted with them for various reasons.

His largest collection, which included six bound volumes of "red" *Magnets* and a similar

number of volumes of "green" Gems, was disposed of in 1943 before going to Spain on Government Service. He resumed collecting after the war and now has a good collection of early Gems, Union Jacks, School Friends, Greyfriars Heralds, and others.

In co-operation with Robert Blythe, Len founded the [London] Old Boys' Book Club. It is now about seventy strong, with a branch in Leeds and postal members all over the world.

Len is an Established Civil Servant, and his wife reads and collects the same papers as he does, her favorites being *The Gem* and *The Union Jack*, both of which she read from the time she was twelve years of age.

—W.H.G.

FRANK READE, SR.

THE FOLLOWING Frank Reade, Sr., serials appeared in very early issues of *The Boys of New York*: "The Steam Man of the Plains; or, The Terror Goes West," in Volume 1, Nos. 28 to 36, and "Frank Reade and His Steam Horse," in Volume 1,

beginning in No. 48 and continuing beyond No. 52 into Volume 2. The author in each instance was given as Harry Enton. These notes were made from a file of the paper that is in my possession.

—JAMES W. MARTIN

BACK ISSUES REQUIRED

—by L. F. Finner, 6 East Ville,
Albert Road, Cork, Eire: Nos.

3, 4, 6 to 17, 21 to 25 of *The Story Paper Collector*.

The Story Paper Collector

Articles of Interest to Collectors of British Boys' Periodicals of the Past

No. 41

JANUARY, 1951

Vol. 2

THE CAREER OF ERNEST LEVISON

By ROGER JENKINS

THERE IS NO DOUBT that the early Ernest Levison was not a pleasant character to know. He was mean, sulky, resentful, inquisitive, spiteful, and keen on smoking and gambling — in short, a complete blackguard. Yet one has the feeling that his author, even then, intended better things for him. The first description we have of him is as follows: "He was a lad of about their own age, dressed in Etons, and wearing a straw hat. His face was not bad-looking, but the eyes were very keen and quick, and the glance incessantly shifting." There seemed to be nothing patently evil about him.

Levison was the only character who began his career in one of Charles Hamilton's famous schools and continued it in another. He made his debut in "Roughing It," Magnet No. 18,

June 13th, 1908. The juniors had arrived at Greyfriars at the beginning of term earlier than they were expected. Bunter mixed liquorice powder with the custard and they were taken ill, with the exception of Wharton, whom Levison immediately accused of playing tricks on them.

Levison seemed to take an instant dislike to Wharton's impetuous nature. In Magnet No. 21 he refused to turn up for a trial to see if he could play cricket for the Remove. Later in the same number he was kidnapped by gypsies, and when rescued by the Famous Four he upbraided them for letting the gypsy get away with his watch and money. In Magnet No. 29 he played a joke on Mr. Quelch, who immediately suspected Bunter. Wharton explained that it was not Bunter but "an amateur conjuror." It did not take the

Remove master long to discover who was the real culprit, and Levison picked a fight with Wharton.

Harry Wharton, strangely enough, showed great forbearance towards Levison. In Magnet No. 30 he refused to be drawn into another quarrel, and the following week he rescued Levison from the Black Pike, a small mountain which does not appear in later stories, which Levison had essayed to climb after a challenge from Bulstrode.

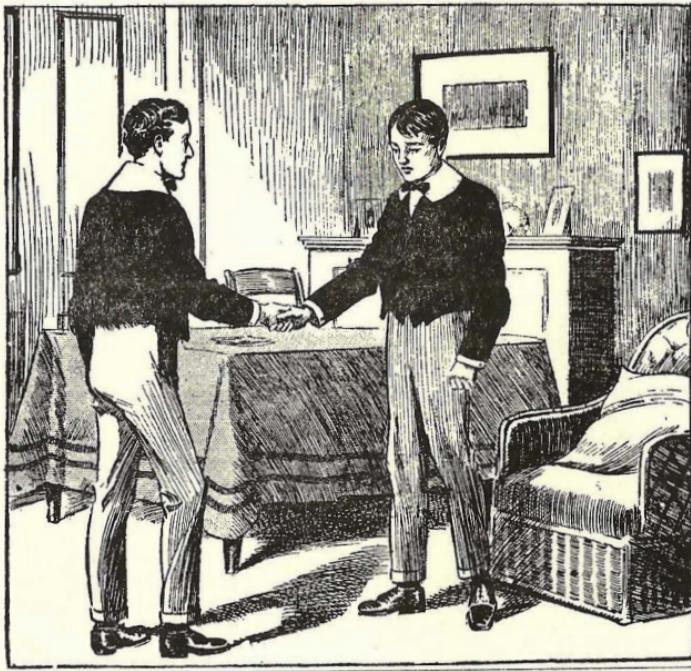
Wun Lung was the next recipient of Levison's ill-will. In Magnet No. 43 he intercepted one of Wun Lung's postcards, bearing cryptic letters, from the Chinese Embassy, and wrote an anonymous note to Scotland Yard stating that the Chinese junior was spying. Much to Levison's mortification it turned out that Wun Lung was merely playing a game of chess by post.

Wharton did not, nevertheless, change his attitude of tolerance towards Levison, and in Magnet No. 46, when Levison went to meet Mr. Joliffe in the Red Cow, Wharton went there to warn him of Mr. Quelch's approach. Unfortunately, the Remove master caught them both coming out of the inn, and when they were before the Head, Levison tantalized Wharton by withholding the truth from Dr.

Locke for as long as possible, thereby implicating him. The Head took a serious view of Levison's conduct and he was expelled from Greyfriars, little more than six months after his arrival.

LEVISON ARRIVED AT St. Jim's in Gem No. 142, dated October 29th, 1910. His first few days there were rather more dramatic than they had been at Greyfriars. Towser took an instant dislike to him on sight and tried to spring at him. (Levison later tried to poison the bulldog, an undertaking, I always felt, deserving success.) Levison had hoped to continue his acquaintance with Lumley-Lumley, but was no more than vexed to learn that he had died the previous week. He knew, however, that Lumley was subject to trances, and he went down to the vaults in the middle of the night to open the coffin to see whether he was still alive. Needless to say, he was, and when it came out that Levison had been expelled from Greyfriars he got Mr. Lumley-Lumley to intercede with the Head to allow him to stay at St. Jim's.* Gem Nos. 141 and 142, though remarkable

*In 1922 Charles Hamilton wrote a different version of the way in which Dr. Holmes first became aware of the fact that Levison was actually expelled from Greyfriars; see Gem Nos. 759 to 764. This



Julian held out his hand, and Levison took it in a shamefaced way. "Good-bye, Julian—I'm sorry you're going. And—and I'm sorry I've been a rotten end to you. I wish you'd stay and stick it out." (See Chapter 13.)

Illustration from "The Honour of a Jew,"
by Martin Clifford, in Gem Library No.
397, September 18th, 1915. In this story
Ernest Levison played an important but
not praiseworthy part.

【Facing page 202.



stories in their way, are interesting as examples of what one finds occasionally in *The Gem* and *The Magnet*—a tale by Charles Hamilton completely out of harmony with the rest of the series.

One can sympathize with Levison far more than his school-fellows seemed to. In *Gem* No. 192 Tom Merry returned from the Congo with a cannibal, if you please, whom he proposed to house at St. Jim's. Levison, with mixed motives let it be admitted, managed to secure the banishment of the savage from the school, but strangely enough the Fourth Form were not grateful, and Levison was thrashed in the dormitory.

THREE IS NO NEED to over-emphasize the unpleasant side of Ernest Levison as he appeared in the early stories. Re-reading them today one cannot escape the conclusion that Tom Merry was a bit of a prig in those days and one gets the impression that one is reading a series of tales without a genuine hero with whom all our sympathies can lie, and consequently one cannot boo the villain as consistently as one ought. Paradoxically enough, the

series is generally considered to be the better of the two, but for the sake of consistency one might be tempted to wish it had never been written.

early Greyfriars stories about Levison seem much more human and understanding than do the St. Jim's ones, though usually in other matters the reverse is true. But in this one case "Frank Richards" seemed to have more of the milk of human kindness than did "Martin Clifford."

Be this as it may, Ernest Levison continued his infamous career as he had begun it. In *Gem* No. 194 he tried to break up Lumley's friendship for Tom Merry & Co.; in *Gem* No. 207 he attempted to win an examination prize by getting his rival suspected of cheating; in *Gem* No. 221 he engineered the expulsion of Dick Brooke (but this was forgiven the following week when he saved Cousin Ethel from a bull); in *Gem* No. 229 he was trapped in the Head's safe whilst trying to play a trick to incriminate another; and in *Gem* No. 278, when his father was temporarily short of cash, he came back to St. Jim's as a boot-boy and created quarrels everywhere.

The editor of *The Gem Library* summed up the character of Levison before his reformation thus: "A strange mixture of good and evil, of cowardice and hardihood, thick-skinned as any boy could be in some respects, extraordinarily thin-skinned in others, Levison has always inter-

ested even those who have not liked him; and it is a singular thing that many readers cherish something very like affection for him, believing against all likelihood that he will turn up trumps in the end. Levison is one of those who, knowing the good, choose rather the evil. There are times when he hates himself for being what he is, and times when he hates better fellows than himself because they despise him for the very faults that none see more clearly than he does."

ALTHOUGH SIGNS of a change of character had been shown by Levison soon after Talbot arrived, it really began the day his younger brother, Frank Levison, came to St. Jim's, in *Gem* No. 451, dated September 30th, 1916. Frank apparently knew nothing of the worse side of his brother's character. When he saw Ernest drinking he informed Tom Merry passionately that the others were leading him on; when Trimble remarked that Levison major smoked, Frank fought him. And it must have been supremely galling to Rake, the son of a war profiteer, to receive an intimation from Ernest that he did not want him to mix with his brother. When Levison major went to the Green Man inn, Rake made an anonymous tele-

phone call to Mr. Railton, but Frank managed to warn his brother in time.

There is no doubt that Ernest Levison realized more and more that his shady habits were a bad example to his brother. In *Gem* No. 455, appropriately entitled "A Surprise for St. Jim's," he found a place for himself in Grimes' village football team and scored the winning goal against his own school. It is hardly surprising that his criticism of the school team's playing was not well received.

Levison was genuinely fond of his younger brother, a quality which had not previously been credited to him. So when Tom Merry offered him a place in the school team he was unable to accept it as he intended to take his brother out that afternoon. As it happened, however, Talbot had already taken Frank Levison out with him. Left high and dry, Levison agreed to go out with Rake on a spree. When Tom Merry & Co. found him lying in a drunken stupor in a field near the school they naturally concluded that Levison's excuse had been an invention. Levison began to sink back into his old ways, and although he was momentarily alarmed by the suspicions of Mr. Railton, nothing would stop him from breaking bounds at night. Frank, having

failed to stop him, took his place in bed in the Fourth Form dormitory and thus prevented his exposure. Levison minor was, however, unable to explain his absence from the Third Form dormitory, but eventually Ernest owned up and was flogged.

The last story in this intermittent series was in Gem No. 466, where Arthur Augustus D'Arcy took the matter in hand. He suggested to Frank that he pretend to imitate his brother's bad habits. Gussy had hit the right nail on the head. The ruse worked. Ernest Levison immediately began to realize what a fool he had been and then the transformation was effected.

Racke, naturally enough, was not pleased by this, and when, two weeks later, Levison was chosen to play in the match against Greyfriars, Racke made every effort to prevent him from turning up. Fortunately Skimpole blundered into discovering the plot and Racke was foiled. It need hardly be added that St. Jim's won the match! After this Levison settled down in Study No. 9 with Cardew and Clive.

IT IS INTERESTING to note that Ernest Levison made two return trips to Greyfriars. The first was in 1923 (*Magnet* Nos. 793 to 799), when Frank Levison ran away from St. Jim's and

landed up ill at Greyfriars, where Ernest had to go and stay until his younger brother recovered. The other time was in 1927 (Gem No. 1031, *Magnet* Nos. 1031 to 1034), when Levison returned to Greyfriars to attempt to find an old will which would be of considerable advantage to his father.* On both occasions there was no hesitation on the part of erstwhile friends in attempting to drag him back to his old ways or even plot against him if necessary.

Although Doris, Levison's sister, was pleasant enough, his father was a rather weak character with a doubtful past. Mr. Levison had made his money in a Yukon gold mine, but his business associates and partners had never seen eye to eye with him on some matters. Gem Nos. 657 to 661 saw the Levisons fleeing wildly across North America pursued by an irate ex-partner, one Dirk Power. No sooner had he been consigned to the vul-

*Collectors of *The Schoolboys' Own Library* may be interested to note that this tale was twice reprinted in the *Library* but from different angles. No. 179, "The Toad of the Remove," is by "Frank Richards" and contains no scenes at St. Jim's, whilst No. 365, "The Boy Who Came Back," is by "Martin Clifford" and is almost entirely situate at St. Jim's, the action moving to Greyfriars only at the end. The very last episode in both numbers is taken from *Magnet* No. 1034; apart from this they bear little resemblance to each other.

tures than another sometime associate of Mr. Levison's—a Mr. Carson—arrived on the scene and began to administer drugs to his old friend, seeking to murder him for revenge as well as financial gain. This plan was scotched in Gem Nos. 726 to 728.

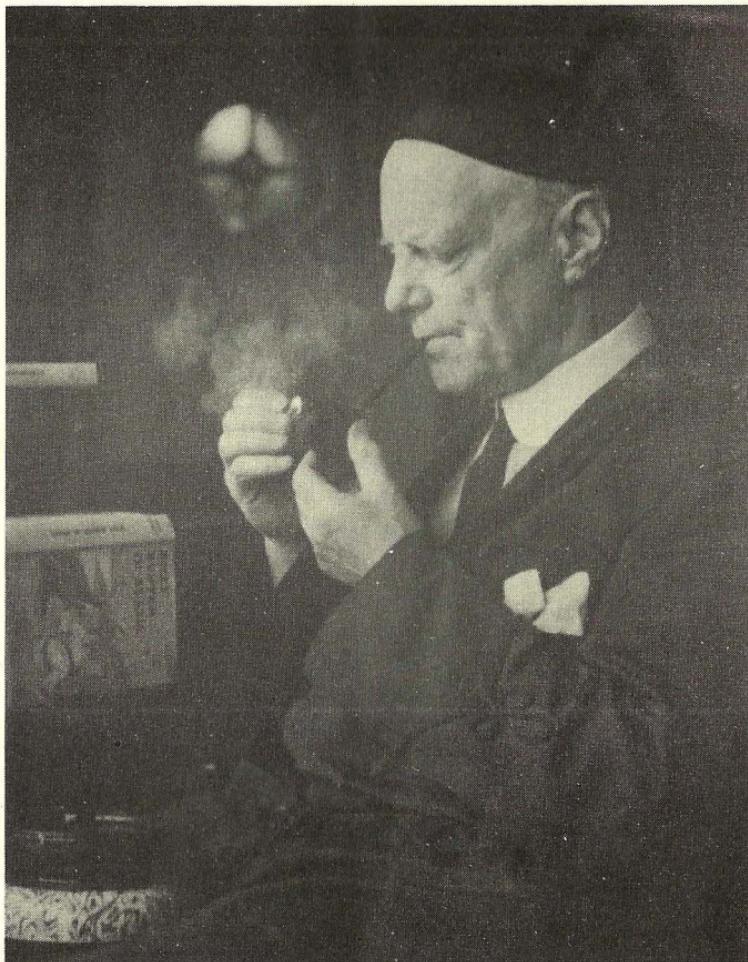
Levison appeared in many fine stories in *The Gem* in the nineteen-twenties, usually in company with Cardew, and unlike Lumley-Lumley and some others who reformed, he seemed to become a more interesting character than he had been before. He

retained his natural shrewdness and quickness of thought, and was often able to help Cardew out of a scrape (e.g., Gem Nos. 1006 and 1007). But of course, like Talbot, he did not seem to play quite so prominent a part in the stories as he had done earlier, which was possibly inevitable. From this time onwards Ernest Levison commands our respect, our interest, and our sympathy. It is perhaps unfortunate that he does not claim our affection as well.

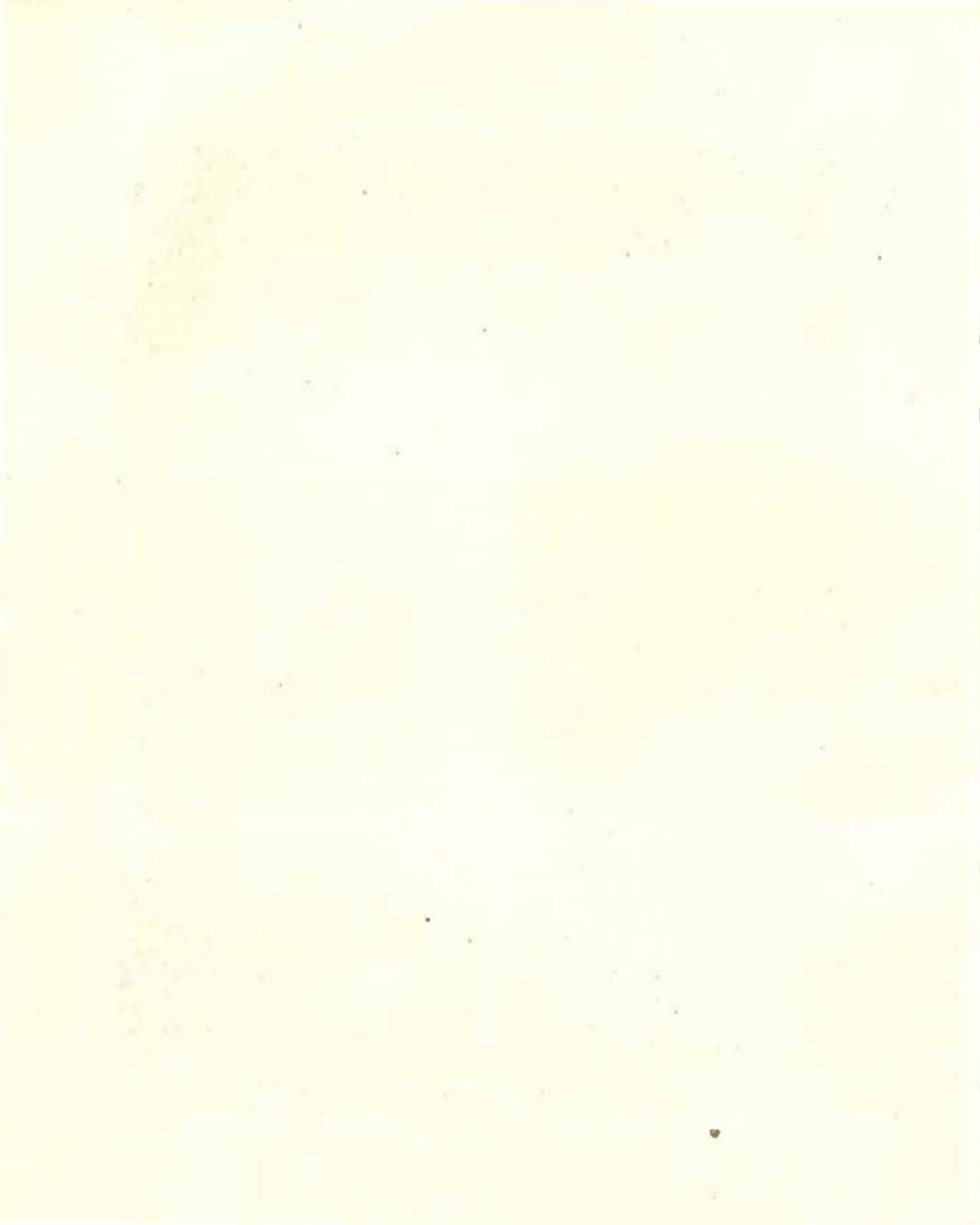
PORTRAIT OF AN AUTHOR

KNOWN AS Martin Clifford to readers of *The Gem Library*, as Owen Conquest to admirers of Jimmy Silver & Co. of *The Boys' Friend*, as Ralph Redway to those who followed the adventures of the Rio Kid in *The Popular*, as Charles Hamilton (his baptismal name) when he wrote of Ken King of the Islands in *Modern Boy*—but why go on?—here he is Frank Richards, of *The Magnet Library* and *Greyfriars*. His stories, told through many years, have doubtless been read by more boys and girls than have those of any other author. Mr. Richards' portrait is reproduced by permission of Peter Powell, Broadstairs, Kent, owner of the copyright, said permission having been obtained for us by Ben Whiter.





FRANK RICHARDS



THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY

Reviewed by WM. H. GANDER :: Part Eleven

OTTER AND GREENE! "Please do not ask who Potter and Greene are! One is ready enough to admit that they are not among the people at Greyfriars who matter most. Still, they do matter. Where would Coker be without them?" Yes, George Potter and William Greene of the Fifth Form, who share Number 70 of The Greyfriars Gallery in *Magnet* No. 534, May 4th, 1918, do matter, even if only as foils for the great Horace Coker.

One wonders how they put up with Coker; then one remembers Coker's Aunt Judy, who has a well-filled purse and is generous with its contents. But, we are told, "You do not get Potter and Greene rightly if you take them as being mere toadies and sycophants." They have, it seems, a real regard for Coker. "Both are good athletes—Potter rather the better of the two."

Solly Lazarus of Courtfield, whose father we have met in the Greyfriars stories as a purveyor of costumes for amateur actors, and who is also a pawn-broker, is Number 71. When the Gallery was being written Solly had been absent from the stories

for some time, but he wasn't forgotten and has been met during the year since. One of the occasions when he came into a Greyfriars yarn has already been referred to in this review, I think: when he was called in to "handle" the burly Percy Bolsover, soon after the latter's arrival at the school. Solly is a good boxer and is well-liked by most of the Greyfriars juniors.

That the Gallery was coming towards its end—though that end was still more than half a year away—was evident the next week, when Reginald Havers Gadsby and Adolphus Theodore Vavasour, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, were featured in Number 72. "They would hardly be worth an article each," we read, and that is just the simple truth. "It would not be easy to say which is the worse of the two." Gadsby and Vavasour are usually encountered as they tag along with Ponsonby whenever he clashes with Harry Wharton & Co.

Number 73, in *Magnet* No. 537, is Claude Hoskins, the musical genius (at least he thinks he is that) of the Greyfriars Shell. He shares a study with James Hob-

son, who greatly admires his chum for his musical ability, even if he does find his music-making hard to endure. Hoskins has seldom played more than minor parts in the stories, but he "is all right in the main."

WILLIAM WALTER DABNEY and Edward Fry of the Greyfriars Upper Fourth share Number 74. Dabney and Fry are to Cecil Reginald Temple what Potter and Greene are to Horace Coker, "like satellites of the planet Jupiter." But like Potter and Greene, we read, they have minds of their own.

"Newland belongs to a race with a wonderful history." Monty Newland, Number 75 in the Gallery, is the only Jewish boy at Greyfriars. He had a rough time when he first arrived at the school, but "he lived down his unpopularity, though he had to suffer before the Remove found out what a good, sound fellow he really was." Monty did not take more than a supporting role in most of the later stories.

We leave the school again for Number 76, which features Sir

Hilton Popper, Baronet, of Popper Court, which is near Greyfriars. Sir Hilton is not popular at Greyfriars, of which he has, at times, been a Governor. There have been many clashes between him and the juniors over supposed trespass on the island in the Sark, which he claims as his own on, it would seem, somewhat doubtful grounds. "An ill-tempered, wrong-headed, selfish, stubborn old tyrant!" We will be well-advised to avoid taking short-cuts across Sir Hilton's estate!

Roderick Sylvester of the Greyfriars Second Form will probably be a complete stranger to any Magnetites who began to read the paper after the first dozen years of its run. He was, I think, a creation of J. N. Pentelow, and if this is the case it accounts for his vanishing from the scene when J. N. P. no longer wrote occasional Greyfriars stories. An American, Roderick was the son of a millionaire, and at this late date that is about all that needs to be said of him, apart from noting that he is Number 77 in The Greyfriars Gallery, Magnet No. 541, June 22nd, 1918.

Part 12 Will Appear in the Next Issue



THE STRAND MAGAZINE

As Remembered by HENRY A. PUCKRIN

MARK TWAIN once described a newspaper as "an island of news amidst an ocean of advertisements." This was an apt description of modern literary productions, for both sections are needed for the success of any periodical. With some allowance for exaggeration the remark fits *The Strand Magazine*. The most successful of Messrs. George Newnes' many efforts, it supplied a much-felt want in the realm of fiction and some account of its long and noteworthy history will be here attempted.

While *The Strand* was far from being the first of the monthly magazines to be placed before the British public, with its all-embracing range of topics it became known throughout the English-speaking world. Unlike its famous contemporary *Blackwood's*, which was intended for the intellectual and highly-educated, *The Strand* appealed to all classes from peer to peasant and politician to publican.

But it went even farther than most magazines, for it included in its rear pages an excellent children's story and thus its place as a family magazine was firmly

assured. It anticipated to some extent the modern "news flash" in a section entitled "Curiosities," which was a collection of pithy photographic pars from all over the world.

Founded in 1891, *The Strand*, in its attractive pale blue cover and the announcement of "120 literary pages," started its career with the usual collection of serial and complete stories by many of the rising writers of that time, some of whom have left their mark on world events of the past half century. Indeed it is not too much to say the magazine and its contributors made each other famous. This was a further triumph for *The Strand*, as one cannot help but think of such authors as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, P. G. Wodehouse, and many others of varying degrees of fame and literary ability.

Many a writer of the short complete stories which were such an excellent feature of the magazine found his feet and made his mark therein. In the illustrations to the stories the same high standard of excellence was maintained. The artists, some of whom have been mentioned in previous articles by

this writer, helped to uphold the magazine's prestige wherever it was read.

NOT ONLY DID *The Strand* supply its readers with fiction, for it kept them informed of the march of world events by means of interviews with famous men and women of the day. This feature, called "Illustrated Interviews," consisted of brief life-histories of the persons concerned, with photos of them at different periods. Mention should also be made of a puzzle corner which was for long a favourite with the magazine's more subtle and mathematically-minded readers.

Turning now to *The Strand's* leading fiction characters one thinks automatically of the great Sherlock Holmes, who made his first* and last bows in its pages. Nothing further need be said here about Holmes as it has all

*With the exception of "A Study in Scarlet," first appearance of which was in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* (London) for 1887, and "The Sign of the Four," in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* (Philadelphia) for February, 1890.—Editor.

been uttered before, but his exploits have furnished inspiration for countless other such stories. This has helped to perpetuate the modern theory of scientific deduction, which (somewhat grudgingly, we must say) the author attributed to Edgar Allan Poe. Practically everything from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's prolific pen made its first appearance in the magazine's pages.

The pseudo-scientific stories of H. G. Wells were given their due with the publication in *The Strand* of "The First Men in the Moon." Written in the true Wellsian vein of fantastic imagery, this story has been described as "a nightmare without horrors."

Almost everyone has heard of P. G. Wodehouse through his humorous creations, Jeeves ("my man Jeeves") and Percy Wooster, the man about town with a flair for getting in and out of all sorts of odd situations. Stories of them, first published in the pages of *The Strand*, have since been issued in book form.

To be Concluded in No. 42.

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Portrait of Frank Richards Multilithed by McCullough's Multigraphing, Winnipeg.

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