

Answer
June 14
25 PC 28

Rose Lawn

Kingsgate,

Broadstairs,

Kent.

February 10, 1947.

Dear Mr. Gander,

I was extremely glad to receive your letter dated

January 7th. I did not think that I should weigh in with a letter

while you were ill, but I have thought about you very often, and am

very glad and relieved to know that you are better. I can guess that

staying indoors and hugging the radiator is not exactly how you like to

spend the time; but one cannot be too careful---especially in a winter

like this. It is the worst winter I remember since the seventies of the

last century--and I don't suppose it is much warmer in Canada than in

the old country. But I guess you don't get your electricity cut on

freezing days as we do!-- coal doled out by the thimbleful! Nor, perhaps,

have you forgotten for years what a square meal is like! So there are some

more "small mercies" for you to be thankful for! You would like to go

down to Florida---and I think sometimes that if I had a Magic Carpet and

could whisk across into Canada, I'd never grumble again! Not, of course,

that we do grumble much---grumbling will never get one anywhere.

Yes, I am writing Greyfriars again--with my feet in a sheepskin bag

and mittens on my hands! But what does the cold matter, or the snow and the

ice, now that Billy Bunter is rolling off the typewriter once more? As

Shakespeare so nearly said, Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious

summer by this son of Greyfriars!

The A.P. have not exactly "relinquished

rights", as you put it. They have ceased to oppose. I am far from thinking

that, as the original publishers of Greyfriars, they have no rights in the matter,

though such are very vague and hard to define: and I am very glad when an amicable arrangement was made. No, the Magnet and Gem will never be revived. I am writing Greyfriars now in book form, and the books will be published at 6/- by Charles Skilton Ltd, 50, Alexandra Road, London, S.W.19. And readers may bank on it that every word that appears under the name of Frank Richards will be written by Frank Richards. My new publisher is a delightful man, as straight as a die, and his contract was drawn up on such generous terms that I just rubbed my eyes at it--after my former experiences. I have never thought much about money, or cared about it, so long as I had enough to pay my way: but I learned its value when my income suddenly ceased to exist in 1940, and I had almost nowhere to lay my head, and it would not even run to tobacco--which was tough on a smoker of fifty years standing. It is no joke when, just on seventy, a man is left with nothing in the world but a taxation hang-over! It was God's Providence that pulled me through, and nothing else could.

But after this experience, I have realised that there is something to be said for hard cash, and that one must give thought to the morrow. So you may guess that it was very pleasant to learn that the Bunter book this spring will produce, at the lowest, six times as much as the A.P., used to pay me for a similar story: while with reasonably good luck it may produce more than twenty times as much. I do so loathe worrying about money: and in these seventies we rather like to glide into smooth waters. I just like to write, and not think of other things: and now I shall be able to do it.

I should be very glad to hear from you again that you are completely restored.

With kind regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Frank Richards