

THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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WHEN COMICS WERE FUNNY!

LEN PACKMAN's 3-part *Comic Papers of the Past* in S. P. C. Numbers 67 to 69 was very enjoyable and informative.

Those cheerful titles recalled a time when even the humble comic had at least four pages of reading matter, a far cry from the present trend of stories in pictures and "comics" that are not necessarily humorous.

To an older generation this trend may be considered in the light of a crime against the modern youth, but one cannot stop progress, if progress it is.

In the rat-race of modern methods two conditions apply. Firstly, will it pay? Secondly, where is the biggest market? Apparently, the answer to the first seems to be that boys' books with fair-class reading matter will not pay; to the second, that glossy-covered magazines for women not only pay, but are also the biggest market. They and cosmetics together work very well in harness.

The great epoch, which began with the Education Act of 1870, which introduced compulsory education for the masses and gave birth to that long line of "old boys' books," is practically over.

It is the contention in certain quarters that the modern boy would take to periodicals similar to those of our youth, providing that stories, plots, and lay-out were brought up to date. On that assumption there is a feeling that The Amalgamated Press ought to gamble in hard cash and shareholders' profits to give the youth of today, if not exactly *Magnets* and *Gems*, at least story-telling of a fair order.

However, The Amalgamated Press are keen business-men, and keener still since their absorption into the larger combine of the *Daily Mirror* publications. If they are pessimistic in this matter, and consider that habits have changed (habits which publishers themselves have formed

and injected into the receptive minds of the young), we might consider at least one of the grounds for their pessimism.

There was a time when our entertainments were, in the main, of our own providing, and reading was one of them. Certainly, in these days, many children know of Billy Bunter, but they watch and enjoy his adventures on television!

• Perhaps they would enjoy the adventures of Robin Hood or Wyatt Earp just as much, on condition they were permitted to relax in an armchair in front of the television set, and allowed to see the plot unfold before them without any conscious effort on their part.

The vast difference in depth of feeling, subtlety, and characterization between reading and "viewing" is a subject on its own and could be dealt with profitably by a far worthier pen than mine.

Len Packman's *Comic Papers of the Past* recalls a world of "comics" in the real sense of the word, short stories, serials of action and adventure, school or sport, the Editor's chummy chats, competitions and prize-giving, the office boy's column with its amusing spelling, and those cross-talk columns to which, it seems, modern highly-paid come-

dians of radio and television still refer for inspiration!

Comics were to most of us a first stepping-stone to higher things. That those first steps included such characters, lovable and unforgettable, as Weary Willie and Tired Tim, Waffles the Waiter, P.c. Cuddlecook, Homeless Hector, Willy and Wally the Terrible Twins, Marzipan the Magician, and hundreds more, is proof of the excellence of those first faltering steps in the world of "old boys' books."

—MAURICE KUTNER

WANTED: BOYS' FRIENDS

WITH OUR collection of *The Magnet* near completion it might be a good idea to publicize our *Boys' Friend* weekly wants. We require these numbers: 259, 260, 320, 364, 677, 693, 719, 720, 721, 722, 724, 725, 727, 728, 743, 744, 745, 751, 753, 755, 757, 758, 759, 760, 763, 766, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 1152 to 1158, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1165 to 1175, 1177 to 1183, 1185 to 1227, 1229 to 1254, 1255, 1276, 1299 to 1305, 1311, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1316, 1318 to 1323, 1325 to 1337, 1341, 1344, 1345, 1346, 1353, 1354, 1355, 1358, 1359.

The opportunity to purchase even a few of these numbers would be greatly appreciated.

—W. H. G.

The Story Paper Collector

No. 71—Vol. 3

Priceless

Presenting the Poet Laureate of The Magnet and The Gem!

WE HAVE a loose-leaf file, on the cards of which we entered, during the years when we were reading through our collection of The Magnet Library, names of and facts about various personalities, actual and fictional, whom we met.

On the card headed "Samways, G. R." there are but four entries:

"His poems are contributed to The Magnet."

"Wrote words for song Rally Round! in Christmas Number of The Magnet, Number 409,"

"Contributed poems to Magnet Numbers 249 and 409."

"A very witty poem, 'Chuckles': An Appreciation, is in Magnet Number 313, signed with initials G. R. S."

The reason for this paucity of notes about George Richmond Sam-

ways we now know, since the happy circumstance of W. O. G. Lofts having contacted Mr. Samways.

It was Mr. Samways, working behind a screen of anonymity, who contributed so much to the "atmosphere" of The Magnet (and The Gem) in the 1910's and 1920's, apart from the main long stories, by way of verse and short stories.

These usually were attributed to some member of the junior forms of Greyfriars or St. Jim's, and presented to readers in the shape of items in The Greyfriars Herald and St. Jim's Gazette, and in Billy Bunter's Weekly in The Popular.

It is with considerable pleasure that we present the contribution from Mr. Lofts that commences on the next page, consisting as it does very largely of statements given by Mr. Samways.

—W. H. G.

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GEORGE RICHMOND SAMWAYS & THE COMPANION PAPERS

By W. O. G. LOFTS

READERS OF *The Story Paper Collector* will recall that in Number 63, July, 1957, I contributed an article entitled *George Richmond Samways: And Especially Magnet Number 400*. At the conclusion of that article I stated that nothing has been seen of him for years. Like one of the "old soldiers" in the popular song, he seems to have simply faded away!

Shortly after that article was written I heard that Mr. Samways had been in very poor health in the late 1920's and it was unlikely that he was still alive, so I did not continue trying to trace him.

About six months ago, however, a chance remark to an author who was in correspondence with Derek Adley (suggested by myself in connection with competitions) brought the information that Mr. Samways was very much alive. Further correspondence proved that he still was not only as enthusiastic as ever he had been about *The Magnet* and *The Gem*, but that he was a mine of information,

real "inside information," on all matters pertaining to these papers.

Mr. Samways stated:

YOUR LETTER gave me the greatest interest, and awakened memories of one of the happiest periods of my life. I am astonished and highly flattered that anyone should be interested in my early journalistic efforts, and would very much like to see a copy of *The Story Paper Collector*.

The verse you quote,

Dear Editor, if you but knew
The thoughts of each sup-
porter,
And how your book thrills
through and through
The globe in ev'ry quarter!
'Tis read by many a boy and man
On train-rides, trips, and
tramways;
And I'll support it all I can
As sure as my name's Samways!

is very well remembered by me, since it launched me upon my journalistic career, and Maurice Down, the then Sub-Editor under Mr. Hinton, gave me a very generous write-up. I was

at that time a junior clerk in a stock and share broker's office in Southsea, earning only fifteen shillings a week; so the seven shillings and sixpence paid me for these verses was manna from Heaven!

I proceeded to write, by candlelight in my small bed-sitting room, a series of poems called Greyfriars Lyrics, which appeared in The Magnet, followed by a series of similar poems in The Gem, entitled St. Jim's Jingles. These poems, immature and amateurish though they were, had an enthusiastic reception.

Shortly after their publication (I was then working in the Magnet office) I was sent for by the Editor of the Companion Papers, Herbert Alan Hinton, and requested to write a Greyfriars story for The Magnet. Charles Hamilton, the creator of the famous schoolboy characters, was at that time on the continent, and had failed for some reason to send in his mss. and a story was urgently wanted.

This story was entitled Reign of Terror, Number 353. After that I must have written in all at least a hundred Magnet and Gem yarns, probably many more.

Magnet Number 400, The Sunday Crusaders, which you write about, was actually written at the request of H. A. Hinton, as he was very anxious to break the ban which many schools placed upon The Magnet and The Gem under the

erroneous impression that the stories were of the "Penny Dreadful" type. This, of course, as you rightly say, included my old school, which by the way was King Edward's School at Whitley, Surrey, a school for boys who had lost their fathers.

A copy of The Magnet containing The Sunday Crusaders was sent to every clergyman in Crockford's Clerical Directory. Many tributes were received from worthy clerics, and a selection of these duly published in the Companion Papers.

IT IS QUITE true that Hedley O'Mant, who was chief Sub-Editor of The Magnet for many years, went to the same school, as did Harold W. Twyman, Editor of The Union Jack. Both were great old school friends of mine.

The ban on the Companion Papers at my old school was lifted at a later date, as a play was reproduced from the Christmas Number of The Magnet, Number 305, dated December 13th, 1913, entitled The Spectre of No. 1 Study, with Hedley O'Mant in the leading role. After a lapse of over 45 years I can still remember the opening lines:

Buck up, and buzz about there,
 Bob,
 Your lazy limbs want oiling.
 I've shoved the kettle on the
 hob,
 And soon it will be boiling.

At the outbreak of war in August, 1914, Maurice Down took a commission, and I became Sub-Editor of the Companion Papers in his stead. The working hours at The Fleetway House were light, and I was able to continue writing stories in addition to my editorial duties, which consisted mainly of proof-reading and replying to readers' letters.

EASILY THE MOST popular story I ever wrote was School and Sport for The Boys' Friend Library. This was as a result of the popularity of Sportsmen All in The Magnet. I can recall going down to the accountant's office on pay-day to receive £40 for it, together with my salary as Sub-Editor, and payments for miscellaneous contributions to the Companion Papers. "Bits of boys getting all this money!" I recall the chief cashier bitterly exclaiming, as my cheque was handed over.

In 1916 I joined the Royal Flying Corps, but returned to The Fleetway House after the war and resumed my old position. About 1921 I decided to free-lance, and went to live in the Isle of Wight. The Greyfriars Herald and St. Jim's Gazette were inaugurated by me, and I wrote the main part of them for years. The St. Sam's stories also were mine, Dr. Birchmall being a great

favourite of all readers. Pride of the Ring was written by me, under the name of "Mark Linley," the boxer, Neddy Welch, being the name of a boxer at my old school.

I created the characters Phyllis and Archie Howell in The Magnet and also the Claremont School tales in Chuckles, which were taken over later by another writer. The stories in The Penny Popular featuring Dennis Carr of the Remove were written by me. In these the Greyfriars Remove cricket team played in different counties.

From 1921 to 1928 I continued to pour out stories, poems, and jingles for the Companion Papers, including of course The Holiday Annual, and I could claim to have written almost as much as Mr. Hamilton in that period.

In 1928 I decided to go in for full time competition work, and set up myself in business as a solutionist. In this I was very successful, winning many major prizes, one in the region of £750, and I have in all won no less than 21 firsts in this type of competition.

[I have seen the certificate of Mr. Samways' winning effort.]

I enlisted in the R.A.F. in 1942 and was stationed in Iceland, where I was demobbed in 1945.

CORRECTIONS or additional information which may be needed for previous S.P.C. articles are as follows, and the



GEORGE RICHMOND SAMWAYS

From a Photograph Taken in the 1920's

following information is authentic:

1.—The *Greyfriars Gallery* in Numbers 31-44. John Nix Pentelow actually gleaned the data for his *Gallery* from Mr. Samways' records on Greyfriars. While he was working in the *Magnet* office Mr. Samways compiled a complete list of all the Greyfriars characters with their correct Christian names, in order to gain consistency in the matter. He also devised a map of Kent showing the location of Greyfriars, the village of Friar-dale, and the market town of Courtfield. There is no doubt whatsoever that Mr. Pentelow used all this data as a basis for the *Gallery* which he later compiled. The actual idea was to provide a guide to substitute writers of Greyfriars stories, and to ensure correct nomenclature of places.

2.—The above also applies to Roger Jenkins' article on Mr. Pentelow in Number 50.

3.—Also Roger Jenkins' article in Number 50. As already explained in *The Collectors' Digest* for August, 1959, the "killing-off" of Arthur Courtney of the Greyfriars Sixth was not an act of crass stupidity by Mr. Pentelow. He was ordered to do it by a higher authority on the following grounds: There had been

great confusion in readers' minds between this Sixth-former and Frank Courtenay, Captain of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, for some time, and Mr. Pentelow "killed off" the Greyfriars senior only because he was told to do so.

4.—The *Greyfriars Story Competition*, by Roger Jenkins, in Number 56. The names "Martin Clifford" and "Frank Richards" were used from the beginning to the end of *The Gem* and *The Magnet*. This was certainly editorial, if not directorial, policy. The names, Martin Clifford and Frank Richards, had endeared themselves so much to school-boy readers that it would have been a great mistake to change them whenever a "substitute" story appeared.

Can one imagine a *Magnet* story appearing as by E. S. Brooks or G. R. Samways—or even by Charles Hamilton? The idolators of Frank Richards would have been most disappointed, to say the least. However good the story happened to be, it would have been compared unfavourably with a "Frank Richards" story and the confidence of the readers would have been undermined.

There actually is no basis for the statement that "the public had just cause for complaint"

because they were buying inferior stories under the name of "Frank Richards." It is a fact that out of the thousands of letters sent to The Fleetway House there were never any voicing complaint at the "substitute" stories. This proves that young readers could not distinguish "substitute" stories from the genuine "Frank Richards."

There were in fact many hundreds of entries in the Greyfriars Story Competition, nearly all written in longhand. Mr. Pentelow for many months spent hour after hour poring through them in the hope of finding a budding Charles Hamilton.

It is almost certain that the winner's entry was published at a later date, while I definitely know of three writers who wrote *Magnet* and *Gem* yarns later, following their successful entries which were listed amongst the prize-winners. They were:

W. L. Catchpole, who wrote four *Magnet* yarns, plus 17 *Gems* and various *Rookwood* yarns. He also wrote all the *St. Sam's Greyfriars Heralds*, and *Holiday Annual* pieces, after Mr. Samways left.

Will Gibbons, who wrote yarns not yet traced.

And lastly, in my opinion easily the most successful of the three in writing, "L. E. Ransom," who, as readers will remember

from my article in *S. P. C.* Number 68, wrote many of the *Cliff House* yarns. He wrote a few *Magnet* and *Gem* stories, the first in 1918, and has been one of the most prolific writers ever at The Fleetway House.

* * *

The Editor Says . . .

FROM THE FOREGOING article, together with those about Mr. Samways that have appeared in *The Collectors' Digest* beginning with the August, 1959, issue, *Magnet* and *Gem* enthusiasts will have gathered that he obviously played a large part in making both papers the success they were.

Mr. Samways' contribution of verse and short stories to *The Greyfriars Herald*, *St. Jim's Gazette*, and *Billy Bunter's Weekly* supplements in, respectively, *The Magnet*, *The Gem*, and *The Popular*, must have been very well-liked by readers. These features added much to the "atmosphere" of the papers, and we are happy to be able to help make the facts known.

As evidence of how well Mr. Lofts' articles about George Richmond Samways have been received by readers of *The Collectors' Digest*, he has provided

excerpts from letters received:

Personally, I believe every statement made by Mr. Samways; the solution to the A Very Gallant Gentleman puzzle is so obvious that it is a wonder that none of us guessed it before. . . . I think that Mr. Samways' revelations have cleared J. N. Pentelow once and for all time of the personal attacks made on him over the last ten years; they have confirmed that Mr. Pentelow was a fine man liked and respected by his colleagues and no more capable of dirty tricks than most people. I sincerely trust that the C. H. supporters will now maintain a little discreet silence on what is a very well flogged subject.

— W. J. A. HUBBARD
Kisumu, Kenya Colony, B.E.A.

I have been very interested in the works of Mr. Samways ever since you revealed in *The Story Paper Collector* that he was the creator and writer of the Doctor Birchmell and St. Sam's stories in *The Magnet*. I must confess that when I used to buy *The Magnet* each week I first read these stories, before reading the main long stories. Personally, I think that in his own lines, Mr. Samways is as great a genius, almost, as Charles Hamilton is.

— REV. A. G. POUND
Birmingham, England.

As Mr. Samways has been revealed as having written most of the contents of *The Greyfriars Herald*

etc., then he certainly contributed much towards the fame of the Hamilton saga. I have always had a very great respect for the originator of all those rhymes and ditties, so you can imagine how interested I was to learn who was responsible for them.

— CHARLES VAN RENEN
Uitenhage, Cape Province, South Africa.

If Mr. Samways was responsible for most of the verses which appeared in the Hamilton papers, then I must pay tribute to him as one of the cleverest versifiers I have ever read. The ingenuity of his rhymes and metres could not have been bettered. (I know, for I go in for this kind of thing myself in an amateurish way, and indeed, some verses of mine in broad Scots have become quite popular at various gatherings throughout my native land.) Now that I know the identity of the author I shall certainly go back to them and read them afresh.

— DR. ROBERT WILSON
Glasgow, Scotland.

¶ IN S. P. C. Number 72 we hope to present a Tribute to the late Herbert Leckenby, Founder and Editor of *The Collectors' Digest* and Honorary Vice President of *The Old Boys' Book Club*, London, by W. O. G. Lofts.

¶ Portrait, p. 289, printed, and paper stock for these pages supplied by, John Davis, Vancouver.

Herbert Leckenby

NEWS OF THE DEATH in York of Herbert Leckenby, which I understand occurred on October 20th, was received with sadness by his many friends in the circle of old boys' books collectors. His editing and publishing of *The Collectors' Digest* since November of 1946 has done much to bring collectors together in an organized group.

Born July 2nd, 1889, Herbert was for the greater part of his working life a civilian telephone operator with Northern Command at York, retiring a few years ago. Unlike many of us who left them and came back to them later, he appeared never to have turned away from the story papers he loved as a lad, but retained his interest right through.

I am not certain now exactly when Herbert and I first became acquainted, but it was during the 1939-45 War, not long after I had commenced printing *The Story Paper Collector*. His first contributions to these pages, *Henry St. John vs. David Goodwin* and *The Twelve Greatest Serials*, both appeared in Number 9, October-December, 1942, so we must have made contact several months earlier—when one allows for

the slowness of the mails then. After that, until Number 27, there were few issues in which he was not represented.

Then, late in 1946 when for a year I was unable to continue printing S.P.C., Herbert launched *The Collectors' Digest* and created for it a very special place in the regard of collectors of old boys' papers.

Herbert's visits came to be special events in the lives of members of The Old Boys' Book Club, in London and various cities in which branches are located.

Only a few weeks before his death he was in London, when, I am told, it was noticed that he was looking not at all well. But this fact could not be detected in Herbert's personal messages in the October *Collectors' Digest*, the last that he prepared, which read like his usual cheery self.

We miss you, Herbert Leckenby. Farewell.

* * *

AT THE TIME of writing, I do not have details as to what is being done about continuing *The Collectors' Digest*, but I have been informed that efforts are being made to keep it going, and that this year's edition of *The Collectors' Digest Annual* will be completed and distributed.

—W.H.G.

RANDOM REFLECTIONS

And a Tribute to *The Story Paper Collector*

SAYS AN ARAB proverb: *When one plays the flute in Zanzibar all Africa responds.* This Islamic version of calling the tune applies particularly to *The Story Paper Collector*, for seldom has there been a response so gratifying to an editor from his readers in various parts of the world. Many articles dealing with story papers of the past have appeared, and still they come in.

Thus, one is rather at a loss to know where to begin, for the constant stream of contributions calls for a continual adjustment of the starting line. After a careful study of the articles one notes that practically all the writers have dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's" of previous contributors. Therefore, one may perhaps be justified in making an all-round survey.

None of those who contributed to the earlier numbers of the magazine could have even dreamed that it would last so long or cover so much ground. Thus it can safely be said that,

in their own small way, they have marked a milestone in modern civilization. May this thought make them feel proud of their efforts.

The many writers for boys and girls, known and unknown, who toiled long and perhaps wearily, have certainly come into their own and had a niche made for them which none will begrudge. Equally so, the publishers and editors of the many journals which first presented their efforts to juvenile readers deserve a place for their courage and foresight in placing their papers before an often cynical and hidebound public.

Everyone will agree that there is little room for criticism, when one occasionally comes across readers who complain of "ghost writers." It is not a very great deal of ground that they have taken with their efforts.

Thus, all there is left for this writer to do is to offer one or more opinions on various articles which have appeared over past years and leave the rest to the judgment of his readers.

NO TIME need be given to covering familiar ground, but there are a few comments that I would like to make. Anent my earlier remarks on "ghost writers," my attention was particularly attracted by Roger Jenkins' very entertaining

Huge Success of - "IT'S HARD TO GET ON!"
The Great Strike Drama:



No. 20. Vol. 1.

Week Ending January 31, 1914.

One Penny.



A thrilling scene from this week's special long instalment of our great new home-life story.

List of the Principal Characters:

GEORGETT HOBMAN - The young protagonist, struggling against the forces of evil.

BLIND JOE HANBARD - The blind beggar, a friend of the young hero.

GEORGE HANBARD - Blind Joe's brother, a friend of the young hero.

METTY HANBARD - A beautiful girl, a friend of the young hero.

SIR JAMES MELROSE - The benevolent lord of the manor.

ARTHUR MELROSE - The villain, the lord's son.

MAD MAX - The madman.

THE REVEREND PETER WHITE - The vicar.

Just Starting Inside!

Number 20 of The Boy's Journal, January 31st, 1914

(See Foot of Next Page)

article on *The Greyfriars Holiday Annual* which appeared in S.P.C. Numbers 58 and 59.

It is a matter of wonder to me, and perhaps to others, why the otherwise keen readers of Frank Richards and the other authors were "taken in" (there is no other term for it, I think) by the continual serving up of reprints in this "periodical." More so because of the frequent alterations, while the reduction in volume made it like a "Mandrabul's offering" which grew smaller with each passing year.

My next observations are on that very interesting contribution of Leonard Packman's in S.P.C. Numbers 67 to 69, *Comic Papers of the Past*. One is tempted to think that the comics and their numerous characters are a review of the universe *in petto*, when one reads about the often laughable and lovable exploits.

Apropos of this, I would like to call Mr. Packman's, and the Editor's, attention to one small omission. In his reference to *Comic Life* Mr. Packman forgot, or perhaps had never heard of,

a character named "Scientific Silas." This genial crackpot occupied the front page for quite a long time, and every week produced some absurd invention which always went wrong.

PRESENT-DAY comics, at some of which I have been looking, seem to cater to the juvenile and the very young. But perhaps the screen presentations of Walt Disney and others have taken over from the older-type comics.

Apart from a passing reference to the lists of journals which have been painstakingly compiled for the edification of S.P.C. readers, I do not think there is any more that needs to be said. The grand total of these different papers would if assembled need a building as large as the famous Library of Alexandria to house them.

So, in a somewhat valedictory manner, I will conclude with a grateful tribute to all those who have contributed to the success of *The Story Paper Collector*.

— HENRY ADAMS PUCKRIN

THE BOY'S JOURNAL

ONE OF THE better papers of its period, but one that did not last very long, was *The Boy's Journal*. Replacing *Cheer*

Boys Cheer, which replaced *The Boys' Herald*, it ran from Number 1, September 20th, 1913, to Number 72, January 9th, 1915. Then it was combined with *The Dreadnought*, itself soon to end.

Two Shoe-Strings Are Cut!

THE 32ND ANNUAL MEETING of The Amalgamated Press was held on June 29th last. In the "Statement" given by the Chairman, Cecil H. King, is a remark beginning: "As you know, some of our smaller publications are living on a shoe-string . . ."

Assuming that there is a shoe-string to each of the smaller publications referred to but not mentioned by name, then this October two of them were cut. This month saw the end of two A.P. "comics," *Comet* and *Sun*, the former being merged with *Tiger* and the latter with *Lion*.

It is probable that there were not so many to mourn their passing as there were several years ago when *Comic Cuts* and *Chips* and *Wonder* were discontinued. But there would be some, for the end of even a "smaller publication" is an occasion for regrets.

Both *Comet* and *Sun* appeared to have rather chequered careers. The beginnings of both are unknown to us, but we came to know them well in recent years; first as largish-page comics with some picture-stories and some reading-stories; later as small-page papers; and finally,

for more than a year as *Magnet*-sized papers of 20 pages, with only picture-stories and comics.

The page-size in this last phase made them more attractive to us than before, even though in the earlier phases one or both papers had included in their programs reading-stories by Frank Richards and picture-stories based on his tales of Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

The last few issues of *Comet* and *Sun* carried no serial-numbers, but if they had the final issues would have been, *Comet*, Number 580, and *Sun*, Number 551, both dated October 17th.

So it goes, and "progress" must be served. Let us hope that progress is more kindly to *The Sexton Blake Library*, to which we will devote a few words. But before doing so we spare some for the change brought about, presumably, by the new ownership of The Amalgamated Press (which is now Fleetway Publications): the omitting of serial-numbers from most of their magazines.

We cannot help wondering why. Future collectors of these magazines, if such there are, will have a difficult time making up their "wantlists." But, deplorable though it may be, there is no reason for publishers of today to feel any concern for possible collectors of the future. As yet *The Sexton Blake Library* con-

tinues to be numbered. Which brings us to those few words about it.

* * *

The Sexton Blake Library

SEXTON BLAKE has been with us for a long, long time. The "New Look" Blake stories in *The Sexton Blake Library* have led us to hope that he will be with us for a long time to come. Sexton Blake of Baker Street and now of Berkeley Square, we mean; not Sexton Blake of Scotland Yard, which he has unaccountably become in another medium. (How ever did that happen?)

But we find in the July, 1959, issues what amounts to a warning that, unless the circulation figures improve, *The Sexton Blake Library* may travel to that crowded limbo of lost magazines from which there is scarcely any returning. This is a contingency greatly to be avoided.

If one's "purple period" was in any decade from the 1890's to the 1940's, *The S. B. L.* is the last remaining "A. P." link with it.

We would like to add our voice, feeble though it may be, to that of the Editor of *The Sexton Blake Library*, and urge anyone

who has a desire to see Sexton Blake and Tinker continue to battle wrong-doers to purchase copies each month. Even to buy extra copies to use in introducing the "new" Blake to those who may, strangely enough, be unacquainted with him, or who have ceased to follow the accounts of his "cases."

If enough of us do this, then indeed will Sexton Blake and Tinker be with us for a long time to come.

* * *

John o' London's

ONE MAGAZINE which has travelled to that limbo referred to above and returned is *John o' London's Weekly*. Originally published by George Newnes, Limited, and suspended in 1954, we were happy to welcome it back this October. A literary magazine, the new *John o' London's* is published weekly by Literary Periodicals Limited, 54 Bloomsbury St., London W.C.1, England. —W. H. G.

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